

POLICE - DEPUTY COMMISSIONER (FORMER) - CONTRACT

(No. B/533) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the former Deputy Commissioner of Police, S. R., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the services of the latter have been retained on contract and, if so, indicate in which capacity and the responsibilities held.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the PRB Report 2008 recommended that an Officer who has attained the compulsory retirement age may be allowed to continue to serve Government with the approval of the relevant Service Commission up to the age of 65. According to the PRB, this recommendation is applicable to officers of a certain level and in very specialised areas where skills and competencies are not available or are scarce. And there is a number of such cases.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, besides his duties as Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr S. is also responsible for -

- (a) the Counter Terrorism Unit, against the established post of Director General of that Unit;
- (b) the Very Important Person Security Unit;
- (c) co-ordinating investigations carried out by Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit and the Criminal Investigation Division;
- (d) the Chairing of –
 - (i) the Police Committee of Needs;
 - (ii) the Harbour Border Control Operations Committee, and
- (e) implementing the Mauritius Intelligence Model under the National Policing Strategic Framework.

Mr Jhugroo: While retaining the services of a retired DCP on contract which is a case *sans précédent*, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that this is causing much frustration among other DCPs and ACPs who have to wait for a long time before being promoted?

The Prime Minister: First of all, it is not unprecedented, Mr Speaker, Sir. Perhaps the hon. Member is a bit young, he does not know, but the former, former Prime Minister had appointed a Commissioner of Police, Mr Morvan, on contract. So, he was even higher than him.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether DCP R.S was responsible to enquire about the robbery which took place in the bungalow of the hon. Prime Minister at Roches Noires?

The Prime Minister: This question has been answered and he very well knows that it is no. I have just said what his duties are, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me say something else, that they are the first people to criticise the Police and when you have good Police Officers with vast experience, who have skills and leadership, we have to try to retain these officers and that is what we are doing.

Mr Seeruttun: Merci, M. le président. Est-ce que l'honorable Premier ministre peut nous dire si dans le cas de vol ou un certain Monsieur R. a été arrêté et détenu dans la cellule à Rivière du Rempart, le DCP S. R était mêlé à l'enquête ? On sait qu'après la personne a été retrouvée morte dans sa cellule.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know why they are dragging this enquiry into that. They had said so much nonsense, it went to a Magistrate and it was put aside. It was all proved to be false. Now, they want to imply him in this investigation. The investigation went on; those who were involved in the investigation had to do the investigation, including Police from Rivière du Rempart. At one time they were saying it was hon. Bachoo's people who were there. Go and check the facts before they say anything!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Prime Minister not consider, irrespective of the past, that in the interest of the Police being perceived to be above politics, it would not be correct for the Executive to substitute itself for the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and decide which uniform Police Officer is good and deserving of contractual employment?

The Prime Minister: It was not the Executive. It was the Disciplined Forces Services Commission who appointed him on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, not on my recommendation.

Mr Soodhun: Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether Mr S. R is earmarked for the next Commissioner of Police?

The Prime Minister: That is not for me to say, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

PMO - ROAD SAFETY - ADVISER

(No. B/534) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr B. B., adviser on road safety matters at his office, he will state –

- (a) his date of appointment, indicating the -
 - (i) terms and conditions thereof, and
 - (ii) his scheme of duties, and
- (b) number of -
 - (i) overseas missions undertaken, giving details thereof in each case, and
 - (ii) reports submitted to his office as at to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, Mr B. B. was contractually appointed on 20 November 2009 as Special Adviser on Road Safety Matters in my Office. The terms and conditions of Mr B. B's contract are in accordance with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau.

Mr B. B. was in charge of the Police Road Safety Unit within the Traffic Branch for almost twenty years. In his capacity as Special Adviser on Road Safety Matters, he is the Head of the Special Road Safety Unit set up in my Office in November 2009 to carry out the following tasks -

- (i) the formulation of data-driven road safety policies;
- (ii) road safety planning in line with the national road safety strategy;
- (iii) to make recommendations on road safety based on best international practices;
- (iv) to ensure coordination in all road safety activities, and
- (v) to establish a multi-sector communication strategy to raise road safety awareness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b)(i) of the question, since his appointment, Mr B. B. has undertaken one mission abroad to Canada from 14 to 21 November 2011, in company of the Director of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping. The object of the visit was to explore avenues of cooperation in the field of road safety and getting an insight of best practices in that country with a view to ascertaining whether these can be implemented in Mauritius.

In regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, the Special Road Safety Unit, led by Mr B. B., has spearheaded the formulation of a new National Road Safety Strategy: '*Preventing Road Injuries, Saving Lives*', that is the name of it, in 2011-2020. This Strategy -

- (i) identifies freshly updated priority areas;
- (ii) works out policies and proposals;
- (iii) assigns responsibilities;
- (iv) sets casualty reduction targets, and
- (v) develops monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Mr B. B. is in charge of the implementation of the project of Driver Education and Testing Centre which aims at providing a formal systematic training and education programmes designed to improve road user skills. The project is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Special Road Safety Unit headed by him has made several proposals to increase the effectiveness of the Police in enforcing traffic regulations. These proposals have been implemented and those which have been implemented so far include -

- (i) the creation of a Road Safety Motorcycle Squad within the Police Force Safety Branch. 50 riders of this Squad are responsible for improving road safety by intervening after observing events linked to drinking offences and high-risk driving situations;
- (ii) all Police Divisions around the island have been equipped with devices for the detection of speeding and drink driving. Previously, Mr Speaker, Sir, enforcement activities related to speeding and drink driving were mostly performed by the officers from the Traffic Branch of the Line Barracks in Port Louis;
- (iii) a 'Training for Trainers' programme intended for Police drivers and riders was organised in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development and a team of professional trainers from Singapore. This training programme was part of a comprehensive plan with a view to enabling Police Officers to improve their driving and riding skills and be responsible and safe motorists;
- (iv) an Advance Defensive Riding Course had been conducted for 204 riders to enhance their knowledge on road safety aspect and defensive driving by Singapore Driving Centre Limited last December, and
- (v) a workshop on "New Developments and Effective Strategies to manage Drink and Drug Driving" had been organised in April of this year with the assistance of Dr. Charles Mercier Guyon of the *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Médecine du Trafic* of France.

It must be pointed out that Mr B. B. works in close collaboration with the Traffic Branch of the Police. In this context, a weekly coordinating meeting is held with the representatives of the Traffic Branch and the Special Road Safety Unit to analyse statistics on road accidents and discuss new strategies to address this issue.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the Road Safety Adviser, Mr B. B. had submitted any report of the accident which occurred in year 2009 at Montebello involving a CNT bus and a lorry, and also the accident of 03 May of this year where eleven passengers were killed?

The Prime Minister: It is not for him to submit reports Mr Speaker, Sir, that is not part of his job.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Mr B. B., the Adviser, was involved and his advice was sought, when the speed cameras were installed by the company Pro Guard?

The Prime Minister: He was working with the Road Traffic Unit, but he is not the one person; there is a whole group of people involved.

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que l'honorable Premier ministre peut nous dire depuis que ce B. B. a été nommé comme Conseiller auprès de son bureau, combien d'accidents fatals il y a eu et où il y a eu mort d'homme?

The Prime Minister: One is not connected to the other; it is precisely because we have these problems that we have nominated him.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that - time and again in this very august Assembly I have said that Mr Buntipilly is part of the problem and not part of the solution - this gentleman does not poke his nose in any Police enquiry regarding road accidents?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, because the hon. Member mentioned this last time, I checked with the Commissioner of Police. He does not poke his nose, but when there is a major traffic accident he goes to have a look what he can observe. That is all he is doing.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in the accident at Sorèze, this gentleman, whilst the driver was injured, tried to secure evidence to prove that the accident had been caused by *une erreur humaine*?

The Prime Minister: He is there to do what he is supposed to do Mr Speaker, Sir. So, if he goes and help with the Police. The Police was there, it is not just him who was there. They were all....

(Interruptions)

No, no, that is not correct to say. I don't know where this information comes from. The reason why he is there is, in fact, to try to see how he can prevent all these major accidents that happen on our roads.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that the number of fatal accidents since 01 of January of this year to 31 of May is 65 with 80 victims, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has submitted any recommendation to remedy the situation?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we are working very thoroughly on these, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is precisely why he is being asked to advise on these matters because he is a man of huge experience and, of course, when he says a few things not everybody agrees with him. That is what we have to do unless we take the bull by the horns, we will sit with the same in hundred years time, that is why we are doing it.

BUS TERMINALS (URBAN) – SECURITY MEASURES

(No. B/535) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the major urban bus terminals, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of robberies and assaults committed thereat, over the past five years, indicating if –

- (a) consideration will be given for the implementation of new security measures thereat and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not, and
- (b) Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System will be installed thereat.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information requested.

In regard to part (a) of the question, it is to be noted that, in a number of cases reported, the parties involved are students and not criminals as such. Furthermore, CCTV cameras at some bus stations/terminals are leading to higher detection rates. Further, I have impressed on the Commissioner of Police that other means such as Police foot and mobile patrols be strictly and consistently adhered to.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the New Transportation Centre, the Victoria Bus Station and part of the Jules Koenig Bus Station are already provided with CCTV cameras. In its plan to extend the CCTV Surveillance to other urban and rural areas,

Police is implementing the project for installation of these cameras at the Place Margeot Bus Station and the remaining part of Jules Koenig Bus Station this year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Police is also working on a project to provide CCTV cameras in the region of Curepipe, and the project will be implemented in the next financial year. This project provides for the Jan Palach Bus Station to be equipped with CCTV cameras.

In the planning of Police, it is scheduled to cover the region of Vacoas with CCTV cameras by 2016.

Ms Anquetil: Being given that Police presence in populated areas like bus terminals will decrease antisocial behaviour, can the hon. Prime Minister state if consideration will be given to deploy *la Brigade des Mineurs* for students at key bus terminals during peak times?

The Prime Minister: We will give this proposal to the Commissioner of Police and let him have a look. I understand that *la Brigade des Mineurs* is present at some places, but I will tell him again.

Mr Obeegadoo: Being given that CCTV cameras are no substitute for immediate timely intervention and assistance by the Police, and the Prime Minister mentioned Curepipe, so he is aware of the problems at Jan Palach, will he consider suggesting to the Commissioner of Police that a physical presence of the Police at Jan Palach be urgently reinforced?

The Prime Minister: I understand that they are supposed to be there, but I will say it again to him, Mr Speaker, Sir.

FACEBOOK - MISS K. B – COMMENTS

(No. B/536 Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to one Miss K. B. who was arrested, in or about July 2012, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the charges, if any, preferred against her, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 30 July 2012, one Mr A. R. H. made a statement to the Central CID that comments of racist connotation against one community had been posted on the Facebook. He averred that the name of Miss K. B. appeared as the author of the comments.

The Police started an enquiry into the matter and on 01 August 2012, Miss K. B. was arrested on a provisional charge of “*Access to a computer system with intent to commit an offence, to wit: stirring up racial hatred*”. She appeared before the District Court of Port Louis on the same day. She was remanded to the Police cell up to 08 August 2012.

In the meantime, on 06 August 2012, Miss K. B. re-appeared before the District Court of Port Louis and was bailed out after furnishing a surety of Rs25,000 and entering into a recognizance of Rs75,000.

During the course of the inquiry, Police have recorded statements from five persons. Also, three other cases linked to the comments made by Miss K. B. have been established by the Police, where six persons have been questioned and their statements recorded.

On 08 February 2013, all the four case files were forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

On 14 May 2013, the Director of Public Prosecutions advised prosecution against Miss K. B. for “*Using an information and communication service for the transmission of messages likely to compromise public order*” in breach of section 46(b)(iii) of the Information and Communication Technologies Act, before the Intermediate Court.

On 21 June 2013, the main case against Miss K. B. was lodged before the Intermediate Court.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have stated before in this House, Government will not tolerate any act of incitement to racial hatred which may jeopardise the multicultural diversity and social harmony through the media, including social networks. The law will be strictly applied to any person, whoever that person may be, who attempts to harm our social fabric.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole country was utterly shocked by the statement made by Miss K. B., almost a year now. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister,

why in such a serious matter was Miss K. B. not being charged for outrage against public and religious morality?

The Prime Minister: It is not for me to decide, Mr Speaker, Sir, which charge to put.

Mr Speaker: It is not within the competence of the hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Let me say something else; that is why I added the last bit I said. She is not the only one, there are other people who are doing this and they will be apprehended as well.

Mr Uteem: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that when it comes to Facebook, one of the major problems in investigation, is that there is no Mutual Assistance Treaty between Mauritius and the United States, and Facebook in the circumstances does not voluntarily disclose the name of the IP users who use this programme? So, if you do not get a confession, it is very difficult to prove an offence committed on Facebook. In the circumstances, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to look into the matter with the Attorney General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to have a treaty with the US, which would allow us to get information from Facebook?

The Prime Minister: This is generally the case with Facebook. It is not just Mauritius; many other countries have the same problem. India recently had the same problem; I think China as well, if I am not mistaken. They do not want to sign any memorandum - I think both the then Attorney General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have been involved in this – but they do say if there is something, they do act sometimes, I must say.

POLICE OFFICERS – COMPUTER LITERACY TRAINING

(No. B/537) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the computerisation of the Police Department, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if Computer Literacy Training is being or has been given to the Police Officers and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) duration thereof;
- (b) names of the service providers therefor;
- (c) number of Police Officers trained therefor, and

- (d) if all the Police Stations have been provided with the necessary equipment and with internet connection.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that computerisation in the Police Department started since 1992 with the Passport and Immigration Office followed by the Traffic Branch and the Crime Record Office. The overall objective of the Police is to ensure modernisation and efficiency through IT development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure an adequately IT literate workforce, a Police IT Unit was set up on 28 June 2000 and one of its objectives is to implement a continuous IT training programme at all levels of the Mauritius Police Force.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 2002 to 20 June 2013, 8,807 Police Officers have been trained in computer awareness, IT proficiency course and short-term IT course. Of these, 5,178 Police Officers have followed five half-day sessions; 1,129 followed eight half-day sessions and 2,500 followed 2-months course and the service providers were the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius College of the Air and the IT Unit of the Police.

600 Police Officers are presently following the short-term IT course dispensed by the University of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that all the 72 Police Stations in Mauritius are provided with computers and printers. Police are implementing the Crime Occurrence Tracking System which aims at creating a data management system on offences and also at reducing paper work by the electronic recording of information, including declarations. The Phase I of the project, covering the Western and Metropolitan South Divisions, has been successfully implemented since November 2012 and is operational round the clock in 64 sites, including Police Stations, ADSU and CID. The Phase II of the project which covers the remaining Divisions will be implemented after the acquisition of the required hardware and network. The bidding document for same is being finalised.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Police Stations have internet connection through dial up and can access the central server based at the Headquarters at Line Barracks, Port Louis to have information such as criminal and driving licence details, missing persons or vehicle ownership

details from the main database hosted in the central server. Tendering procedures have been initiated for the provision of an unlimited broadband connection by the Police Tender Unit to upgrade the connectivity in the Police Stations.

Tenders are being launched, in fact, today and the closing date for the submission of the bids will be on 10 July 2013. The contract is then expected to be awarded by mid-August of this year.

Police Headquarters, including the main branches such as CCID, ADSU and the Traffic at Line Barracks, Port Louis, the Special Mobile Force at Vacoas, the National Coast Guard at Les Salines, the Helicopter Squadron as well as the Maritime Air Squadron have access to internet through Government Intranet System. The remaining branches and units, including Rodrigues Divisional Headquarters outside Government Intranet System perimeter access internet through ADSL.

As for Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that four out of the six Police Stations are connected to internet through ADSL. With respect to the remaining two Police Stations at Rivière Coco and Grande Montagne, no internet facilities could be provided in the absence of internet infrastructure.

I am further informed that the National Coast Guard Post in Agalega has a set of computer without internet connection and one set of computer for use by the Police Station has been shipped to Agalega on 24 June of this year.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned, among others, the electronic recording and this is the reason for me to put that question, because Police Officers face a lot of difficulties to record by electronic ways. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will use his good offices to see with the Commissioner of Police whether the Police Officers do not need a better training, because I have personally witnessed that for six lines one Police Officer can take up to one hour to record it electronically?

The Prime Minister: I will have to say that to the Commissioner of Police - because I gave the number of those who are trained - whether we have to look at what kind of training they are getting.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the equipment that are made available to Police Officers, be it computers and printers, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that in some Police Stations, by times one ink cartridge is being used for, at least, two printers? One Officer takes the cartridge, puts it on the printer, goes back and so on? This is also what I have personally witnessed in Police Stations. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it that such situations are avoided regarding consumables in Police Stations, because it hinders the work of the Police Officers?

The Prime Minister: We have a long system of having all these. We've heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister said about procurement. Even if you have to buy a pencil, you have to go through the system, unfortunately. This is why I would like to change the system, if I could.

Mr Ganoo: I have heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that about 8,000 Police Officers have undergone computer literacy training. This should represent about 80% of the total Police Force. Can the hon. Prime Minister, therefore, liaise with the Commissioner of Police to see to it that statements given by witnesses or accused parties are no longer taken in handwriting so that this might help Counsel, our Courts of Law and in fact the Force itself?

The Prime Minister: That is a good suggestion. I have also made that suggestion. I think he is working on this.

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that we have got very competent and computer literate Police Officers as just mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister, so would he consider to allow these persons to monitor the speed cameras which have been installed all over the island instead of giving it to the private individuals?

Mr Speaker: What is this question?

(Interruptions)

Yes, next question! Hon. Uteem!

AIR MAURITIUS LTD - FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(No. B/538) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will state -

(a) the amount of;

(i) money, if any, which it owes to Government, and

(ii) its debt guaranteed by Government, and

(b) if the Government proposes to provide additional financial support thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ B/181 at the Sitting of 29 May 2012, I pointed out that Air Mauritius Ltd. is a company listed on the Stock Exchange and any disclosure of information regarding its financial affairs, that is, beyond disclosures required by law to be made in its Annual Report, may affect the price of its shares and the shareholder's value. It would, therefore, not be appropriate for me to give the information requested by the hon. Member.

However, as I had stated in my reply to PQ B/181, Air Mauritius has not obtained any loan from Government. It has only benefitted from bank guarantees from Government and it has always met its obligations.

Mr Uteem: I heard what the hon. Prime Minister has said. What the question relates to is the existing exposure of Government on financing and guarantees given for the purchase of airlines, etc. This will not affect the price of shares of Air Mauritius Ltd because it is already a known fact what the debt of Air Mauritius Ltd is. What we want to hear is: what is the exposure of taxpayer in Mauritius on the exposure taken by Government on Air Mauritius Ltd.?

The Prime Minister: This is sensitive information, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it bargains for the sum that they want to spend on aircrafts, I myself know this for sure. So, that is why we do not disclose it.

Mr Uteem: In relation to part (b), I understand that the hon. Prime Minister does not want to give any information which will be price sensitive but may I know from him whether the Government is committed to support Air Mauritius Ltd. whenever it goes into financial difficulties?

The Prime Minister: I am hoping it will not go into financial difficulties, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is our hope and that is why we are looking for strategic partners as well.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in the given circumstances, Government would be ready to guarantee loans to Air Mauritius Ltd. for the purchase of new aircrafts?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that they are in the business of purchasing new aircrafts. They are looking at it but they are not in the business because we are in the process of evaluating the strategic partnership that Air Mauritius Ltd. is keen on and, I think, it should look at. That is why we want to do that as a first step and then we will see.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

CIVIL SERVICE - HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS – CONTRACT

(No. B/539) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the high ranking officials on contract, he will state if Government will consider posting on the website –

- (a) their respective terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (b) the number of boards on which they are members.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the terms and conditions of appointment of contract officers are generally set in accordance with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau.

As a matter of fact, paragraph 13.5 of the 2013 PRB Report provides, *inter alia*, that the conditions of service of employees on contract employment, save for leave, travelling and car benefits, should be in line with what obtains in the Civil Service.

Furthermore, the PRB has also recommended that the salary of officers appointed on contract against established posts should normally be the salary attached to the established post.

There are also specific recommendations which have been made by the PRB regarding leave, travelling and car benefits as well as gratuity, loan facilities applicable to contract officers.

The PRB Report is already available on the Government Web Portal and therefore the information pertaining to contract officers is accessible to the whole public.

Likewise, information regarding membership of statutory boards and committees and company boards is also already in the public domain, given that the profile of all board directors is normally disclosed in the annual reports of these organisations, as required by the Code of Corporate Governance. Their annual reports are also published on the websites of these entities.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of information pertaining to contract officers posted on the Government Web Portal does not arise.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is aware that recently the Financial Secretary has posted on the website of the Ministry of Finance his salary, all his perks, his fringe benefits and all the boards where he sits and all the revenue that he gets from Government.

For the sake of transparency, I personally feel that this is a good move that the Financial Secretary has made and this should be extended to all officers who are being employed on contract on the same terms as the Financial Secretary.

The Prime Minister: I have already answered the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/542, B/544 and B/546 have been withdrawn. Questions addressed to Ministers!

BEST CONSTRUCTION LTD. – CONTRACT

(No. B/551) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction projects awarded to Best Construction Ltd., since 2005 to date, he will state the number thereof, indicating the respective contractual value thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being compiled and will be tabled.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, as this contractor is enjoying a total of about Rs400 m. contract, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House how many contracts have not been completed as per the contractual time and the amount paid in terms of additional works?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that the information is being compiled because the question asked is for not one or two but eight years. That is why I will take a bit of time to compile and it will be laid on the Table and then the hon. Member can ask me any number of questions.

Dr. Sorefan: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, recently there has been flooding. May we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how many emergency procurements have been awarded to this contractor after the recent flooding and the total amount paid to the contractor?

Mr Bachoo: As I have just mentioned, the information is being compiled but it is a fact that there were emergency situations in our country. There had been floods on two occasions and according to the emergency situation, we have given works to the District Contractors, whoever was in the District but the rate was the one which had been established by the CPB.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will get to the question just put by my colleague. What we want to know is after the floods of 30 March, how many contracts have been awarded to that same contractor on an emergency basis?

Mr Bachoo: Being given that the contractor was responsible for four or five Constituencies, above twenty-five contracts were awarded. I do not have it exactly. They are working on it. In any non-classified road, wherever the need was felt, it was the non-classified road contractors who were given the contracts. Particularly this contractor was given too much of work because he was responsible for Constituency Nos. 5, 6 and particularly 7 where almost six to seven big contracts were given to him under emergency. But the rates were the ones which were worked out by the CPB.

Dr. Sorefan: I will just add 5, 6, 7 and 9.

Mr Bachoo: For No. 9, being given that this year there has not been too much of havoc caused by flood there were two bridges which...

(Interruptions)

But they fall under the classified road and it was through the RDA contractors and not this non-classified road contractor.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister in relation to the allocation of these emergency contracts after the flooding, what was the procurement method used and how many contractors were awarded the contracts?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, after the big flood which occurred, there was an emergency meeting which was held and it was decided that for non-classified roads all the contractors who are already approved by the Central Procurement Board be given the work but the rate had been determined by the Central Procurement Board and the contractors were also those appointed by the Central Procurement Board, except in one or two cases where the existing contractor who was appointed by the Central Procurement Board did not turn up on that day, that is, one day after the emergency. Then, the Committee took the decision to hand it over to the next contractor who is also on the list of the Central Procurement Board. Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as emergency is concerned, the work can be entrusted to any contractor but we have not done that. We have preferably gone to the District Contractors appointed by the Central Procurement Board and the rate also was determined by the Central Procurement Board and not by my Ministry.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister did not answer what my colleague, hon. Lesjongard, asked about the number of contracts that have been awarded to this particular contractor on emergency procedures after the flooding of 30 March.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the exact number; it must have been above 25. I can calculate it. In Constituency No. 7, we have given about six to seven contracts and in Constituency No.6, we have given three contracts. In this way, in different places, contracts have been awarded. I do not have the exact number and I am going to submit it. I got a question and I have to answer for eight years. It is not a child's play. I have to give you because whatever information you asked, I never shirk from my responsibility, I submit, but that will take me a few days time.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House on what frequency he meets these contractors and in presence of whom?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, the responsibility of the District Contractor that looks after non-classified roads befalls under the NDU. But the hon. Member who was himself a Member of this Government knows. When the need is felt, on the request of the PPS, I called them in the

presence of the PPS, the Permanent Secretary and the Engineers. We have to hire and fire them at times when there is late delivery of works or when they do not do their works properly.

(Interruptions)

It is my duty because if I do not do it, Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody else will do it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Bachoo: But these works are always done in the presence of the PPS, the Project Manager, the Deputy Project Manager and the Engineers of my Ministry. We monitor and we also hold meetings almost once a month and when the need is felt, the contractor is called. There is also a case where one contractor was suspended for not doing his job well.

Mr Gungah: Mr Speaker, Sir, in a reply to PQ B/402 of 28 May, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister informed the House that the contract for the upgrading of Belin football ground at Goodlands was awarded to Best Construction Ltd. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether the contractor has got the necessary know-how and expertise to carry out such jobs because nearly one year has gone and the works are still at the initial stage?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member comes with a specific question, I will answer. But I am aware of that situation at Belin football ground. There was problem of access on that and then, we have to wait because of the bad weather ...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish!

Mr Speaker: Do not interrupt!

Mr Bachoo: I am talking from memory, whatever I know. If the hon. Member has asked me a question, the intention is to get an answer from this.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes, answer!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, then, we had a problem with the sugar estate. Secondly, those who were participating in the Maha Shivratee festival wrote a letter because they would use that playground. Thirdly, there were amendments to be made on the plan. Fourthly, there were requests made by the inhabitants of the region to put cross drains. All these things had to be done and there had been delays. I do not have all the details with me, but I am telling you from memory. There is a problem on that side and I am looking into it.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is the criteria used to choose the District Contractor and what action is being taken to ensure that one District Contractor is not overloaded with work and that the work is equally distributed to all other contractors?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to answer on behalf of the Central Procurement Board. That is their responsibility.

Mr Speaker: Yes, you have the right to. So, I think this question has been sufficiently aired. Next question hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

RAMPHUL LTD. – EX-EMPLOYEES - COMPENSATION

(No. B/552) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Attorney General whether, in regard to the ex-gratia payment made by Ramphul Ltd. to his ex-employees, he will state the terms of the agreement between Ramphul Ltd. and Government in relation thereto, indicating the -

- (a) engagement taken *vis-à-vis* the sugar camp dwellers, ex-employees of Ramphul Ltd.,
and
- (b) measures taken by Ramphul Ltd. to implement the decisions agreed upon during the negotiations.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker Sir, six sugar entities including Ramphul Ltd which are not members of the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) and which do not fall under the purview of the Sugar Industry Efficiency (SIE) Act wanted to terminate the employment of their

212 workers following Reform in the EU Sugar regime and the drastic cut in the price of sugar by 36%. Under the then legislation, these workers would have been entitled to a compensation of ¼ month salary per year of service.

In 2011, Government intervened on humanitarian grounds and through difficult and protracted negotiations agreed with these sugar entities to the payment of a cash compensation equivalent to 1.5 months salary per year of service. Towards this effect, Government agreed to contribute 50% of the cash compensation to the tune of some Rs23 m. Subsequently, Ramphul Ltd on 17 May 2011, implemented the Early Termination Contract for 67 beneficiaries who were paid a total cash compensation amounting to some Rs15,479,000, that is, an average of Rs231,000 per employee compared to Rs38,500 that they would have received without Government intervention.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that there are presently 12 camp dwellers at Ramphul Ltd out of which seven opted for the Early Termination Contract (ETC) in 2011 whereas the remaining five dwellers are squatting. Ramphul Ltd took an engagement to allow the existing sugar camp dwellers, to continue to occupy their camps till they find an alternative house. Ramphul Ltd is keen to finding a solution for these camp dwellers, albeit that there is no onus on Ramphul Ltd to allocate land to the dwellers and there is no agreement in that regard.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been informed by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority(MCIA), that following a meeting held by the MCIA and Ramphul Ltd, and also, a meeting held yesterday in the presence of hon. Alan Ganoo, Leader of the Opposition and MP of the Constituency, the following were agreed upon -

- (i) the ex-employees will continue to occupy the camps until a solution is found;
- (ii) some five perches of land will be identified by Ramphul Ltd to be sold at a reasonable price to the occupiers;
- (iii) Ramphul Ltd will arrange for long-term loan facilities with minimum monthly repayment and a minimum initial deposit, and also

(iv) they are agreeable to extend the same facilities to the five squatters.

The MCIA is closely monitoring the matter.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, I raised the issue regarding the workers who are still occupying the sugar camps and I understand what the hon. Minister replied. But still my concern is whether a Ministerial Committee was set up to assist not only compensations, but also housing problems of the sugar camp dwellers, and if so, what steps have been taken to achieve this agreement?

Mr Faugoo: Honestly, Mr Speaker Sir, there is no agreement between Ramphul Ltd and the occupiers on the issue of houses or land. Presently, as I said yesterday, there was only a meeting between Ramphul Ltd where the hon. Leader of the Opposition was present. They are willing to sell five perches of land to each of the occupiers and this is the proposition made by Ramphul Ltd. But, there is no agreement on the issue of land or houses, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to recall the hon. Minister that he made this statement on 22 June 2011 during the cash payment for the termination of employment at Ramphul Ltd, and I quote -

“Ena enn comité ministériel de cinq ministres qui fine réuni pour guette pas ziste coté compensation mais aussi le problème du logement de quelques travailleurs”.

Is the hon. Minister now saying in light of what he just said that this statement is not correct?

Mr Faugoo: I have never said that this statement is not correct, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I am saying is that there was a Ministerial Committee which was looking on the issue of houses and this is where we have asked the MCIA to liaise with Ramphul Ltd to find a solution.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I raised that question regarding *logement* of camp dwellers some two years back, having seen the conditions in which they are living right now. Can the hon. Minister say whether he can negotiate with Ramphul Ltd and try to see whether instead of selling land to these people they can benefit, in spite, of the fact that Ramphul Ltd is outside the MSPA, he can give a sort of land compensation same as has been given for VRS and now ERS?

Mr Faugoo: I have spoken to Ramphul Ltd and they are not willing to give any land to these sugar camp dwellers for the simple reason that they are not benefiting from anything under the SIE Act. Because those estates which have been given land to ex-employees, who have opted for VRS or ERS or Blueprint, Mr Speaker, Sir, they are entitled for conversion where they do not pay any tax. If Ramphul Ltd gives land to 12 of the dwellers out of which five are illegal - they are squatting - it will open the door to 212 workers whose contracts have been terminated, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Minister, if in case the workers agree to purchase the land and to accept the proposals which have been made by their former employer, is it possible for the Ministry to contribute to help these 12 families who have been living on this camp for so many years - some of them for 30 to 40 years - and who have been allowed by Ramphul Ltd. to stay there? I don't think they are squatters because they have been allowed to stay pending they find alternative accommodation, but can the Ministry source out funds either from the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment or somewhere else to help these families in case they agree to purchase the land and to support them in the acquisition of their plot of land?

Mr Faugoo: We are willing to help, Mr Speaker, Sir, but help to the extent that we can. We are negotiating with Ramphul Ltd. Ramphul Ltd. is not under any obligation to give land to these dwellers. We have given 50% of the compensation; Government has contributed 50% of the cash compensation which I said earlier. These dwellers - those who were ex-employees who opted for early termination of contract - were compensated in the tune of approximately Rs235,000 a year ago. They should also..

(Interruptions)

I am seven of them who are in occupation, they should also make an effort. They cannot ask, nothing is given free, Mr Speaker, Sir. They should also make an effort. Government has gone a long way to help them, as I said, by contributing 50%, but they have to make an effort also.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, not all received the compensation of Rs200,000, some have received a compensation of Rs49,000 only. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like

to know what was the term of reference of the Inter-Ministerial Committee particularly regarding housing problems of these workers?

Mr Faugoo: To look into the issue of housing and this is what exactly we did.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

No comment! Next question!

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - OLD CITÉ EDC - SURVEY

(No. B/553) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Old Cité EDC in Constituency No.14, he will state if a survey has been carried out to ascertain the conditions thereof and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in Constituency No. 14, there are 8 Cité EDC, namely Bel Ombre, Case Noyale, La Ferme, L'Embrasure, La Mivoie, Petit Bien, Surinam and Tamarin comprising 479 housing units.

In August 2012, my Ministry initiated a survey to assess the status of the 3113 housing units found on 59 EDC housing estates across the island, inclusive of those found in Constituency No. 14. This exercise was completed in October 2012.

Regarding the EDC housing units in Constituency No. 14, it has been found that -

- (a) 92 original housing units have been removed and replaced by new concrete construction;
- (b) owners of 333 housing units have carried out concrete extension to their existing housing units;
- (c) 47 housing units are in fair condition, and
- (d) Seven housing units are in deplorable conditions, out of which three units are occupied and four units are unoccupied.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants of these housing estates are all owners of the housing units. Regarding the seven housing units which are in a deplorable state, the inhabitants have been informed of the various schemes available for upgrading of their housing units. These include -

- (a) housing loan scheme provided by the MHC Ltd. at low interest rate;
- (b) casting of Roof Slab Grants and/or purchase of building materials scheme at the NHDC;
- (c) assistance and subsidies from Government through the National Empowerment Foundation, and
- (d) assistance by the local authorities for the removal and carting away of asbestos wastes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the officers of my Ministry and representatives of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life have also informed the residents of the EDC houses on how to maintain their housing units.

Mr Obeegadoo: Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether the subsisting asbestos removal issues are being attended to by his Ministry, whether directly or through the NHDC, and when we will be assured that all asbestos risks have been eliminated altogether?

Dr. Kasenally: If he had listened to it, he would have known that I have said already that they would get assistance by the local authorities for removal and carting of asbestos waste and also representatives of my Ministry and those of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, I have informed them of the EDC houses, how to maintain their housing units.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, in light of what the hon. Minister has just said, many of those people living in these asbestos houses do not have a permit, do not have a title deed to be able to receive the loan. I, myself, have many cases that I have to handle and it is very difficult. So, can I ask the hon. Minister to help these people to obtain their title deed so that they can remove the asbestos houses?

Dr. Kasenally: I have already said that they are proprietors of these houses and all of them have been given their title deeds. I don't know where is the problem.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned facilities for casting of slabs. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this applies also to those who want to change their slabs because the slab, as it is now, is leaking?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, of course, they will be eligible for that. They have to make the application and there will have to be proper evaluation because some of these houses have got an inclined roof and it may not be possible or it may not be safe to cast a slab on a structure where there is asbestos. In these circumstances, they have got ways and means to pull it down as most of them have done. There are only three, out of 3,113 there are three or four, two or three houses which are in a deplorable state and they have been abandoned. Therefore, as I have said again, they have been made aware of all the facilities which Government is extending to them and they are no mean facilities. They are very substantial and this Government has gone a long way towards helping these poor people. It is our policy to come to these underprivileged people and we do it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know if I have understood the hon. Minister properly! Has the hon. Minister said that there are only three or four families living in asbestos houses in this Constituency? I have raised this question a few years back, before 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir, but unfortunately, I have again to ask the hon. Minister whether he does not think that in the case of occupiers of these asbestos houses although he has just provided us with the information that Government has provided many schemes to poor families for rebuilding or renovating their houses. But, may I ask him whether those living in these asbestos houses should not benefit from a particular scheme so that we can get rid once for all with all these old asbestos houses not only in Constituency No. 14, but all over the island because these houses were constructed years ago after Cyclone Carol and Alix, as far as I remember, Mr Speaker, Sir. Fortunately, some families have been able to get out of the trap and have been able to pull down their asbestos houses, but there are many families who still live in these houses with all the dangers that this represents. So, although the hon. Minister has told us that his Ministry has been providing advice as to how to live in these asbestos houses, but still, daily they face many dangers. Can I ask him whether Government should propose one particular scheme to eliminate all asbestos houses?

Mr Speaker: That is a speech, hon. Leader of the Opposition! Yes, hon. Minister, answer.

Dr. Kasenally: You know, listening to that discourse the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been giving me information which I have already provided and this Government, as I have said, is prepared to help these people, but they must come forward as well. *On peut amener le cheval auprès de l'abreuvoir mais on ne peut pas le forcer à boire.*

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, these people did come forward with many obstacles that they can't really obtain a decent house to live for two years. I am still looking into the matter with people in my own Constituency. With regard to Bel-Ombre - *Cité* EDC - these houses have been there over years and in one house today you have more than 17 people. According to my information, the Sugar Estate has offered 2,000 acres of land to the Government. Is that information correct?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not want to say that but, since Constituency No. 14 has been mentioned, I must say that three weeks ago, on a Saturday, we spent half a day going over the following places: Case Noyale, Karo Kalyptis, Grande Rivière Noire and la Comtesse de Lamarque. I went through that *Cité* EDC where some of these people are living in a deplorable state and we are moving them to another place. So, it is not proper or fair to say that we are not doing anything. What this Government is doing is unprecedented as far as housing is concerned.

(Interruptions)

But, we are not satisfied; we are going to do more. But given a chance, ...

(Interruptions)

Now, if you don't want to listen, I will sit down!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Therefore, this is a proper time to break. We break for one and half hours!

At 12.52 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.43 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

BUS TERMINALS - RENOVATION

(No. B/554) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bus terminals, he will state if consideration will be given for the renovation thereof, indicating if the services and facilities extended to the commuters thereof will be improved and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that once a traffic centre is completed and inaugurated, it is handed over to the Local Authorities. The renovation of the centre and the improvement of facilities offered, therefore, lie with the Local Authorities concerned.

However, I would like to add that the evolution of the bus transport system in recent years have resulted in a significant increase in both the number of buses and the other bus routes on which the buses are operating. This has resulted in major bus stations being now operating under conditions of overcapacity. Buses and passengers are cramped together and the space available is totally inadequate for the volume of activity generated by the Public Transport System. There is acute shortage of storage space for buses and bus stations. This is forcing buses to squeeze in the space available or parked in areas not normally intended for bus parking. The solution is to move the major bus stations to new locations where ample space will be available for designing modern bus stations.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that presently the disembarkation of passengers, including students est fait *de façon peu méthodique, mettant la vie des passagers en danger*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House if a safety audit will be carried out in all urban bus terminals to review the disembarkation procedures?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, regular monitoring exercises have been carried out. We have come to the conclusion that there are certain bus terminals where enlargement works are required, additional space is required. For example, the hon. Member has in mind the Curepipe bus terminal and I would like to inform her that the location of a new platform has already been identified within the bus station and, secondly, a plot of land has also been made available by the Municipality of Curepipe. We are looking into the possibility of transferring part of the buses which, during off-peak time or peak time also, can utilise those bus stations. They can be used as parking space for those buses. As far as the monitoring is concerned, that is done on a regular basis. But that is not enough, we need to move. For example, in Rose Hill, the same problem is faced by all the bus utilisers. Here also, we have been able to spot a plot of one acre of land. We hope that the needful will be done in the near future.

Ms Anquetil: M. le président, le *PPS* hon. Thierry Henry, le maire de la ville de Curepipe, les conseillers et moi-même avons effectué une visite hier à la gare de Curepipe. Etant donné que la ville de Curepipe est une ville pluvieuse, est-ce que l'honorable vice-Premier ministre peut informer la Chambre si des auvents pourraient être installés rapidement à la gare de Curepipe pour protéger les passagers de la pluie ?

Mr Bachoo : Mr Speaker, Sir, I would convey this request to the NDU to see to it that this work is completed.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has just informed us about the problem at *Place Margéot*, Rose Hill and has made mention of a plot of land. I raised this question here as well as hon. Nagalingum on many occasions and, in fact, land was made available at Ebène where there was a big project. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform us whether work has started by the relevant authority for the planning of this new bus terminal, not only to cater for the eastern regions, but also for the intra buses of Rose Hill at Place Dar-es-Salaam Square where it is very much congested?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, this has not been budgeted. The preliminary design has already been prepared. Now, we have to wait for the availability of funds to do the work because the project will be above Rs50 m.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned that he has identified one acre of land for Rose Hill. May we know whether it is the same plot of land which was identified some eight years back?

Mr Bachoo: There has been a slight change, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't have exactly the location plan with me, but if a substantive question is asked, I will submit the location plan as well.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether there is any project as regards the Bus Terminal at Victoria Square?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, again we have the same problem here also, unavailability of space. At one time, we had taken the decision to go towards Les Salines, but that area has already been earmarked for other projects. The other plot which was available was just by the side of Victoria Square, which has already been handed over, that is, the CWA compound.

We had the Sea Training school that has already been handed over to the Municipality of Port Louis to lodge the merchants.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is surely aware that there have been a number of serious accidents, including fatal accidents at Jan Palach, Curepipe. I understand he referred earlier to an audit. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us whether that audit has now been completed and will he be willing to communicate to the House the results of a Road Traffic Safety Unit, if any, having reference to Jan Palach, Curepipe?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been repeated road traffic assessments conducted, as far as I am aware. As far as the audit is concerned, I will have to look at it but, repeatedly, assessments have been carried out. There is a difference between assessments which they conduct at regular intervals and the audit. I will try to find out if we have got any traffic audit which has been carried out and if the information is available, I will circulate a copy.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, to the extent that the inhabitants of Curepipe, as hon. Anquetil seems to be confirming, are very weary of safety issues at Jan Palach; if there is no such audit, will he agree to urgently commission a full audit pertaining to safety of people using Jan Palach, Curepipe at the earliest.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not insensitive to this problem. Definitely, I am going to look into it and whatever actions need to be taken will be taken urgently.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Anquetil.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether, in regard to the relocation of Vacoas Bus Terminal where matters stand?

Mr Bachoo: As far as Vacoas is concerned, unfortunately there was an attempt to move the building of MPI itself but I don't think that is possible. There was an attempt; discussions were on, but it is very difficult for us to move the whole headquarter from that place to any other place. As at now, it is statu quo.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN- ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/555) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to alleged cases of sexual abuse on children, she will state, for the past year, if any case arising in an institution dealing with *les enfants inadaptés* has been reported to her Ministry and, if so, indicate the actions taken, if any, in relation thereto.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to alleged cases of sexual abuse on children arising in institutions dealing with *les enfants inadaptés* reported to my Ministry for the past year, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply to PNQ made on 16 April 2013.

I am also informed that an anonymous letter was received at my Ministry on the 07 May 2012 regarding alleged cases of sexual abuse on children attending an institution dealing with *les enfants inadaptés*. The letter was dated 11 October 2011.

A site visit was effected by officers of my Ministry at that institution on 04 June 2012 and the Officer-in-Charge thereof was met with. The latter informed that she did not receive any complaints neither from the children of her institution nor from any of their parents. She requested the CDU officers to meet the Director of the said institution.

Concurrently, the case was referred to the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* for a Police inquiry in July 2012.

In May 2013, following a request to the Police, my Ministry was informed that a copy of the anonymous letter had already been sent to them by the Prime Minister's office on 24 October 2011. They have enquired into the matter and, according to their report, all persons interviewed in that respect denied the allegations mentioned in the letter. The anonymous letter was also sent to the Ombudsperson for Children's Office by the Prime Minister's Office and, on 09 January 2012, the Ombudsperson for Children had informed the Prime Minister's Office that the allegations made were unfounded.

Upon receipt of the report, my Ministry requested the Police on 19 June 2013 for a further probing into the case.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that, following an open letter addressed to me in the newspaper '*Le Mauricien*' of 11 June 2013, a meeting was held on 20 June 2013 between officers of my Ministry and the author of the open letter along with an ex-member of the institution. The ex-member mentioned that an alleged case of sexual abuse that might have occurred in August 2009 on an ex-student of that institution. My Ministry has initiated actions for an inquiry to be carried out and the Police will also be requested to conduct an inquiry regarding same.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister as to why it takes so long to inquire into cases of sexual assault on children?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, normally whenever a case is made known to the Ministry, we inquire into the basics of the case as regards the victim side which is normally a social inquiry, but the case is also referred to the Police for other types of inquiries. Therefore, it pertains to the Police, I cannot say how long they take to make inquiry. It depends on the case, I suppose.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think there is need to have concerted action between the Police, the Ministry of Education also which is concerned, the Ministry of Gender Equality so that, in cases where children - especially handicapped children, *enfants inadaptés comme on dit*, are concerned. I think there need to be hasty decisions and outcome in the inquiry as quickly as possible.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is exactly what happens. In fact, when a case is referred to us, we, at the Ministry, refer it immediately to the Police and, at the same time, I believe that when a case is referred to the Ministry of Education, same is being done. Therefore, there is a referral of cases and sharing of information and, as I have said in my answer, when the letter was received at the Prime Minister's office, it was sent to the Police and the Ombudsperson for Children's office as well. So, there is concerted action according to the different cases that are submitted to us.

Mr Uteem: I heard the hon. Minister mention that, as soon as there is an allegation of sexual assault, her Ministry immediately refers the matter to the Police. May I know from the hon. Minister how many cases have been referred to the Police by her Ministry over the past two years and how many complaints she has received of a sexual nature?

Mrs Martin: I would ask the hon. Member to come with a substantive question. I do not have these figures as regards the two years. I cannot supply it now.

Mr Obeegadoo: To go back to the point raised by hon. Hanoomanjee, is the Minister aware that, in the report of Magistrate Kwok into the MITD related affair, according to interpretation given to us by hon. Bunwaree, one of the recommendations was that Police must act promptly in such cases. Now, will the Minister tell us, as Minister in charge of Child Development and Family Welfare, whether, further to that report which she may have seen we haven't...

(Interruptions)

she has not either. Well, on the basis of Minister Bunwaree's communication, has she taken up the matter with the Prime Minister to try and get a copy of that report and with the Commissioner of Police so that indeed in such sensitive issues the Police act promptly as recommended by that report?

Mrs Martin: There has been an interministerial meeting headed by the Deputy Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

chaired by him. Decisions were taken regarding each and every recommendation that was made known and I assume that action is going to be taken accordingly.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we keep on hearing week after week cases of children being sexually abused in different institutions. May I ask the hon. Minister, as I did to the hon. Prime Minister last week or two weeks ago, as to whether Government will look at the problem *en amont* in the sense that, before parties are recruited to work with children, proper legislation is presented before the House urgently as in the case of other jurisdictions. For example, in Australia, there is a Working with *Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* which Act provides for procedures for checking the criminal record of people who carry out, or propose to carry out, child related work; to prohibit people who have been charged with or convicted of certain offences from carrying out child related work.

I have also a 2011 legislation. Another legislation of 2011 called the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*. This is an Act to provide for background checking and registration of people who work with vulnerable people and other purposes. I suggest to the Prime Minister and the hon. Minister that this is the trend in other countries. Legislation is being adopted to check people who propose to work with children and to screen their background. So may I ask the hon. Minister whether she will consider urgently the necessity of coming to this House with a legislation and introduce a Bill along the lines which I have been proposing, that is, to address this problem of employees who propose to work with children in order to check their criminal record.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, because I am also one to think that when you deal with children you have to be extremely careful. I must say that we have, in the Ministry, engaged into massive sensitisation of people, NGOs and institutions as well as organisations dealing with children, explaining to them what their responsibility is when they have to deal with children. I think because of the mass of sensitisation, now we have more reported cases which are an encouraging factor in a way, because people are now disclosing whenever sexual abuse or any sorts of abuse are perpetrated on children. This is a positive sign.

However, with regard to the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we have in the Ministry adopted now a new approach where institutions...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Minister. You see, the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is focused on proper legislation to screen potential people who are desirous to engage into activities with children. So, you answer the question as it has been put.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, that's what I am trying to explain, in fact...

Mr Speaker: This is not what you have been explaining.

Mrs Martin: I am trying to explain, Mr Speaker, Sir. If you would just allow me, just a few sentences more. I wanted to explain to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that, in fact, we have started asking questions to the institutions to which we are giving children and requiring them to give us a list of the people working with them and also the different certificates of character that they should be possessing; but the problem remains that with private institutions, we cannot intervene, and if they don't want to give it to us, we cannot force them to give it to us.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, it appears you have not understood the question. It is about legal laws which empower your Ministry, your office of the Ministry or any institution to screen potential candidates who wish to work with children.

Mrs Martin: It is a valuable suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, and probably we can examine the possibility.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking about *les enfants inadaptés* who are in an institution and we have the Minister who is responsible for the protection of children. This issue first came to light in June 2012; we are more than a year after. We have learnt from the Minister that Police have interviewed X, Y and Z, they all deny. Can I ask the hon. Minister, what protection has been given to the alleged victim in the course of the enquiry, be it at the Police level, be it at the Ombudsperson level and be it at her Ministry?

Mrs Martin: Given that the Police had said that the allegations were unfounded, based on their enquiry, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was no security that was deemed to be given.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether she can inform the House, since she has assumed duty as Minister, how many times she has met the Commissioner of Police or his senior officers to discuss issues concerning protection of children, whether she has

ever had any meeting with the Commissioner of Police, whether that issue has also been discussed with the Secretary for Home Affairs?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not met the Commissioner of Police as such, but we do have a working together committee which meets quite regularly with the representatives of the Police, we speak to them, we discuss with them. We also work with the *Brigade des Mineurs* very closely and whenever a case is reported, we report it to the Police directly.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister has just said that she agrees that the Police have to act as quickly as possible in this case. May I know from her Ministry which department has conducted the inquiry, when was that inquiry started and who are the people who have been involved in that inquiry?

Mrs Martin: Usually when a case is reported to us, Mr Speaker, Sir, as such a case, our officers go to the institution and try to conduct a social enquiry with focus to helping and supporting the victim. This is the side what we look at; but, concurrently, we refer the case to the Police for other types of inquiry and this is done around the same time when we start our inquiries.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have asked a very simple question: when did the inquiry start and who are the people who conducted that inquiry?

Mr Speaker: Which department?

Mrs Martin: I have already answered in my main answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I will repeat again. In fact, the CDU officers went to the institution on 04 June and met the officer in charge and, concurrently the case was referred to the Police for enquiry.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I heard the hon. Minister, in her main answer, saying that she has requested another inquiry some weeks back, that is, on 19 June, last week, I think after the question has been put. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she was relating to this case which came to her knowledge in 2011 and it is now that she has initiated another enquiry – after I think some two years for which case she has once again initiated an inquiry - and also who are those persons who are going to conduct this inquiry? Which personnel does she have to inquire with handicapped children, because going only with the persons concerned deny, but what about the children and who will go to deal with the children? What are their qualifications?

Mrs Martin: I have explained in my main answer also that we had, in fact, an anonymous letter which was sent to us, we did the inquiry and we referred to the Police. In light of that new article that was published in '*Le Mauricien*', we asked the Police to further inquire again, because the article was made known on 11 June 2013. And that is why despite receipt of the report of the Police that following the first inquiry in 2011, the allegations were unfounded, because of this article and subsequent information that we received, we asked them to probe further.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, *c'est un scandale de voir avec quelle légèreté la ministre est en train d'aborder ces questions.*

(Interruptions)

Are we not back again to the same thing as was done for *Foyer Namasté* when the Minister came and said that the allegations were unfounded and, finally, we saw that the allegations were not unfounded? Doesn't the hon. Minister think that she needs to go deeper into the matter and give some protection to that child, even if she is saying that the allegations are unfounded?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must make it clear to the hon. Member and she is not understanding, because she does not want to understand.

(Interruptions)

I have to tell her, because she really does not want to listen to me.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mrs Martin: Let me put it clear, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the allegation was put to us in 2011, we conducted an inquiry and then the Police conducted an inquiry. The Ombudsperson had conducted an

inquiry also. The Police conducted an inquiry and both organisations said that there was nothing and it was unfounded. It is on the basis of these findings that I am saying that the allegations made were unfounded. However, as she has mentioned in the case of *Foyer Namasté*, it is the same thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. Whenever a child starts speaking and a child starts making allegations, we immediately take him under our wing and we immediately follow the procedures. What we did was, at the minute the child started speaking of alleged sexual abuse, even a year later, we, in fact, made the child do a statement.

(Interruptions)

It is not my fault if the Police do not find out anything. I am not responsible for Police enquiries.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there is an increasing number of child abuses, of sexual abuse on children, may I ask the hon. Minister when does she finally propose to come with a full-fledged children's Bill with tougher penalties with regard to sexual abuse on children? When does she propose to come with that Bill to the House, because consultations on the issue began years ago?

Mrs Martin: I do agree with the hon. Member. The consultations began a few years ago, but since it is a large Bill, it requires the assent and the concurrence of many other Ministries. This is the step where we have reached now. We have had workshops with all the stakeholders and now the different Ministries and Institutions are required to give their views on this Bill. As soon as this is given, it will go back to the State Law Office and be presented subsequently in the House.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what has happened to the drop-in centre at Grande Rivière for sexually abused children? That centre was ready since 2011. What has happened? Why is it still dormant? There are so many children who are sexually abused, why is it dormant?

Mr Speaker: Not too many questions at the same time!

Mrs Martin: It is not pertaining to the question. Let the hon. Member come with a substantive question and I will come back to it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, next question!

POINTE CANON, MAHEBOURG - CHILD CREATIVITY CENTRE

(No. B/556) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the creativity centres operating under the aegis of her Ministry or under that of the National Children's Council, she will state the number thereof, indicating, in each case, the -

- (a) number of staff posted thereat, and
- (b) opening hours thereof.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is only one Child Creativity Centre which is situated at Pointe Canon Mahebourg. It was set up by the Ministry in September 2000 and made operational in August 2001. Since November 2002, the management of the Centre has been entrusted to the National Children's Council.

The Number of staff posted thereat as at date is 11. The opening hours of the Mahebourg Child Creativity Centre during weekdays are from 8.45hrs to 16hrs. The Centre is also open during week-ends upon request of NGOs and other public or private organisations dealing with children. The Centre is also made available for the running of Residential Camping Programmes for children from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. One Office Attendant is then on duty at the Centre.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister say why up to now there has been no decentralisation of creativity centres when we know fully well that there are so many community centres falling under the aegis of her Ministry which are not being used, I should say?

Mrs Martin: I can see that the hon. Member is not well informed because in fact...

(Interruptions)

... because in fact,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Martin: ... even though there is only one creativity centre, Mr Speaker, Sir, we use the social and community centres also to conduct activities for children. The women centres are also used to conduct the activities for children and those activities are done during weekends as well as during the school holidays.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is there a global plan of work which has been worked out to encourage creativity in children in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and will the Minister say whether during her numerous visits to other countries or even to India which has helped us in the past with *Bal Bhawan*, has she contacted all these countries to encourage creativity in Mauritius in children?

Mrs Martin: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the objective of creativity centres is being respected, that is, to create holistic creative development of the child conducive to his creative environment. In fact, children are being offered different creativity activities to be able to develop his social, intellectual, cultural, moral and physical development. This is what we do. More concretely, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can just take one of the last examples which we did for International Children's Day and that was done during the holidays of Easter where 600 children from 35 different regions participated in a National Artwork. The paintings were, in fact, displayed all round Port Louis.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister seems not to be aware that the shelter of Pointe aux Sables was originally meant to be a creativity centre. Therefore, the shelter was to be located therein on a temporary basis since 2006. In view of the fact that there is a lack of infrastructure for children in the region, will the hon. Minister state whether she proposes to

relocate the shelter, thus allowing the centre to be fully operational as a creativity centre for the children of the region?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I am aware and I asked the same question, but I have been informed that at the time when this creativity centre was converted into a shelter it was to cater for an emergency and since then, a few important modifications have been made and it is no longer conducive for a creativity centre.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are lots of contradictions in what the Minister is saying. Can I ask her whether she is aware that staff of the National Children's Council have undergone training? There are craft workers, staff in the dressmaking unit and they all have followed training courses with a view to encouraging creativity. Why is it then that these staff who had been trained with public funds are not now being used to encourage creativity in children and there is only one creativity centre? She has just mentioned it.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, the staff of the National Children's Council and the National Women's Council do several things but, there is a whole list of activities that the children do in the creativity centre and the social welfare centres, as I explained, during holidays. They are guided by the same officers who, in fact, assist the children in doing a lot of creative activities. I have the list and there are more than 20 different activities which I can table for the hon. Member to see if she does not know.

Mr Speaker: Let's go to the next question, hon. Uteem!

STC - PETROLEUM GAS - TENDER

(No. B/557) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the tender for the supply of liquefied petroleum gas for 2013/2014, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the State Trading Corporation is excluded from the application of the Public Procurement Act, by virtue of the Public Procurement (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2009, in respect of procurement of goods purchased for resale, including services incidental to the purchase or distribution of such goods.

Nevertheless, the State Trading Corporation is fully committed to implement sound procurement policies and practices, based on open and fair procedures. The procurement of goods and services is thus subject to an open bidding process which is advertised in the media.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that it is, with this spirit in mind, that it launched an open international tender on 08 March 2013 for the supply of 65,000 metric tonnes of Stenched Pressurized Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) mix for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

I am further informed that four offers have been received at the closing date on 19 April 2013. They are presently still being evaluated by the State Trading Corporation. As per the usual practice, the names of the bidders, the premiums and the demurrage rates proposed have been posted on the website of the State Trading Corporation.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the current premium per metric tonne being paid by the State Trading Corporation for LPG and what is that premium compared to the lowest bidder which has submitted its bid for this exercise?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, we actually have four bids, as I said in my main reply. The lowest bid is 98 dollars premium and 3000 dollars demurrage and the highest is 155 US dollars with 20000 dollars demurrage.

There has been an increase, actually, in the premium from last year to this year.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Bid Evaluation Committee has already completed its evaluation and submitted any recommendation to the Board of the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, the State Trading Corporation is not bound by the provisions of the Public Procurement Act. When a tender is launched by the State Trading Corporation (STC), actually it is tantamount to a process of open bidding. Once, the STC receives the different bids, it reserves itself the right to negotiate with the different suppliers who may be retained for that exercise. This is based on a certain number of factors, including the credentials of the supplier, the capacity to supply at the required standard for the whole duration of the period etc. Up to now, the evaluation has not been completed

Mr Uteem: My question was very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir. I asked whether there was a Bid Evaluation Committee and whether it has looked at the three bids and made any recommendations?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have thought that I have replied by saying that the evaluation process has not been completed. There is an Evaluation Committee which has examined the different bids and which has requested from two potential suppliers to come up with further information. One of them has and the Evaluation Committee has not yet met with the second retained supplier.

Mr Uteem: The supply of LPG is supposed - according to the tender posted on the website of STC - to be for the period starting 01 July 2013, that is, in ten days' time. So, may I know from the hon. Minister if this tender is not awarded before 01 July 2013, whether there would be any shortage of LPG in Mauritius?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the House that there would be no shortage because the STC has taken the precaution of extending for three months the contract with the present supplier just to ensure that we do not run into a shortage.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Uteem: If I may ask one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Based on the information available on the website of the State Trading Corporation, there is a difference of Rs25 m. between the lowest bidder and the second lowest bidder and Rs50 m. between the lowest bidder and the third lowest bidder. So, may I ask the hon. Minister why is he taking so long to award the contract to the lowest bidder in this case?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, again as I have said in my main reply, the lowest bidder may not necessarily be the best supplier because we have to check a certain number of factors including its credentials, its capacity to supply at a given moment. I have to inform the House of something, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have limited capacity of storage of LPG. We have a consumption of around 65,000 or 67,000 tons per year, so much so that we receive stocks of LPG about once in every three weeks. So, the frequency of suppliers is extremely high and we have to ensure that the supplier who is chosen by the State Trading Corporation is in a capacity to supply at this frequency.

SERGE ALFRED SWIMMING POOL - MAINTENANCE

(No. B/558) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, he will state if he has been made aware of the bad state thereof and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto and, if so, when.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Serge Alfred swimming pool, although dating back to 1983, is fully operational. I agree that there are certain shortcomings that are due to normal wear and tear of a 30 year old infrastructure, but certainly the swimming pool is not in a bad state.

I repeat, the Serge Alfred swimming pool is fully operational and is being utilised to its maximum by athletes of the National Training Squad, those of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports (TFES), the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*, the general public, swimmers of the Police Force and those of other organisations. Competitions are also being held under the FINA rules and regulations and not later than early this month, several national records have been established.

With the strict hygienic conditions to be observed for a swimming pool and the normal wear and tear, maintenance and repair works are an ongoing exercise throughout the year. The problem recently encountered with the water temperature has already been addressed with the repairs effected to the boiler. Heating of the pool is being started earlier, that is, at midnight. However, we have to reckon with the fact that climatic conditions sometimes do not allow us to obtain the required temperature.

Repair works in the ladies cloakroom and repairs to the computerised scoreboard are ongoing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some of the maintenance and repair works would require temporary closing down of the swimming pool. With a view not to penalise users of swimming pools, it is the practice at the level of my Ministry to undertake major maintenance and repair works during the process of “*vidange*”, which is carried out during the period July to September every year.

The maintenance and repair works to be effected at Serge Alfred swimming pool during “*vidange*” have already been identified and will be started shortly.

Mr Quirin : M. le président, l'honorable ministre des sports est-il au courant qu'en mai dernier, un jeune nageur, élève d'une école privée de Quatre-Bornes, s'est blessé au pied dans le bassin à cause d'un carreau céramique abimé?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am fully aware of this situation. In fact, I was informed about this incident which occurred on Wednesday 15 May 2013 as a matter of utmost concern. I personally requested a report regarding this incident on the same day. I was made to understand by the officer-in-charge of the swimming pool that while waiting for the *vidange* due in July to effect necessary repair works, all the coaches and schools using the swimming pool were made aware of this issue and did ensure that users do not venture in this part of the pool. The coach present during this incident stated that all children were instructed not to jump in the middle of the lane where the broken tile was found. It is very unfortunate that a child, while playing, jumped on the broken tile in this specific part of the pool and hurt himself. As soon as the child reported this injury, first aid was given to him and a dressing applied by the coach to stop the bleeding. Thereafter, arrangement was immediately made for the child to be transferred to MediSave Clinic and the cost of medication and treatment amounting to Rs8,000 was met by the Sports Council. The Sports Medical Unit also followed up regarding his health.

Ms Anquetil: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre de la quantité de diesel utilisé par jour pour chauffer l'eau de la piscine et le montant des frais ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the boiler which is used for the heating of swimming pool during winter is operated from midnight to 8.00 a.m. in the morning daily. The amount of diesel used is approximately 400 to 500 litres per day amounting to approximately Rs22,000 per day as per the present diesel price.

Mr Fakeemeeah: As we are in the issue of swimming pool, I would like to ask the hon. Minister to look into the case of the swimming pool of Plaine Verte which may be out of the possibility to be warmed. Please look into it.

Mr Speaker: The question is specific about the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool.

Mr Fakeemeeah: But we are on the issue of swimming pool.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member can come with a substantive question for the Plaine Verte Swimming Pool.

Mr Quirin : M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire s'il est au courant que l'eau de la piscine n'est pas chauffée actuellement du fait que la chaudière ne fonctionne plus, avec pour conséquence, que les nageurs qui se préparent pour les grandes compétitions à venir sont pénalisés alors que la piscine du Pavillon n'est toujours pas opérationnelle ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the swimming pool of Pavillon has been handed over to my Ministry and it will be operational as from tomorrow.

Mr Speaker: The question is about Serge Alfred Swimming Pool.

Mr Ritoo: Regarding the issue that the water is not heated, in fact, it is the contrary. In fact, the water is being heated. There is no problem. We had some technical problems regarding one fuse which was defective, it has been changed and all the users are able to utilise the swimming pool to the maximum.

Ms Anquetil: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre si c'est une obligation de la Fédération Internationale de chauffer l'eau de la piscine pour les entraînements ?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, I am not going to allow this question. You must stick to the relevance of the question.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool at Beau Bassin, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he intends to pay a site visit there because one of the main problems affecting those who are going to the swimming pool - especially children and women - is the question of security. Tout l'environnement *of the swimming pool* laisse à désirer et il y a pas mal de travaux d'environnement à faire. There is even the problem of lighting regarding security purposes and those attending the swimming pool at night and after and now we are in winter. Can the hon. Minister see to it urgently that these problems be attended to?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I visit the swimming pool regularly and I can say that all the works identified have been taken on board. When we will be doing the *vidange*, which is

normally done in July to September, the swimming pool will be closed for two or three months, then we will do all the repairing works and all the items that have been noted.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, malgré l'assurance que nous a donné l'honorable ministre concernant l'eau qui est chauffée, je dois dire, d'après les informations que j'ai reçues, et qui confirment effectivement que depuis l'hiver 2012 des réparations sont effectuées sur cette chaudière. Mais peut-on savoir pourquoi le ministère ne considère pas la possibilité d'installer une nouvelle chaudière au lieu de procéder à des réparations *piecemeal* à longueur d'année, vu que la piscine est très utilisée ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I indicated in my answer that we are waiting for the *vidange* which will be effected very shortly. Then, we will come with all the works that I mentioned. Regarding the changing of the boiler, well, the boiler could cost us Rs2.5 m. while the works that have just been effected have cost us Rs825,000. So, I prefer to have this boiler repaired than going for Rs2.5 m. in changing the boiler itself, but we will do it at a later stage.

SPORTS - REGIONALISATION

(No. B/559) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the regionalisation of sports, he will state if there is any collaboration between his Ministry, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the local authorities for the promotion thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of regionalisation of sports is presently being reviewed and will be incorporated into the legislation which is equally being reviewed.

It is envisaged to give local authorities more responsibility for the organisation of sports within their geographical areas.

Currently, there is a tacit collaboration between my Ministry and the Local Authorities in the promotion of "*sports de masse*". A number of sports infrastructure has been constructed or upgraded by my Ministry and vested into local authorities for use and management. Similarly, various facilities belonging to the local authorities are used by my Ministry for organisation of

training, games and competitions at regional level, for example, *Jeux de l'Avenir*, *Jeux de l'Espoir*, Inter-college Games and for the running of *Écoles de Foot*.

The services of officers of the sports cadre, coaches and other facilitators from my Ministry are put at the disposal of all partners for the implementation of the concept and strategies of regionalisation and also for assisting in the holding of sporting activities organised by them.

My Ministry also provides assistance in terms of medals, shields and sports equipment to genuine regional clubs which are actively involved in the organisation and promotion of sports at regional level. In addition, the Regional Football Committees receive an annual grant from my Ministry for the promotion of football at regional level.

I am informed that the Local Authorities also sponsor regional committees and local clubs on request for the organisation of sports activities on a case to case basis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after the review of the sports legislation, it is envisaged to have a Memorandum of Understanding between my Ministry and the Local Authorities to have a clearer picture of the roles, responsibilities and funding of sports activities.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans ma question initiale, j'ai fait référence à la collaboration entre le ministère des Sports, le *Local Government* et les *Local Authorities*. De ce fait, le ministre peut-il nous dire si les *Regional Sports Coordinating Committees* - comme stipulé dans la section 3 du *Sports Act* - fonctionnent ou pas?

Mr Ritoo: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I stated that we are coming up with a reviewed regionalisation of sports and this will be incorporated in the legislation which is also being reviewed.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans un communiqué émis par le conseil des ministres en date du vendredi 21 juin 2013, mention est faite qu'il y aura un nouveau *Sports Bill*, comme nous l'a confirmé l'honorable ministre, et qui rendra, entre autres, la régionalisation du sport plus flexible dans son application. Le ministre peut-il nous préciser ses intentions, comment il va procéder à rendre plus flexible - en quelques mots - la régionalisation du sport?

Mr Speaker: No, no! You will have to wait for the Bill. This question is not allowed.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we have an idea from the hon. Minister as to when he will bring the Bill to Parliament?

Mr Ritoo: At the next sitting of the Assembly.

NEF – CASE WORKERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/560) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the case workers, he will state, for the period January 2013 to 15 June 2013, the number thereof recruited, indicating the -

- (a) date of advertisement therefor;
- (b) number of -
 - (i) applications received, and
 - (ii) applicants interviewed, indicating the date of the respective interview, and
- (c) names and addresses of the recruits.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) is a non-profit making company registered under the Companies Act.

As such, it is managed by an Independent Board of Directors that is also responsible for the overall implementation of the policies of my Ministry as regards poverty alleviation and economic empowerment of the vulnerable families in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to stress that the NEF being a private organisation, my Ministry is not responsible for the recruitment of staff by the Foundation, this being the sole prerogative of the Board of Directors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the NEF has proceeded with the recruitment of 19 case workers, registered family social worker in May this year, on a contract basis for a period of two years.

This recruitment exercise has been prompted by the re-organisation of the activities of the NEF in July last year to enable a better outreach and effective utilisation of resources, Mauritius has been divided into three specific zones.

Naturally, this strategy has necessitated a reinforcement of capacity at field level.

Furthermore, the recruitment of additional field staff is part of the recommendations made by the World Bank and the UNDP for a reduction of the ratio of Case Workers to vulnerable families.

I am further informed that the NEF has its own internal procedures for the recruitment of staff.

On vacancies arising, a list of prospective candidates is retrieved from a database known as the Empowerment Programme Interactive Platform (EPIP).

The EPIP System has been in operation since the year 2008. Candidates can register either online or by calling at the NEF Office or through NEF's hotline service.

In regard to the recruitment of the 19 Case Workers mentioned earlier, I am informed that in April 2013, a list of 75 candidates was drawn from the EPIP System for a pre-selection exercise to be conducted by the HR Department of the NEF.

34 candidates who responded to the qualification requirements of the post were shortlisted for an interview by the HR Committee of the NEF Board.

Four candidates did not turn up for the interview carried out on 22 and 23 April 2013.

I am informed that the 30 remaining candidates were assessed by the HR committee, following which 21 candidates were found suitable for employment in order of merit. Three candidates did not reply to the offer made to them. Accordingly, the next best candidates from the waiting list established by the HR committee was selected for employment.

The recommendations of HR committee were duly approved by the NEF Board at its meeting held on 08 May 2013.

I am tabling a list of the 19 recruits, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that those who have been recruited have received a contract for a period of two years. May I ask the hon. Minister whether those who were in post before this recruitment have seen their contracts renewed for a period of six months, while the new recruits have received a contract for two years?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NEF that a few of the Case Workers have had their contracts renewed for only six months, whereas for the others it is for two years, depending on their performance.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether those who have received a contract for six months because of their performance, have, in the past, received any warning or any appraisal of their performance, and whether these persons were informed of their performance?

Mr Dayal: Not exactly to my knowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, I am aware that they their contracts have been renewed for six months, with the possibility of renewal, depending on their performance.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned - if I got him right - that the contract was renewed for a period of six months because of their performance. I take it as poor performance. They have not received a contract of two years as new recruits. My question was: someone has evaluated these persons saying that they are not performing. I would like to know whether these officers were informed of their poor performance and how. Was appraisal of their work carried out? When were the officers informed of their performance?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the appraisal is being conducted by the Programme Managers and then, the Board inform accordingly.

Mrs Labelle: Is the hon. Minister aware that a complaint has been filed at the Ministry of Labour by one officer who felt aggrieved because he was never informed of his performance, only when the contract was renewed for a period of six months?

Mr Dayal: I am given to understand that such is the case.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I find a sort of a contradiction in what the hon. Minister is saying. For new recruits, their contract is for two years. We don't know anything about their performance. We don't know anything about their past, but for those who are in service and whose services we know, we are renewing only for six months. Should it not be the case where those who are already in service, their contracts are renewed for two years and those new recruits should be on probation for six months, then probably get a contract for employment?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, for those who are already serving, the contracts for most of them have been renewed for two years, but for few of them have been renewed only for six months depending on how they perform. For the new recruits, this has been the decision of the Board.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister for these people whose contract has been renewed for only six months, is it intended that after six months their employment contract will be terminated?

Mr Dayal: It all depends on how they perform.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the procedure for recruitment, the hon. Minister has stated that there is a database and so on, the names were retrieved, but may I know since when this database has been constituted?

Mr Dayal: In fact, I thank the hon. Member for putting this question. NEF operates within the confines of a Comprehensive Human Resource Manual which has been prepared by an external consultant, Mr Mike Gujhadur and which has been approved by the Board since November 2010.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Jugnauth!

(No. B/561) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the alleged case of sexual abuse on a minor student at the Hamilton College, she will state if her Ministry or any department/unit operating under the aegis thereof has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a case of sexual abuse on three minors, students at the Hamilton College, was reported at my Ministry on 24 May 2013. A social enquiry was initiated on the same day by officers of my Ministry who were accompanied by officers of the "*Brigade Pour La Protection Des Mineurs*".

On 30 May 2013, the matter has been referred to the Police for further criminal enquiry. On the same date, one minor was removed from parents' custody and placed at the shelter of my Ministry for security and safety reasons. She is being psychologically followed upon.

I am, also, apprised that on 11 June 2013 minor's parents have made an application to the District Magistrate of Grand Port District Court to have the minor back. This request is scheduled for hearing today, that is, on 25 June 2013.

As regards the two other minors they denied having been sexually abused and their statements were recorded by the Police on the 26 May 2013.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister whether any person from her Ministry has taken statement from the three minors altogether?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, the officers of my Ministry normally are not the ones who record statements, but they work together with the *Brigade des Mineurs* and normally it is the Police who takes the statement.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Minister who is responsible for child protection whether she had taken cognizance of the Child Protection Act, Section 12 concerning recording of statement which says clearly that –

“When there is reasonable ground - I read it for her benefit - to believe that the interest of a child so require a statement may in the presence of the Permanent Secretary be recorded from him in the absence or without the consent of his parents.”

Therefore, when a case is reported to her Ministry, there is a duty for officers of her Ministry, at least, to start the enquiry speedily and to take a statement. So, whether that has been done in accordance to section 12?

Mrs Martin: Actually, it has been done in accordance with the law in regards that officers of CDU work closely with the *Brigade des Mineurs*. When they went, for example, to the school for the social enquiry, the *Brigade des Mineurs* was with them and when the children were convened at CDU, Rose Belle for an interview or so, the CDU officers were there. When the statement was recorded for the Police, they assisted along with the Police being there recording the statement.

Mr Jugnauth: I insist, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, to an earlier question, the hon. Minister had said that the Police do its part and that she cannot answer for the Police. I am not talking about the Police; I am talking about her responsibility as Minister who is responsible for child protection. Has she acted according to what the law, not only allows her, but, in fact, makes her responsible to do when there is a case of alleged harm against a child? Let me also refer the hon. Minister to section 3 which talks about an enquiry that can be conducted in such a case.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what I have been trying to say. I have been saying it, Mr Speaker, Sir. The children were convened at the CDU of Rose Belle. The officers were there and they were interviewed. Of course, what they have said has been written down, but there is also a formal statement which is taken by the Police and the Police have their own way of recording statements, but they are also assisted by a CDU officer.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know when her officers have taken a statement from the three minors at Rose Belle whether the Permanent Secretary was present?

Mrs Martin: In fact, the Permanent Secretary is not present as such, but she can be represented by any certified officer of the CDU.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister when she states that her officers were there with the children, in front of the Police, may I ask her what is the role of the officer then; just to chaperone those students in the presence of the Police or do they have a specific role to carry out?

Mrs Martin: The role of the officer is to give assistance as appropriate, that is, if the child is in need of assistance to be able to prepare that child for the statement, this is done by the CDU officers. If the child needs any form of support, it is provided. If ever the child is in need

to undergo any sort of procedure, this is also assisted by the CDU officers. All the services as appropriate are provided to the children.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know then from the enquiry that has been conducted by her Ministry, what has been the outcome of that enquiry?

Mrs Martin: Like I have said in my main answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, one minor who has reported having been sexually abused was removed from parents' custody and placed at one of the shelters of my Ministry for security and safety reasons. She is also being psychologically followed upon. As for the two others, they also have been given a psychological support, but they denied having been sexually abused and their statements were also recorded.

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Minister aware of a video clip that has been circulated whereby it clearly shows the teacher - I won't describe what has happened, but with at least one minor, if she doesn't have it, I can provide a copy.

Mr Speaker: It is understood, yes.

Mrs Martin: I do not have it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Any more questions? Yes!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this case is, of course, only the last of a spate of cases of alleged abuse against students. Will the hon. Minister consider raising immediately with the Prime Minister and the Commissioner of Police the need for a proper Child Abuse Investigation Unit within the Police and an agreed protocol as between her Ministry and the Police as to the role and responsibility of each in respect of such an enquiry. This is the case in the UK.

Mrs Martin: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the Working-Together Committee, we have been trying to find ways of collaborating with the Police and some hurdles have been identified. We are trying to overcome them. However, the Police also has departments such as the *Brigade des Mineurs* which specifically deals with minors but this suggestion of the hon. Member can be entertained. I can try and see in what way we can implement that.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the delay between an examination of victims in this case by her officers and referral to the Police and a medical examination at the Police level?

Mrs Martin: I suppose the delay depends on the case. As for this one, the case was reported by my Ministry on the 24th; on the same day the *Brigade des Mineurs* was made aware

of it. On 30 May, it was referred to the Police for criminal enquiry. As for the medical examination, according to the information I have, all the three minors were clinically examined on 25 May and one of the minors was examined by Police Medical Officer on the 26th; the other two minors refused Police medical examination.

Mr Jugnauth: Has a statement been taken by the officers of the Ministry from Mr A., the teacher of Hamilton College?

Mrs Martin: This is another confusion, Mr Speaker, Sir. In cases of child abuse, my Ministry is only entitled to deal with children matters. And the CDU, specifically the Child Development Unit, deals with children. Therefore, caring for the aggressor is not our mandate. What we do, inter alia, is: we take care of the children, assist them as appropriate and try to see in what way we can prepare them for the coming Trial if any.

Mr Jugnauth: May I remind the Minister again, probably she has not gone to the Child Protection Act. Section 3 says clearly that the Permanent Secretary can summon any person, with or without the child, to give evidence for the purpose of enquiring into the matter. But anyway can I ask the Minister whether she is aware that, apart from that minor where there is investigation by the Police, there is another minor whereby the parent has written a letter to say that she is aware that the child had an affair with the teacher, but that she does not want the case to proceed, to go ahead. Is the Minister aware of that?

Mrs Martin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what I have said. There were three minors, one admitted having been sexually abused and two said they were not. I assume the hon. Member means one of the two.

Mr Jugnauth: But then, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask again whether the Minister is aware of her responsibility that, even if a parent says that he or she does not want to go ahead, there is a duty for the Ministry to enquire because we are concerned with child protection, not the protection of the parents.

Mrs Martin: Yes, definitely. This is why the case has been referred to the Police, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the case does not only concern one minor but the three minors.

Dr. S. Boolell: Considering, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it is a matter of medical emergency that victims be subjected to a medical examination towards recovery of forensic material, may I

ask the hon. Minister to look into the possibility that the Police doctors have an early access to the victims in any case rather than wait for a lot of evaluations?

Mrs Martin: In most cases, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is done as the hon. Member is saying. This is what we are trying to do as soon as we are aware and as soon as the victim is ready, we go for the medical examination.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, to take from what hon. Obeegadoo has just said and the reply given by the Minister, can I understand that the Minister is not prepared to give consideration to the proposal for the creation of a Child Investigation Unit and to device a proper protocol with the Police in cases of children who are sexually assaulted?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already answered this question.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister very often mentions the Working-Together Committee. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, in her next meeting, if ever there is a meeting, of the Working-Together Committee, she will consider bringing up the issue of a protocol in alleged cases of sexually abused children.

Mrs Martin: In the Working-Together Committee, there are about – I am speaking from memory and I'll ask the hon. Member to bear with me - fourteen to fifteen institutions which are represented. We have been trying during the past meetings to sign different memorandum of understandings and most of them have been signed. We are trying to finish memorandum with the Police. That is where we have hurdles and this is where we are trying to see in what way we can solve that. We are trying to do it as quickly as possible, but it does not depend only solely on the Ministry.

MITD –MINORS – SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/562) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the alleged case of sexual abuse at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, she will, for the benefit of the House, state if her Ministry or any department/unit operating under the

aegis thereof has carried out an inquiry in relation to minor V. A. and/or minor C. D., mentioned in the report of the psychologist.

Mrs Martin: I am informed that, in regard to the alleged case of sexual abuse at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, an enquiry was carried out in December 2011 by officers of my Ministry in relation to minor V. A. following a letter received from Mrs P. C. dated 28 November 2011.

As regards the report of the psychologist formerly employed by the MITD, I must point out that my Ministry has never been made aware of its contents prior to it being tabled on the 17 November 2012 at the National Assembly by the hon. Leader of Opposition.

In her report, mention is made of minors A. B. and C. D. Their identities have not been revealed to my Ministry and I am also apprised that the abbreviations refer to fictitious names hence an enquiry could not be carried out by the CDU officers based on this report.

I am informed that the Police investigation regarding the alleged case of sexual abuse is on-going, and if during Police investigation the identities of minors A. B. and C. D. are revealed, and are in need of protective and supportive services, my Ministry will assist as appropriate.

It is to be noted that, on 21 June 2013, the Police informed my Ministry that, as regards the other minor bearing initials C. D., mentioned in the Parliamentary Question, there are no indications as to his or her involvement in the case.

Mr Jugnauth: Then may I ask the hon. Minister who carried out the inquiry with regard to minor V. A. and what is the outcome of that inquiry?

Mrs Martin: The inquiry was carried out by officers of the CDU along with a Police officer of the *Brigade des Mineurs* and, as regards the outcome of the inquiry, we have convened the minor several times to the Ministry; at first, the minor did not want to come and the parents also did not let the child come. When the child came with her parents, they violently denied that she had been victim of any sexual abuse and, as the Fact Finding Committee revealed, nothing had happened. The child had not been victim of sexual abuse.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the Minister whether that child minor V. A. has been interviewed alone?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister said that she only came across that information when the hon. Leader of the Opposition table this report. From then on, may I know what action has been taken by the hon. Minister in order to try to ascertain, first, the identity of that minor and, second, to carry out an enquiry?

Mrs Martin: As I have indicated in my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, we were apprised that both names, A. B. and C. D. were fictitious names. As from there, the Police investigation informed my Ministry that, as regards the other minor bearing initials C. D, they have not been able to find him or her and there are no indications as to whether he or she has been involved in this case.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: May I know if then the psychologist has been called in order for her to give the necessary information with regard to what she has stated in her report, that the suspected paedophile wanted to go out with that girl and wanted to kiss her also?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, actually, I have been informed by one officer of my Ministry that they tried to call her just after the report had been tabled. They got in touch with her on the phone; she said she was going on holiday and that the officer should, in fact, contact the Director of the institution and she was not willing to give any statement.

EASTERN INSTITUTE OF INTEGRATED LEARNING & MANAGEMENT (INDIA) -

FAKE DEGREES – COURT JUDGEMENT

(No. B/563) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Eastern Institute of Integrated Learning & Management (EIILM) campus in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if the arrest of the Vice Chancellor and the Chairperson of the Eastern Institute of Integrated Learning & Management (EIILM) in India, to which the campus is affiliated, for the issue of fake degrees in India has any incidence on the courses held and the degrees delivered in Mauritius.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker Sir, I thank the hon. Member for giving me the opportunity to inform the House of the actions taken with regard to this case.

As soon as the reports concerning the arrest on 07 May 2013 of three high officials of Eastern Institute of Integrated Learning & Management of Sikkim was brought to my attention, I requested the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry to instruct the Tertiary Education Commission to obtain full details on this matter and to determine whether there have been any sanctions imposed on the institution by the relevant authorities in India and which could have an incidence on the local branch.

I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that it contacted the Indian High Commission in Mauritius and the Mauritius High Commission in India. The Mauritius High Commission has informed Tertiary Education Commission that the relevant authorities in India have to take actions mandatorily against a University if a court of law issues an order which may condemn the practices of the University.

It has also informed TEC that the High Court of Sikkim quashed the FIR, that is, the First Information Report on 04 June 2013. As per the judgement delivered by the High Court of Sikkim, the State Government of Sikkim is at liberty to take up any further investigation with regard to the offence and file any additional charge sheet in the event there are sufficient materials against the three officials. I am tabling a copy of the Court judgement of the High Court of Sikkim dated 04 June, 2013.

The Tertiary Education Commission has been requested to conduct a full and comprehensive audit at the Mauritius Branch of the University to verify all records of enrolment, continuous assessment and examinations process and the procedures to dispense diplomas and degrees. The Board of the TEC will ensure close follow-up of the developments at the level of the State of Sikkim through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and take actions as may be required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also requested my Permanent Secretary to instruct the Tertiary Education Commission -

- (1) to strengthen its quality assurance structure by setting up a Vigilance and Monitoring Unit to regularly monitor -
 - (i) Academic Delivery;
 - (ii) conduct of examinations and internal assessment;

- (iii) student support system, and
 - (iv) infrastructural facilities.
- (2) to carry out a full audit of all tertiary education institutions operating in Mauritius.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the Tertiary Education Commission has issued any *communiqué* following the fake degree scandal in India?

Dr. Jeetah: As I have replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no question of fake degree, at this stage. There was a matter in court and the judgement which I have laid on the Table of the Assembly, the FIR has been quashed by the court in India. So, the question does not arise.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not had the report yet. I wonder whether it has been tabled. Yes, please, table it! I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the seriousness of what occurred in India on 06 May? Is he aware that the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar and the Examination Controller of EIILM SIKKIM - *la maison mère* - were arrested, because the lady was found to have obtained a teaching job, based on a Master's in Education Certificate, delivered by EIILM SIKKIM, whereas after inquiry, it was found that, that university neither has any education Department nor any faculty for the subject? Is he aware?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I did mention, there was a matter in court and I also did say that the matter was quashed. I also said that, as per the judgement, they have reserved their right to look further into the matter if any evidence or whatever crops up, but the matter has been quashed. As far as I am concerned, I did request the Tertiary Education Commission to follow closely together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to this case.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister aware – again, according to the Indian press and I will table a copy of an article having appeared on 06 May in the SIKKIIM now newspaper to the effect that EIILM here, in SIKKIIM, has been under the Police scanner since September last year on charges similar to the latest one, its officers in Jorethang were subjected to a Police raid on 01 September 2012 and its officials arrested?

Dr. Jeetah: It may have been the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did say the matter went to court and it is only the court which actually decides whether somebody is guilty or innocent. So, as I

said, there is a court judgement and my Ministry, TEC has to go by the court judgement. I have requested the Tertiary Education Commission to follow this matter very closely.

Mr Fakeemeeah: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there been any specific enquiry carried out by his Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did reply earlier on that I did request my Permanent Secretary to instruct Tertiary Education Commission, which is the regulator in Mauritius to look into matter, to see whether there is any incidence. TEC has requested the Indian High Commission in Mauritius, as well as the Mauritius High Commission in India, to look into all this affair.

Mr Fakeemeeah: My worry, Mr Speaker, Sir, is our Mauritian students studying abroad. Can the hon. Minister look to it to set up an independent committee chaired by a Magistrate to look into the whole issue, especially in regard to Mauritian students who might get penalised by this problem in the future?

Dr. Jeetah: I am not aware of Mauritian students involved overseas. My concern is the branch here, whether there is an integrity of the system and the value of the certificates to the students who are being offered their degrees here. I can certainly look into whether there are Mauritian students in that institution in India, but I am not aware of any.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister wants us to believe that the case has been dismissed in a court of law in India. In fact, this is not the case when you read the judgement. A preliminary point of law was taken and in paragraph 12 it reads –

“However, it is made clear that the investigating agency is at liberty to take up further investigation with regard to the offence under FIR as connected cognition offence committed in the case of the same transaction involved in the first FIR”

So, there were two offences.

“Five additional chart sheets in the event of being sufficient material against the petitioners after such investigation.”

So, the judgement requires the authorities to go further in their investigation. Paragraph 13 reads

–

“It is also made clear that remarks and observations made herein – in this judgement – shall not be construed as expression of any opinion on the merit of the case.”

So, the case has never been heard, the case has never been dismissed and the enquiry is not completed, this is what the Judge ordered.

Paragraph 13 reads -

“It is also made clear that remarks and observations made herein shall not be construed as expression of any opinion on the merit of the case.”

So the case has never been heard, the case has never been dismissed and the enquiry is not completed, this is what the Judge ordered.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have deposited the paper myself. But I have mentioned whatever the hon. Member has just stated. I did say that they have reserved the right. But, this is what I have in my file, in the judgement. This bit that that you did not read, this is paragraph 11 -

“In view of the above principle and facts of the case briefly alluded to above, this court is of the view that it would not be permissible for the second FIR 92 2013 dated 06.05.2013 to survive and, therefore, it hereby stands quashed.”

I did also say that they have reserved the right to look further. I did mention that earlier on. Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, paragraph 14 clearly says -

“With the above reservation, the Criminal case stands disposed of”

I did say that I have requested Tertiary Education Commission to follow up this matter closely and to look into what actually happens afterwards.

Mr Bhagwan: If I am not mistaken, the Minister can clarify us. In the past, the Minister had declared his interest while replying to such questions concerning that particular case. Can I know from the hon. Minister if he can, at least, give us the guarantee that no undue favour will be given to that particular university here, being given his relationship with that because he declared his interest in the past and today he has not declared his interest.

Dr. Jeetah: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have done that in the past. I have done in to yourself, to the House and to my Permanent Secretary. It is a known fact that the Jeetah family has been in the education field since 60 years back. I have declared my interest. I have a brother who has been involved in this university. But, I can give a guarantee to the hon. Member that I have given ...

(Interruptions)

And to everybody here! I have asked my Permanent Secretary and every time I have told them to try to be as strict as possible with this institution especially that we are related and they will make sure that they will bring a light to what actually happens. And, I gave you the judgement myself, which you did not have. I also called hon. Obeegadoo to ask him whether he is aware of any student who has had any fake university and if that is the case, I can guarantee you I will take the action that is required.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any risk that the degrees of the Mauritian students following courses at the institute in question in Mauritius be eventually not recognised?

Dr. Jeetah: I have asked the Tertiary Education Commission about this matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. They have satisfied all the requirements of TEC. At the moment, this is not the case. In fact, I have also been told that their students are graduating in Masters and so on overseas, in England and in other universities. But insofar as the behaviour of some people in India is concerned, I have requested TEC - I say it again - to follow this matter very closely to make sure that everything is in order.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister has just mentioned his interest is that his brother is a member of the university. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he personally is a trustee of the Trust that runs this university and if this is the case, does not he find it fit that whatever enquiry is being conducted on this university should not, at any point, come under his purview but he should ask a colleague of his to handle this?

Dr. Jeetah: That is a very valid point, Mr Speaker, Sir. Maybe I have to explain my association with the family. I do not have any interest in running this Eastern Institution. I have nothing to do with that. If that is the point...

(Interruptions)

No, I have nothing to do with the running of ELIIM University.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I am a trustee of the Trust. That is all.

(Interruptions)

No! This is my family undertaking. Mr Speaker, Sir. I can say it in front of the House that I have nothing to do with this institution. I have nothing to do with what actually happens, with their finance and anything. I have got nothing to do with that. It just happens that he is my brother.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Next supplementary, you mean, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I said next question!

Mr Obeegadoo: But I have one supplementary, Sir.

Mr Speaker: You won't get time for your next question.

PENALTY POINT SYSTEM & SPEED CAMERAS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/564) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to road traffic, he will state if consideration will be given for a review of the –

(a) Penalty Point System, and

(b) operation of the speed cameras, in the light of the difficulties recently experienced in the implementation thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Penalty Point System is being implemented as provided for in the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2012 and it is not the intention of Government to review the system.

With regard to part (b) of the question, some unpredicted technical difficulties were encountered in the implementation of the first phase of the project. Application as it is of this new technology is totally a new experience whereby the system is being automated through the central back office connected to remote speed camera sites.

A technical committee was set up to assess the speed camera system in collaboration with experts from the supplying firm and the contractor and take remedial actions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the four new speed enforcement cameras along Motorway M1 and M2 as well as all the six new mobile speed enforcement cameras have already been put in operation since Monday 24 June 2013 at 00.01 hours. The remaining speed cameras along other roads are being assessed by the Technical Committee and will also be put into operation shortly. The public will be informed through a press communiqué accordingly.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the number of issues that have arisen since the introduction of the point system as regards the conditions of roads in Mauritius, whether we are referring to inoperative traffic lights, defective road markings associated with the recent accident in Rose Hill or the incoherence of speed limits, is the Vice-Prime Minister reconsidering the full force immediate implementation of the point system until those issues are properly addressed?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the Penalty Point System we are not having any problem. Up till now there has not been such problem, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The second issue which was raised has been regarding the markings. I had already mentioned, even through the press, that many meetings were held in my Ministry which was chaired by the Supervising Officer and where we found that in an unclassified road particularly reference is made to the place where there was an accident, but that was the responsibility of

local authorities to see to it that the proper markings are made. So, we have already given instructions to all the local authorities to look after non-classified roads. As far as the classified roads are concerned, the RDA is doing the needful.

We do not have any problem as far as the implementation of penalty point is concerned.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Obeegadoo, if you have any? Yes!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking about road accidents, on many occasions I have raised the issue of quality of paint. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether he has enquired whether there is a local manufacturer and whether directives could be given to each local authority or whoever responsible - even the RDA - to purchase the real quality of paint for road marking so as, at least, to prevent any further case of accident?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken this very seriously. There are two types of paints which are used. We have given instructions that they have to use the best quality paint. In fact, to be honest, in Mauritius – I do not know the name of the company – there is only one contractor who does that work and that is why all the big contractors sub contract it to that special contractor. But he is so much overworked that he does not get enough time. So, what do the other authorities do? They take up all the other ordinary people who are involved in painting of roads. But, we have given instructions to see to it that it should be the best quality of paint which should be utilized for marking of roads. I have already given instructions, but I am definitely going to call another meeting of the local authorities as well as my own RDA engineers to see to it that the road markings are properly done.

Mr Speaker: Time is up!

(Interruptions)

I have given four minutes more. I can't!

(Interruptions)

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn; PQ Nos. B/565, B/567, B/568, B/569, B/571, B/579, B/580 and B/581.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.