

(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