

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – TURNOVER

(No. B/421) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the total turnover generated on its cargo operations over the past two years ending 31 March 2014 and 2015 respectively, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) amount of profit and loss realised in relation thereto, and
- (b) impact thereof on the overall performance of the company.

Reply: Since the information sought relates to commercial matters of Air Mauritius Limited, it could be prejudicial to the interest of the airline for such information to be released.

CAMP CAROL, GRAND’BAIE & PEREYBERE – DRAINS – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/422) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the construction of drains at Camp Carol, Grand’Baie and Pereybère respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to –

- (a) if a consultant has been appointed therefor and, if not, why not, and
- (b) in each case, the –
 - (i) expected start and completion dates thereof;
 - (ii) name of the contractor therefor, and
 - (iii) project value thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the National Development Unit (NDU) that the construction of drains and ancillary works at Camp Carol, Grand’Baie and Pereybère are in the list of projects to be implemented during this Financial Year for Constituency No. 6.

These areas were considered as prominent flood prone areas in a study carried out by a Greek consultancy firm and which was funded by the World Bank.

The detailed designs reports and cost estimates in respect of these 2 projects are ready and are being sent to the Project Plan Committee (PPC) for approval, following which NDU will be launching the tenders through an Open Bidding Exercise.

**BETAMAX SHIPPING LTD & THE STATE TRADING CORPORATION –
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – CONTRACT**

(No. B/423) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the contract between the Betamax Shipping Ltd. and the State Trading Corporation for the transportation of petroleum products from India to Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if, in the course of the inquiry being carried out thereinto, all the –

- (a) persons allegedly involved therein have given statements in relation thereto and, if not, why not, and
- (b) documents related thereto have been secured, indicating the expected date of completion of the inquiry.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that an enquiry has been instituted by the Central CID following receipt of a letter dated 12 February 2015, from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection regarding malpractice in the allocation of the contract of affreightment between the State Trading Corporation and Betamax Shipping Ltd.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 34 persons have so far given statements to the Police in connection with this case. Police will convene other persons, if need be, for their statements in due course.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that various documents from the State Trading Corporation and correspondence exchanged between different Government bodies which are related to the enquiry, have been secured by the Police.

This case will require in-depth and protracted examination of numerous confidential documents and interview of various persons allegedly involved or incriminated therein.

It is, therefore, inappropriate at this stage to give an indicative date of completion of the enquiry.

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIERE – SYNTHETIC DRUGS

(No. B/424) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an alarming and rapid proliferation of synthetic drugs has been reported thereat and if so, indicate if he has recently received a letter addressed to him by the *Coalition des Acteurs Sociaux de Barkly* and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two cases of synthetic drugs have been detected by the Police in the Constituency No. 20 from 2013 to 04 September 2015. Although the Police does not consider this figure as alarming, the situation is being closely followed with a view to preventing the proliferation of synthetic drugs not only in that region but throughout the island.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that he did receive a copy of the letter from the *Coalition des Acteurs Sociaux de Barkly*, addressed to me, on 13 August 2015, in which the following priority issues related to the proliferation of synthetic drugs among the youth in the locality, were listed –

- Lack of Police Officers at the Barkly Police Station;
- The review of the Dangerous Drugs Act;
- Prevention campaigns in Barkly, and
- The setting of a Day Care Centre for the Youth.

With regard to the first issue, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Barkly Police Station covers the region of Cité Barkly, La Confiance and Mont Roches and although it is adequately staffed, it has been reinforced. The Police Station is also supported by the Emergency Response Service, the Divisional Support Unit; the Divisional Traffic Police, the Field Intelligence Officers, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit and other divisions of the Police Force.

With regard to the Dangerous Drugs Act, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Questions B/359 and B/372 on 01 September 2015, wherein I announced that necessary measures would be taken to amend the Act so as to criminalise the consumption of and dealing in the new synthetic drugs which have appeared on the market. The relevant Regulations to the Act have already been drafted by the Attorney General's Office and will soon be made operational by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Regarding the prevention campaigns in Barkly, Police Officers of the Barkly Police Station trained in community policing, have conducted several sensitisation campaigns and engage in door-to-door contact with inhabitants of the locality, more specifically the parents, with a view to combating the proliferation of synthetic drugs. Regular Community Policing meetings to address drug related issues are also being held.

I am informed that one such meeting was held on 22 July 2015 and was attended by the Members of the National Assembly of that constituency, and also by certain Municipal Councillors, among others.

The ADSU also have been carrying out sensitisation campaigns in educational institutions, including those in the region.

Moreover, regular sensitisation programmes are being conducted in the locality by the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA), targeting more particularly the youth. From January 2015, such activities have been conducted by the NATReSA in 7 educational institutions and 6 other organisations in the constituency.

Concerning the setting-up of a Day Care Centre for the youth, I have referred the proposal to the concerned Ministries for consideration and appropriate action.

SMF & SSU – PATROLS

(No. B/425) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Special Mobile Force and the Special Supporting Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the Officers thereof will be deployed to effect regular patrols and organise check points in sensitive zones with high crime rates.

Reply: In regard to the Special Mobile Force and the Special Support Unit, these two units have distinct and highly specialised responsibilities as compared to the regular Police.

The Special Mobile Force is the only paramilitary unit which ensures the safety of mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands from outside threats.

The Special Support Unit is responsible for public order policing in the local context.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, over and above their normal duties, the personnel of the Special Mobile Force and the Special Support Unit are being deployed on a daily basis on patrol duties in support of the regular Divisional Police. They carry out vehicles check operations throughout the island in a targeted manner, particularly in crime prone areas.

Furthermore, the Special Mobile Force conducts nocturnal patrols as well as vehicle checks and road blocks everyday in the southern part of the island.

As regards the Special Support Unit, several of its teams carry out patrols in the northern part of the island on a daily basis.

Since January up to 04 September this year, 1,590 and 987 stop and search operations have been carried out by the personnel of the Special Mobile Force and the Special Support Unit respectively together with the regular Police whereby a total of 31,586 vehicles were checked. A total of 1,821 contraventions were established.

POLICE FORCE – SYNDICATE – SETTING UP

(No. B/426) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will state if Government is considering authorising the setting up of a syndicate therefor and, if so, indicate the proposed –

- (a) legal framework to be established to govern same, and
- (b) date of coming into operation thereof.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/157 at the sitting of the National Assembly of 10 March 2015 wherein I mentioned that

preliminary consultations had started with a view to formulating a proper framework within which the Police Officers would be allowed to syndicate, as announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019.

In regard to part (a) of the question, amendments will be brought to the Police Act and the Employment Relations Act to enable the setting-up of a syndicate for Police Officers.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the consultation process with all stakeholders has been completed, and the Attorney-General's Office is presently working on the draft Bill. Some minor issues have yet to be sorted out, and as soon as these are cleared, the draft Bill will be finalised. It is expected that the Bill will be introduced in the present session of the National Assembly.

TRANQUEBAR – FOOTBALL PITCH – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/427) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the football pitch at Tranquebar, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to the –

- (a) start and completion dates of the construction works thereof;
- (b) contract value thereof, and
- (c) when activities in relation to football will be held thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the NDU that the football pitch at Tranquebar is a project consisting of three phases namely –

- (i) earth works, masonry walls, construction of French drains, levelling and turfing;
- (ii) fencing and fixing of gates; and
- (iii) lighting of football ground.

The contract for Phase I was awarded to the contractor, Modern Jurassic Building and Construction Ltd on 07 November 2012 for the sum of Rs3,957,328 (VAT inclusive). The starting date was scheduled for 10 January 2013 with a completion date of 10 June 2013.

However, I am given to understand that the contract was terminated on 30 July 2014 due to delays and non-performance on the part of the contractor. As a result, the levelling and turfing of the football ground remained outstanding.

On 01 August 2014, the NDU awarded a contract for Phase II of the project to Safety Construction Co. Ltd. for the sum of Rs7,095,688.60 (VAT inclusive), without including the outstanding works in Phase I, namely the levelling and turfing of the football ground. Phase II of the project started on 01 September 2014 and was completed on 27 February 2015.

A tentative handing over exercise of the site was effected on 14 April 2015 by the relevant Project Manager with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, given that the ground was not properly levelled and the turfing was not to standards, the exercise could not take place.

The NDU has included the outstanding works in its list of projects to be implemented during this Financial Year. The football ground is expected to be completed by December 2015.

POLICE FORCE – LAM PO TANG & LEGEND CASES

(No. B/428) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will state if he is aware that criticisms have been levelled against the Mauritius Police Force in the aftermath of the Lam Po Tang and Legend cases and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the –

- (a) modernisation and upgrading thereof, and
- (b) setting up of a High Powered Commission to be presided by a former Judge to inquire thereinto and propose the necessary reforms to enhance the efficiency and credibility of the Mauritius Police Force.

Reply: I have not been officially made aware of any criticism levelled against the Police in the aftermath of the Legend and Lam Po Tang cases. However, it has come to my knowledge that in the wake of the verdicts in those two cases in July 2012 and July 2015, respectively, criticisms were made especially in the Press against the Police, particularly in regard to the manner in which investigation had been carried out in those cases. Given that the two cases have each been heard before a Judge sitting with a Jury panel, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the different criticisms raised after the two trials.

Nevertheless, I wish to highlight that it is Government's responsibility to ensure that necessary measures are taken to enable all institutions, including the Police Force, to discharge their duties in an effective and efficient manner.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Government Programme 2015-2019 contains several measures aiming at modernising and upgrading the Police Force. These include –

- (i) the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill which will, *inter alia*, regulate all issues pertaining to confessions and their admissibility in Court;
- (ii) the setting-up of an online central criminal database for offenders;
- (iii) the installation of CCTV cameras and audio recording systems in all Police stations, and
- (iv) the setting-up of an Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Action has already been initiated for the implementation of all these measures.

In addition, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in March 2015, a Strategic Policing Plan has been launched, and emphasis has been put therein on the use of analytical techniques to support investigations and the importance of upgrading skills of Police Officers in detection and management of scene of crimes.

In regard to part (b) of the question, in view of the extensive reforms in which Government has already embarked in regard to the modernisation of the Police Force, the need for the setting-up of a High Powered Commission presided by a former Judge to enquire into criticisms levelled against the Police, does not arise. I wish to highlight that in the context of the forthcoming introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, the Attorney-General's Office will soon carry out public consultations to provide ample opportunity to all stakeholders to set out their views in relation to the enhancement of the efficiency and credibility of the Mauritius Police Force.

H.E. THE VICE-PRESIDENT – PREMISES – RENT

(No. B/429) Mr M. Hurreeram (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the premises rented to serve as official residence for H.E. the Vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius, he will,

for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if tender procedures have been followed for the renting thereof and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) date the bid therefor was launched;
- (b) name of the bidders therefor, indicating the name of the successful bidder;
- (c) extent thereof, and
- (d) monthly rental thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ALLEGED ARM TRAFFICKING – INQUIRY

(No. B/430) Mr M. Hurreeram (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the recent request made to the Government of Mauritius by Mrs K. L. A., Director of the Conflict Awareness Project, to re-open the inquiry concerning the alleged arm trafficking network in Mauritius, he will state if he will consider acceding thereto.

(Withdrawn)

INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION – SETTING UP

(No. B/431) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Independent Police Complaints Commission, as mentioned in the Presidential Address, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

MELROSE PRISON – CONSTRUCTION – CONTRACT

(No. B/432) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the construction of the Melrose Prison, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons/Police, information as to the –

- (a) name of the contractor thereof;
- (b) contract value thereof, and

- (c) delay in the completion thereof, if any.

(Withdrawn)

CEB - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - PURCHASE

(No. B/457) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to coal, heavy fuel oil, diesel and other petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) the actual prices at which the Board is purchasing same, indicating the percentage of decrease in these prices as compared to the highest levels at which these products have ever been purchased, and
- (b) if, following the fall in the prices of fossil fuels worldwide, the electricity tariffs on the local market will be revised downwards.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that -

(i) the CIF price for coal was USD 64.65 Metric ton for the latest consignment received in July 2015. The highest level paid was USD 141.16 Metric ton on 2 March 2011. Based on this price, the percentage decrease in 54.2%.

(ii) for 380 CST heavy fuel oil the price was USD 358.13 metric ton in July 2015. The highest price paid was USD 768.94 in March 2012.

(iii) for 180 CST, the price was USD 363.50 metric ton in July 2015. The highest price reached was USD 781.42 metric ton in March 2012.

The percentage decrease is around 53%.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the electricity tariffs were last increased by an average of 10% in 2010 and have been maintained for the past five years at the same level, despite the relatively higher prices of heavy fuel oil between 2010 and 2013, significant investment in the extension and upgrading of the electricity infrastructure and debts of Rs 2.6 billion, as highlighted in the Director of Audit's report.

Any tariff review will have to be considered in a holistic manner, based on sound financial principles taking into account, not only prices of fuel oil and coal, but also other factors such as revenue stability, debt servicing, short to medium term capital investment,

integration of renewable energy in the generation mix, and discouraging wasteful use of electricity.

VACOAS MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY - INQUIRY

(No. B/458) Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the Vacoas Multipurpose Cooperative Society, he will state the measures being taken by his Ministry to help the Board thereof redress the situation thereat.

Reply: Following an inquiry undertaken by my Ministry into the affairs of the Vacoas Popular Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Ltd, serious malpractices and mismanagement issues were revealed.

The existing Board of the society was removed and a new Board was appointed on 12 January 2015.

The following measures have been taken by my Ministry to help the Board redress the situation -

(i) In line with the provisions of the Cooperatives Act 2005 (as amended), the Society has been put under stricter control, that is, the payments effected by the Society are being vetted by two Senior Officers of my Ministry;

(ii) As the top management of the Society has either resigned or been dismissed, the Board has, in consultation with my Ministry, appointed Ernst & Young, a professional accounting firm to manage the affairs of the Society;

(iii) A special Working Group, comprising of a Lead Analyst from the Financial Services Commission (FSC) and Senior Officials of my Ministry, has been set up to closely monitor the situation;

(iv) Directives have been issued to the Board to enlist the collaboration of institutions such as Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Financial Reporting Council (FRC), FSC, CCID and the Bank of Mauritius to assist the new Board in addressing alleged cases of gross financial irregularities;

(v) A help line desk has been set up at the level of my Ministry, as well as at the seat of the Society to help the Board in handling queries and complaints;

(vi) Following the Board's submissions of Ernst & Young Report regarding the solvency of the Society, my Ministry directed the Board to convene a Special General meeting to consider the insolvency issue;

(vii) My Ministry also assisted the Board to hold the Society's Annual General Meeting to apprise members, *inter-alia*, of the financial situation of the Society;

(viii) The Board apprised the Ministry of several pertinent issues which emerged from the Special General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting. My Ministry sought legal advice from the State Law Office and informed the Board accordingly; and

(ix) I am informed that the Board has received as at to date three Rescue Plans from the members of the Vacoas Popular Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Ltd. However, they have asked for an extension until 15 September 2015 in order to submit a revised Rescue Plan. My Ministry has already acceded to their request.

EID-UL-ADHA – LIVE CATTLE

(No. B/459) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the live cattle being made available on the local market for the Eid-ul-Adha festival, he will state if he is aware that, currently, there are uncertainties surrounding the age thereof and, if so, indicate the measures being taken by his Ministry to guarantee that the age thereof is as per the prescribed norms.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/434)

EMPLOYEES – LAID OFF

(No. B/460) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the employees laid off over the period 01 January 2015 to date, he will state the number thereof who were employed in the –

- (a) private sector
- (b) parastatal/statutory bodies, partly or wholly government funded companies or local government authorities, and
- (c) British American Insurance or other related companies.

Reply: The number of employees laid off for the period January 2015 to date in the Private Sector including the British American Insurance or other related companies is 1776. For the information of the House, this figure when compared to previous years, it is found that the trend of laid off workers is more or less the same specially in comparison to figures of 2013 which stands at around 2250.

With regard to Part (b) of the question, the services of around 450 employees of parastatal and statutory bodies, have been terminated following Government decision taken in March 2015 to the effect that all recruitments/enlistments made after 1st July 2014 in parastatal bodies and Government owned companies be terminated according to Law.

As regards part (c) of the question, I would refer the Hon. Member to reply made to the PNQ of 01 September 2015.

CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/461)Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the Certificate of Character Act, he will state if Government is considering bringing amendments thereto and, if so, indicate –

(a) when and

(b) the nature thereof.

Reply: Paragraph 38 of the Government Programme 2015-2019 is specifically in relation to Certificate of Character and it provides as follows -

“38. In order to increase the employability of people convicted of minor crimes and misdemeanors, such records will cease to appear on their ‘certificates of character’ after a period of one year.”

With a view to implementing paragraph 38 of the Government Programme, my Office has started consultations with relevant stakeholders in relation to the amendments to be brought to the Certificate of Character Act. My Office is still awaiting inputs from various stakeholders.

I have to inform the House that the consultation process is ongoing and as soon as it is over, I will seek Cabinet approval to make the required amendments to the Certificate of Character Act and will bring the Bill before the National Assembly.

At this stage, given that consultations are still ongoing and that Cabinet approval has yet to be sought or obtained in relation to the amendments to be

brought to the Certificate of Character Act, it would not be appropriate for me to give any further details on those amendments.

D.Y. PATIL MEDICAL COLLEGE - COURSES

(No. B/463) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the courses run at the D.Y. Patil Medical College, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the -

- (a) Medical Council of Mauritius, information as to where matters stand regarding the recognition and registration of the postgraduates thereof, and
- (b) Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if it will be allowed to enroll under-graduate and post-graduate students in the future.

Reply: I am informed by the Medical Council that no action has yet been taken in respect of -

- (a) the recognition of the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM) as a medical institution as defined in the Medical Council Act, and
- (b) the registration of Post-graduate students of the D.Y Patil institute.

I am further informed that a team from the Imperial College comprising eight (8) medical Specialists will be in Mauritius in November, 2015 to reassess the clinical competency of the students of the D.Y Patil Institute. The team from Imperial College will be assisted by a local team of Specialists who will be chosen on the basis that they have not been involved in the Postgraduate training of the D.Y. Patil students.

INFANT MORTALITY

(No. B/464) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to infant mortality, he will state the latest figures thereof, indicating if there has been an increase thereof and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) identified causes thereof, and
- (b) measures that are being taken for the prevention thereof.

Reply: Infant Mortality is defined as the death of a child less than one year of age. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1000 live births.

According to available data, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for the island of Mauritius from 1990 to 2015 has shown a general decline from 19.9 to 13.2 (up to June 2015). The forecast for 2015 will be 12.6. As regards Rodrigues, the IMR from 1990 to 2015 has shown a good decreasing trend from 34.9 to 17.0. The forecast for 2015 is 14.3.

Therefore, parts (a) and (b) of the question do not arise.

NATIONAL AIDS COMMITTEE - COMPOSITION

(No. B/465) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the National Aids Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) when the Committee last met, and
- (c) if the proposed discontinuation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme was discussed at the level thereof and, if so, table copy of the proceedings thereof in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

NINE YEAR CONTINUOUS BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/466) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Nine Year Continuous

Basic Education Project, she will state how her Ministry is proposing to respond to the public concerns that -

- (a) it will lead to the introduction of an additional competitive high stake examination at the end of Year 9, and
- (b) the introduction of mixed schooling in existing single sex schools, to be renamed *Academies*, in Year 10, may result in serious management issues.

(Withdrawn)

FREE TRANSPORT TO THE ELDERLY AND TO THE STUDENTS SCHEME - SUBSIDIES

(No. B/468) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the allocation of subsidies to the bus owners in relation to the Free Transport to the Elderly and to the Students Scheme, he will state if his Ministry is considering revising its policy in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I am not envisaging any fundamental change in the policy of the free transport to the elderly and to the students scheme. However, there is need to revise the modalities thereof.

The present system represents a number of flaws and there is need to make it more efficient, cost effective, transparent and accountable.

The main problems relating to the present system are as follows -

- (a) complaints from parents and head of schools about unavailability of school bus services;
- (b) buses failing to pick up students and old aged pensioners;
- (c) excessive lateness of students at school;
- (d) students can travel only on the itinerary from their residence to their schools and back;
- (e) misbehaviour of bus crew towards students and old aged pensioners, and

- (f) calculation of compensation is based on assumptions and projections and not on specific figures and therefore very difficult to be audited.

I am further informed that over the years the amount disbursed under the scheme has increased considerably from Rs570 m. in 2005 to reach Rs1.233 billion in 2014 and Rs616.48 m. for period January to June 2015.

In view of the massive amount of public funds used, I consider that there is need to make an assessment of the impact of the free travel scheme and to determine as to whether the target population is getting value from the budgetary resources injected in the scheme.

I have therefore decided that a study be carried out to re-engineer the transport industry which would include an assessment of the free bus travel scheme and recommendations for a more transparent, efficient and cost effective management of the free transport payment mechanism effected by Government to bus operators.

Expressions of Interest will be issued by mid-September 2015, and the assignment will have to be completed within a period of six months from the award of the contract.

PORT AREA - LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS - STORAGE FACILITIES

(No. B/469) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the Port area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority, information as to if new storage facilities for Liquefied Petroleum Gas have been constructed and commissioned thereat, since 2011 to date and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the name/s of the promoter/s thereof and;
- (b) if same have been constructed on freehold land or on land belonging to the Authority and, if in the latter case, further indicate the;
 - (i) extent and location thereof;
 - (ii) procedures followed and terms and conditions thereof, and
 - (iii) shareholding of the company/ies at the time of application therefor and subsequent thereto.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMEN – OFF LAGOON FISHING

(No. B/470) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the developments in the port, he will state the medium and long term policies Government proposes to adopt to support the fishers of the regions of Tombeau Bay, Roche Bois, Les Salines, Bain des Dames, Sables Noir, Grand River North West and Pointe aux Sables, indicating if he will consider the possibility of giving a substantial compensation to those who would opt to quit the business.

Reply: It is the policy of my Ministry to encourage and empower fishermen to operate off lagoon. In this context, my Ministry has embarked on a programme to assist fishermen to take advantage of a scheme whereby 50% grant up to a maximum of Rs200,000 is given to fishermen for the purchase of canotte (fishing boat) which would allow them to go fishing off lagoon.

Furthermore, my Ministry has set 7 Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in the regions between Trou aux Biches and Albion to enable fishermen to increase their catch.

Most of the Fishermen from Baie du Tombeau to Pointe aux sables have been trained in new fishing techniques to enable them to engage in off lagoon fishing.

With regard to compensation to those who would opt to quit the business, there is no scheme to compensate fishermen who opt to relinquish their fishermen cards, except for net fishers.

I wish to inform the House that since 2006 to date, some 510 fishermen have surrendered their fishermen cards without any compensation.

CEB - ST. LOUIS PROJECT - TENDER EXERCISE

(No. B/471) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the last tender exercise for the St. Louis Project – CEB Tender CPB-22-2014 for the Redevelopment of St. Louis Power Station – Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 4x15MW Diesel Generating Sets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the -

- (a) name/s of the bidder/s thereof, and
- (b) reasons why the bid exercise was cancelled.

(Withdrawn)

TRAFFIC LIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM - CONTRACT

(No. B/472) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Traffic Light Control System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the -

- (a) terms and conditions of the maintenance contracts awarded in relation thereto, and
- (b) name/s of the contractor/s therefor.

(Withdrawn)