

(c) what was the growth percentage of steel production last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) to (c) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has planned to increase the production of saleable steel by 7% in 2000-01 over 1999-2000. The saleable steel production of SAIL (excluding IISCO) in 1999-2000 was 9.53 MT representing a growth of 11% over 1998-99.

Planning to Re-Introduce VRS in SAIL

3059. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether SAIL is planning to re-introduce Voluntary Retirement Scheme in its plants to get rid of over-staffing in near future;

(b) if so, by when and the details of the proposal and benefits to be given to the employees opting for it; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. SAIL has drawn up a scheme, based on the guidelines of Department of Public Enterprises, to introduce Voluntary Retirement. Details of the scheme and effective date of implementation have not yet been finalised.

Direct foreign investment in steel plants

3060. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether multinational companies can make direct foreign investment in steel plants;

(b) if so, the percentage of their equity; and

(c) the percentage of Government equity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) As per the existing policy, 100% foreign direct investment through the automatic route under the powers delegated to the Reserve Bank of India is permissible in the steel sector.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The Union Government at present has no proposal to setup any new steel plant in the Central Public Sector. Accordingly, the issue of percentage of

Government equity does not arise.

Business and financial restructuring of SAIL

3061. SHRI R. K. ANAND: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken for business and financial restructuring of SAIL;

(b) the implementation of Voluntary Retirement Scheme and number of employees retired, so far, under the scheme during the last three years; and

(c) the value of export of steel during the last three years item-wise and steps taken to boost export further?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) The Financial-cum-business restructuring package of SAIL includes, inter alia, financial restructuring, right sizing of the organisation, reduction in operating costs, change in market strategy and reprioritising of capital expenditure, besides conversion of certain units, engaged in non-core activities into joint ventures. Detailed milestones have been made for the implementation of the business restructuring plan and progress is monitored by the Government.

(b) SAIL had operated Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) based on deferred payment basis during the year 1998 and 1999 and 5975 and 13617 employees have been separated respectively under the scheme.

(c) The value of export of steel, item-wise during the last three years has been as under:

	<i>(Rs. in crores)</i>		
	1999-2000	1998-99	1997-98
Iron & Steel			
A. Pig Iron	45	23	176
B. Steel			
Semis	127	87	236
Structurals	6	4	1
Bars & Rods	15	7	2
PM Plates	286	339	450