

cadres is being undertaken. It is difficult to indicate the exact time for completing these exercises.

Foreign Exchange released to Business Executives

4500. SHRI DIGAMBAR SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the level in the Reserve Bank of India, Bombay and its branches at which applications for grant of foreign exchange to business houses and their executives for their visits abroad are dealt with and upto what amount applications are disposed of in routine course ;

(b) whether there is spree of reckless spending of foreign exchange by these Business Executives in the name of business promotion or import of know-how or acquisition of knowledge ;

(c) whether the release of foreign exchange has been made much easier by the close contacts which the Liaison Officers/Executives of these big firms have established with Foreign Exchange Control Branch of the Bank ; and

(d) what steps he proposes to take to plug these loopholes and stop malpractices indulged in by these people ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):

(a) The work relating to release of foreign exchange to individuals in connection with their travel abroad is under the direct supervision of the Joint/Deputy/Assistant Controllers incharge of the Exchange Control Departments at respective Branch Offices of RBI. Exchange is released in accordance with the instructions issued from time to time by Central Office of RBI. To facilitate quicker disposal of work, powers have been delegated to various levels of officers.

While authority levels are defined according to monetary limits, the norms of scrutiny are defined irrespective of the extent of exchange release demanded or the status of the applicants. RBI does not classify such applications as routine or otherwise.

(b) No, Sir. All cases of release of foreign exchange are subjected to prescribed scrutiny and the amount of exchange is released as per scales laid down.

(c) and (d). It is the constant endeavour of RBI to render public service to its customers and at the same time to exercise proper control over the release of foreign exchange. To avoid delays, simplification of procedures has been undertaken. If, therefore, release of foreign exchange has become easier, it is for everybody and is due to measures undertaken by RBI and not due to so called close contacts of Liaison Officers/Executives of big firms with officials of Exchange Control Departments of Reserve Bank of India.

Compensation to Physically Handicapped Persons in Government Service

4501. SHRI KESHORAO PARDHI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether physically handicapped persons in Government service are getting an extra amount of 10 per cent of their basic pay in the form of compensation;

(b) whether this amount is given to them on production of a Medical Certificate from a competent Medical Officer in support of their disablement ;

(c) whether such persons are also entitled for allotment of quarters on priority basis;