Debate No. 8 of 24.04.2007

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - BURGLARIES

(No. B/236) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to burglaries in State Secondary Schools since July 2006 to date, he will –

(a) state the name and locations of the schools;
(b) table a list of the items stolen, indicating their estimated value, and
(c) where matters stand in relation to the inquiries.

Reply: The information is being placed in the Library.

CAMP SAVANNE, HENRIETTA – ACCESS ROAD

(No. B/255) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the access road to Camp Savanne, Henrietta, he will state if this project will be financed during the current financial year.

Reply: (The Minister of Local Government) I am informed by the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix that the project for the tarring of the access road to Camp Savanne, Henrietta will be financed during the current financial year.
N. SADDUL PRIMARY GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

(No. B/256) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the ICT primary project, he will state the number of computers sent to the N. Saddul Primary Government School, Vacoas, since July 2006 to date.

Reply: I would like to refer to my replies to PQs Nos. B/1452 and B/1530 of 21 and 28 November 2006 respectively, wherein I stated that the School IT Project was introduced in January 2001 mainly to create IT awareness in the primary school sector. The project comprised the following components –

(i) conversion of existing classrooms into computer laboratories;
(ii) recruitment of ICT Teachers, and
(iii) purchase of ICT equipment.

As from 2006, in a spirit of equity and fairness, there was a topping of the IT equipment originally meant for only 50 schools with a view to distributing the equipment equitably to all schools. The provision of infrastructural facilities in all primary schools with the collaboration of the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure preceded the distribution of IT equipment.

In the same context, N. Saddul Government School received 5 PCs and one printer in June 2006. My Ministry is targeting 20 PCs to each primary school in line with Government policy to promote an IT literate student population and to integrate ICT in teaching and learning. 5 additional PCs will be provided in June 2007.

During the specific period July 2006 to date, no computer has been sent to N. Saddul Government School. In fact, no school has been provided with any computer during that period.
POINTE AUX SABLES – ENERGY PRODUCTION PROJECT

(No. B/257) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether in regard to the project for energy production from charcoal in the region of Pointe aux Sables, he will state –

(a) its location;
(b) its environmental impact, and
(c) the proposed date for its completion.

Reply: I am informed by the CEB that, as such, there is no project for energy production from charcoal in Pointe aux Sables. In fact, there is a project for the setting up of a coal-fired plant of a 110 megawatt capacity at Pointe aux Caves, which is found in the area between Belle Vue Phare and the Montagne Jacquot Sewerage Treatment Plant. The site covers an extent of 92 arpents.

As regards part (b) of the question, on 06 April 2007 the promoter has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report to the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit. The EIA is currently being examined by that Ministry. I, therefore, consider it premature at this stage to tread on the environmental aspects of the project as it may prejudice the assessment. Nonetheless, I can reassure the House that obtention of a favourable EIA response will be a sine qua non condition for the implementation of the project.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that the first unit is expected to be commissioned in December 2009 and the second unit in June 2010, going on the assumption that the project proposal passes successfully the different stages of examination.
SC/HSC EXAMINATIONS 2007 – STUDENTS - NUMBER

(No. B/258) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to the number of students who have entered for the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate for the year 2007.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made at our sitting of 17 April 2007 in respect of PQ B/173.

The MES has informed that 19,652 school going candidates will sit for the Cambridge School Certificate and 9224 for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations in 2007, as opposed to 19,371 for SC and 8,862 for HSC in 2006. These figures for 2007 exclude the entries for the four colleges in Rodrigues, which are yet to submit them.

As regards amount of subsidy to be disbursed by my Ministry, the final figures will be known only by mid May 2007. Indicatively the Ministry of Social Security has disbursed MUR 73.6 m in respect of subsidies for SC and HSC examinations for those entitled to 100% and 50% subsidy up to now. As regards my Ministry, it is estimated that it will have to disburse around MUR 55 m in respect of the 25% subsidy.

LE MORNE ANGLERS CLUB – WALL – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/259) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to a wall erected on the beach along pas géométriques leased by Government to the Le Morne Anglers Club, he will state if he has received representations from the fishermen of the Black River Village, complaining of the inconveniences being caused to them and to the public in general.
Reply: (The Minister of Housing and Lands) On 06 February 2007, my Ministry received a summons to appear in Court on 09 February 2007 as co-respondent to a case lodged by the Association des Pêcheurs Professionels de Grande Rivière Noire & Others against Le Morne Anglers Club not to proceed further with the construction of a retaining wall.

On 22 February 2007, my Ministry was informed by the Solicitor General that the Attorney of Le Morne Anglers Club has given an undertaking that the Club would not proceed further with any construction unless a building permit was obtained, and, in the light of the said undertaking, the application has been set aside by the Judge in Chambers on 12 February 2007.

I am advised that the retaining wall falls within the site leased to Le Morne Anglers Club.

BERJAYA HOTEL – EMPLOYEES – REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/260) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the sale of the Berjaya hotel, he will state if he has received representations from the employees or their union and, if so, will he state the measures that his Ministry has taken or proposes to take to protect the interests of the employees.

Reply: I am informed that the Ministry received representations on 08 and 09 February 2007 from the workers of Berjaya Hotel and the Hotels and Restaurants Employees Union respectively on the impending sale of the Berjaya Hotel.

A meeting was held at the Ministry with management of the hotel and with the representatives of the Hotel and Restaurants Employees Union. During the meeting, the Executive Director of the hotel has informed that –

(a) negotiations were being carried out with a Dubai based company for the sale of the hotel;
(b) the hotel would continue to operate as an ongoing concern;
(c) all the workers would be employed by the new management with continuity of service and on the same terms and conditions of employment, and

(d) renovation works would be carried out at the hotel between the period May 2007 to November 2007 and that during this period workers would continue to be paid their wages.

The Executive Director also gave the commitment that once the deal would be clinched, the outgoing and the new management would sent a joint letter to the Ministry to confirm the above undertakings.

In a letter dated 13 April 2007, addressed to the Ministry, the Executive Director has again given the assurance that the interests and rights of the workers would be safeguarded in accordance with the law.