

[English]

Trade Gap

1512. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the trade gap has widen for the year 1997-98 as compared to the year 1996-97;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken to narrow down the trade deficit during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (c) As per the Provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI & S), the trade deficit for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 in Rupee terms and in Dollar terms are:

Year	Value	
	US\$ Million	Rs. Crores
1996-97	5442	19319
1997-98	6799	25268

The trade deficit is measured by excess of imports over exports. The increase in trade deficit is primarily due to increased import of petroleum products and fertilizers besides capital goods, raw material and intermediate goods. These were required for accelerating industrial production and exports, which is the basic feature of a vibrant economy. The key to reducing trade deficit lies in accelerated export growth. To this end, export promotion measures are initiated on a continuing basis by the Government, to enhance the export growth of the country. These include policy liberalisation and simplification of procedures for providing an exporters friendly environment. Export promotion measures are initiated on the basis of constant interaction with the trade, industry and export promotion organisations set up by the Government.

Retrenched Employees of WCL

1513. SHRI KAMAL NATH : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether employees of Western Coalfields Limited are being retrenched due to medical unfitness;
- (b) if so, the total number of such employees;
- (c) the procedure adopted in this regard;
- (d) whether there is any proposal to change the existing procedure; and

- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) There is no policy of retrenchment of workers in coal companies on the ground of medical unfitness, but employees who are declared permanently medically unfit get the benefit of employment to one of their dependants under clause 9.4.0 of National Coal Wage Agreement (NCWA)-V.

(b) In Western Coalfields Limited (WCL), since 1996-97 and upto 29-5-98, 378 workers have been given such benefit under Clause 9.4.0 of NCWA-V.

(c) The employees who desire to get this benefit under Clause 9.4.0 of N.C.W.A. -V, apply for the same. After screening at the area level, a Medical Board examines them at the head quarter level. If permanent disability is established, then the employee is declared medically unfit.

(d) No such proposal has been received.

(e) Does not arise.

Outstanding Income Tax

1514. SHRIMATI BHAVNA DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA :

SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons against whom income tax amount of more than One lakh rupees was outstanding as on December 31, 1997;

(b) whether the Government have not been able to recover the amount; and

(c) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) The total number of persons against whom income-tax amount of Rupees one lakh and above are outstanding is 111290 as on 30.9.1997. (latest available figures).

(b) and (c) The following are generally the reasons for the outstanding demand :-

(i) Demands that have not become due for payment;