

essed and sanctioned by Custom Houses within 48 hours of presentation. There is no provision for issue of any permits by Collectors of Customs under duty drawback scheme.

(b) The average time taken in the Ministry for fixation of Brand rates as per a recent sample study, is about 18 days after receipt of the prescribed application and related documents and pre-verification report from the field staff-unless waived otherwise (as under the simplified procedure).

(c) and (d). Exporter-wise ledgers for admissible drawback for various claims filed are maintained and the draw-back amount due consolidated on fortnightly basis and cheques for the same sent to the pre-notified banker of the exporter for credit in his account. As per guidelines laid down, custom houses are to make efforts to ensure that the cheques for claims presented in a fortnight are issued within a week to ten days of the close of the fortnight. Custom Houses and the Ministry monitor the disposal of the claims on regular basis through documentary reports to ensure that there are no undue delays and the exporters get admissible drawback expeditiously.

Trade Balance with Austria

762. SHRI GOPINATH GAJAPATHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is growing trade imbalance between India and Austria and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether there is a considerable scope to raise trade between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU):

(a) Director-General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics data shows that the trade imbalance which was Rs. 58.45 crores in 1987-88 and Rs. 55.60 crores in 1988-89 has narrowed down in Rs. 19.20 crores during April-November 1989 period.

(b) and (c). With a view to raising the level of trade between the two countries, various trade promotion efforts, sales missions, buying delegations, and participation in trade fairs are being made. An Indo-Austrian Mixed Commission has been set up to promote commercial and economic relations between the two countries.

Acceptance of Deposits from Public by Land Development Banks

763. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the land development banks are permitted to receive deposits from the public particularly in the farm sector in the rural areas for a period less than one year; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b). Land Development Banks (LDBs) are mainly engaged in dispensation of term credit for investments in agricultural sector. By the nature of their constitution and set up, they are not to do all types of banking business including acceptance of deposits repayable on demand. It is not desirable to raise short-term deposit to lend for medium and long-term period. However, as per existing scheme, Land Development Banks are allowed to accept deposits for period not less than one year and not exceeding two years.