WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES, ANSE ALLY–
ALLEGED ILLEGAL SAND REMOVAL

(No. B/820) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether, on or about 20 April 2007, a pick-up van was seized in connection with an alleged illegal removal of sand at Anse Ally, Rodrigues, and, if so, if the van is still being kept in Police custody as at to date and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 20 April 2007 at 0745 hrs, a pick up van driven by Mr S. L. was stopped at Grande Montagne during routine check by the Police. The vehicle was loaded with several bags of sand and the driver could not account for the possession and origin of the sand. He was brought to Grande Montagne Police Station for enquiry. A provision charge of “possession of stolen property” has been retained against Mr S. L. On 20 April 2007, he was released on bail after having furnishe done surety of Rs5,000.

The vehicle was not seized as the offence did not occur between sunset and sunrise as in stipulated in Section 15(2) of the Removal of Sand Act. It was returned to its owner. Enquiry is still in progress.
TERRE ROUGE LAND SETTLEMENT –
SUGAR CANE FIELDS – FIRE OUTBREAK

(No. B/821) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether an inquiry has been carried out to ascertain the circumstances in which some 25 acres of land under cane cultivation in the region of Riche Terre, which was promised to Tianli, caught fire and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 12 July 2007 two planters made a declaration at the Terre Rouge Police Station to the effect that on 11 July 2007 about 9½ acres of standing sugarcane at the Terre Rouge Land Settlement, had been burnt.

On 13 July 2007, a third person reported a similar case of fire on about one acre of standing sugarcane at the same place. No suspect was mentioned in any of these cases. The origin of the fire was unknown. The Triolet Fire Brigade attended to the case on 11 July 2007 between 11:00 hours and 15:30 hours.

I am further informed that enquiries into the above cases are still underway.

The Police are keeping a close watch in this area. As a result, last Saturday, two people have been arrested at Ilot by the SSU following a fire in the sugarcane field.
MBC - DIRECTOR OF NEWS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/822) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mr D. R., recently appointed as Director of News at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –

(a) the terms and conditions of his appointment;

(b) if any interview was conducted prior to his appointment, and

(c) if the vacancy for the post was internally advertised and subsequently cancelled.

Reply: I am informed by the MBC that the vacancy for Director of News was internally advertised by the MBC. However, due to the urgent need for somebody of high calibre to head the news department, Mr. D. R was offered employment on a contract basis in that capacity by the Corporation by virtue of his previous experience. In fact, Mr D. R. was assigned such duties in 1988, 1991 and 1997. He also served as Head of News between January 1998 and October 2000.

Given Mr. D. R’s past track record, experience and competency, the Corporation did not deem it appropriate to interview the candidate.

I am tabling a statement giving the terms and conditions of employment of Mr D.R.
MEDIA SUMMIT – MALAYSIA - DELEGATE

(No. B/823) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent Media Summit held in Malaysia, he will –

(a) state if Government was represented thereat, and

(b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if it was represented thereat and, if so -

(i) the names and grades of the delegates, and
(ii) the expenses incurred by the Corporation, over and above those met by the Asia Broadcasting Union.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that I was personally invited to attend the Asia Media Summit held in Malaysia from 29 to 31 May 2007. As I could not attend the event, I delegated a Senior Officer of my Office, who is also a member of the MBC Board, to participate in the Summit.

The MBC was represented at the Summit by the Chairman of the MBC Board and the Director-General. The costs of airfares as well as payment of allowances in accordance with approved rates were met by the MBC.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS – DRUG ABUSE

(No. B/827) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of educational institutions where cases of drug abuse have been reported since July 2005 to date, indicating the remedial measures taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since July 2005 to date, one case related to drug involving six students at an educational institution has been reported to Police.
The following remedial measures have been taken by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to deal with the problem -

(i) providing psychological assistance and counselling to the students;

(ii) setting up of Discipline Pastoral Care Committee to monitor closely the situation;

(iii) organising home visits to assess the social environment of the students;

(iv) training of teachers to increase alertness to drug abuse and identify such cases;

(v) seeking co-operation of rectors, inspectors, parents and social workers;

(vi) establishing an active line of communication between Heads of Schools and ADSU personnel on a regional basis; and

(vii) seeking police assistance to patrol the vicinity of educational institutions on regular basis.

Young students need special coaching and guidance so as to prevent them to fall prey to social evils. In addition to the measures already mentioned, regular awareness campaigns are organised by the Police in educational institutions to emphasize the ill effects of alcohol and drugs. In the year 2006, sensitization campaigns were organised in 120 primary schools and 69 secondary schools involving a total number of 54,206 students. From January 2007 to date, of 45,424 students in 140 institutions have been sensitized.

Anti-drug sensitization campaigns and related activities such as brainstorming sessions and workshops for school administrators and teaching staff are also carried out by NATReSA.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources proposes to carry out a survey on the extent of the problem in our schools. A Committee under the Chairmanship of the Director of Curriculum is working on the modalities thereof.
POLICE FORCE - “CITIZENS’ CHARTER FOR POLICING”

(No. B/828) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if the Police Act will be amended to make provision for the adoption of a policing charter and, if so, when.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since April 2000 on the recommendation of Mr Shattock, the Mauritius Police Force has adopted a “Citizens’ Charter for Policing” which aims at promoting ethical behaviour and inculcating professional values and standards in the Police Force.

The Government Programme 2005-2010 provides for the adoption of a Policing Charter which will lay the foundation for customer-based policing.

In this regard, a Draft new Policing Charter has been prepared by the Commissioner of Police in consultation with ICAC which is under consideration at the level of my Office.

I am also advised by the Attorney-General’s Office that there is no need to amend the Police Act in order to be able to adopt the new Policing Charter.
MBC - MR P. S. – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/829) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the appointment of Mr P. S. at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation information as to –

(a) the post held;

(b) his terms and conditions of appointment;

(c) the salary, allowances and other fringe benefits to which he is entitled, and

(d) the number of overseas missions undertaken by him since his appointment.

Reply: I am tabling a statement giving the information requested by the hon. Member.

ASSOCIATION DES DROITS DES ARTISTES MAURI CIENS - REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/830) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if he has received representations from the Association des Droits Des Artistes Mauriciens, dated 22 September 2005, for the recognition of the Association.

Reply: My Office received an undated letter on 09 September 2005 from the Association des Artistes Mauriciens on their proposals for the setting up of a society for the protection of performers’ and interpreters’ rights. The matter was referred to the Ministry of Arts and Culture for consideration.

I am informed that the Ministry of Arts and Culture subsequently held three meetings with the Association to discuss their proposals.
At each meeting, the Association was requested by the Ministry to submit all relevant documents such as its Memorandum of Association, proposed statutes, etc so as to process their request.

I am informed that the Association has failed to submit the complete set of documents despite another request made by the Ministry on 19 September 2006. The matter has therefore not been proceeded with in the absence of the required documents.

However, I am also informed that Performers Rights are already protected by sections 24 and 25 of the Copyright Act and the Mauritius Society of Authors has already initiated action for the administration of these two sections of the Act.

GLOBAL NET CO. & INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES – ALLEGED SWINDLING

(No. B/831) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether a group of students recently made a statement against Global Net Co. and the Institute of Business and Professional Studies at the Trou Fanfaron Police Station.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a group of 15 persons reported a case of alleged swindling at the Trou Fanfaron Police Station on 03 July 2007 against the Director of Globe Net Co.

According to the statement made to Police, job opportunities as telephone operators at Globe Net Co. were advertised in the press in March 2007. Globe Net Co was advertised as a fast expanding company in the BPO Sector offering employment to 100 Telephone Operators to school leavers, with SC or HSC. The benefits would include a basic salary of Rs9,000, Rs2,000 attendance bonus, other allowances, in-house promotion as well as transport facilities.

On application, however, candidates were required to follow a course in “Les Métiers des Centres D’Appels” against the payment of a course fee of Rs9,000 at the Institute for Business and Professional Studies.

No job has been offered to the trainees after completing the training course. The press advertisement was blatantly misleading. The case has been referred to the Central CID and police enquiry is under way.
BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL – LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/870) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to legal advisers attached to the Black River District Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to –

(a) the names of the incumbents;
(b) their terms and conditions of appointments, and
(c) the amount of retainer or any other fee to which they are entitled.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will subsequently be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

TRAINEE TEACHERS AND DEPUTY RECTORS – RECRUITMENT

(No. A/28) 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 the recruitment of trainee teachers and deputy rectors, respectively since July 2005 to date, he will give a list thereof, indicating their –

(a) names;
(b) addresses, and
(c) postings

Reply: In the year 2005 and 2006, no Trainee Teacher (General Purpose) and (Oriental Languages) was recruited.

As from March 2007, 381 Trainee Teachers (General Purpose) and 164 Trainee Teachers (Oriental Languages) were recruited. Their names and addresses as listed at Annexes I to VII are being tabled. I wish to draw the attention of the House that all the Trainee Teachers (General Purpose and Oriental Languages) who were enlisted in 2007 are presently following a training course of two years and 3 months at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE).

With respect to the recruitment of Deputy Rectors since July 2005, their names, addresses and postings are being tabled at Annex A.
(No. A/29) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to the Nouvelle Découverte Community Centre, she will state when it will become operational.

Reply: (Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit) The Community Centre Project at Nouvelle Découverte forms part of a major contract for the sum of Rs162,550,740 awarded on 03 March 2004 to the then Development Works Corporation for the construction of 13 community centres in various regions of the country. There have been many delays in the implementation of the projects as the DWC was engaged in other projects throughout the island.

After the closing down of the Development Works Corporation, a survey of all remaining works at the uncompleted community centres has been effected. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping has been requested to award the works at the community centres to its District Contractors including the Nouvelle Découverte community centre.

The outstanding works at Nouvelle Découverte community centre consist of electrical components, other minor works and site works. The Energy Services Division (ESD) and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping are providing assistance for preparing tender documents to float tenders.

Scope of works for site works are being finalised by the consultancy firm, Atelier D’Architecture Diagonale II.

In view of tendering procedures the works at Nouvelle Découverte are expected to be completed in about 6 months.

After the completion of the outstanding works, arrangements will be made with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens’ Welfare for the handing over and inauguration of the community centre at Nouvelle Découverte so as to make it operational.