

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NEW GOVERNMENT CENTRE – SOLAR PANELS

(No. B/600) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the solar panels installed at the new Government Centre, he will state the number thereof, which are still operational.

Reply: The solar photovoltaic system which was installed on 16 January 2000 at the New Government Centre comprises 960 solar panels each of a capacity of 80 watt amounting to a total 76.8 kilowatt.

The solar panels are in good working conditions. However, I am informed that the main control panel is faulty, in particular, the power supply card.

I am also informed that the same power supply card was repaired in August 2006 and broke down again recently. After investigation of this recurrent fault on the power supply card, it was decided to house the control panel in an air-conditioned cabin. My Ministry is liaising with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to construct the cabin. The equipment is expected to be back in operation in one-month time.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS - VACANCIES

(No. B/601) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the posts of Regional Development Officers, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof on the establishment of his Ministry and
- (b) the existing number of vacancies, indicating if he proposes to have them filled and if so, when.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question there exist 28 posts of Regional Development Officers (RDOs) on the establishment of the National Development Unit (NDU) of my Ministry. As a result of a restructuring exercise of the Technical Division of NDU, Cabinet on 13 March 2005 agreed that the number of posts of RDO to be filled be reviewed from 28 to 23.

In respect of part (b) of the question there are 9 vacant posts of RDO. Action has been initiated to write to the Public Service Commission (PSC) to report the vacancies and to arrange to fill vacant posts. The entry qualification for the post of RDO is an appropriate degree. The PSC has requested that the Scheme of Service of the post be amended to streamline the qualification requirement for alignment with degree-level posts in the Public Service. Processing of the amended Scheme of Service is underway at the level of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms. Soon after prescription of the revised Scheme of Service procedures will be followed by the PSC to fill the vacancies.

RESERVOIRS - LEAKAGES

(No. B/602) **Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to water leakages from the natural reservoirs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures he proposes to take.

Reply: I am informed that there are no natural reservoirs which are used for the supply of water. However, there are eleven man-made reservoirs; out of which six are under the responsibility of the Water Resources Unit of my Ministry and no leakages have been noted in respect of these reservoirs. The remaining five reservoirs are owned and operated by the Central Electricity Board and Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate.

SMALL ENTERPRISES HANDICRAFT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY – DIRECTOR

(No. B/603) **Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the Director of the Small Enterprises Handicraft Development Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to if his contract has been renewed and if so, the terms and conditions thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/592)

SOLAR HEATING SYSTEMS – CUSTOMS DUTIES

(No. B/604) **Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the solar heating systems, he will state if he proposes to review the customs duties levied on same and the other incentives in connection therewith, with a view to promoting the use thereof.

Reply: With regard to solar heating systems, I invite the hon. Member to wait for the Budget proposals.

STC – HANDY WORKERS

(No. B/605) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the handy workers posted at the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as the number thereof recruited, since July 2005 to date, indicating –

- (a) their names and addresses, and
- (b) if it is the practice for these handy workers to be posted in Rodrigues and, if so, the number thereof who have been posted thereat.

Reply: The required information is being tabled.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is a fact that any employee of the Corporation may be posted in any of its stations, at any time, during his tenure of office as decided by Management of the Corporation. There are actually 10 of this category there.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN – ALLEGED VIOLENCE – JANUARY 2006-MARCH 2008

(No. B/606) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to complaints of alleged violence on women and children reported to her Ministry, since January 2006 to March 2008, she will state –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the follow up actions taken in connection therewith by her Ministry.

Reply: From January 2006 to March 2008, 4280 cases of violence against women and 3465 cases of child abuse have been reported at the six Family Support Bureaux of my Ministry.

With regard to part (b) of the question, follow up actions taken by my Ministry include first hand counseling, psychological counseling, legal advice and immediate intervention where required.

I wish to inform the House that in adult cases of domestic violence, women are assisted by Family Welfare and Protection Officers of my Ministry for applications for Protection Orders at the District Courts.

Moreover, those who are at risk, are provided temporary accommodation in places of safety and in some cases referrals are made to other agencies for further assistance.

With regard to children, urgent site visits are effected by Family Welfare and Protection Officers of my Ministry and where children are found to be in danger, they are removed immediately and placed at the shelter of the Ministry. This is usually done with the assistance of the Police.

Within the least possible delay, applications for Emergency Protection Orders are made at the District Courts. Upon further enquiries, applications are made for Committal Orders to keep the children at a place of safety (Shelter & Residential Care Institution) for longer period.

In both cases of women and children, follow up visits are effected even after the grant of Court Orders for protection. These include home visits and psychological sessions so as to ensure rehabilitation and to foster reintegration in the family.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN – SHELTERS - FACILITIES

(No. B/607) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to the shelters for women and children, she will state –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the number of women and children who can be accommodated therein;
- (c) the facilities provided thereat, and
- (d) if any psychologist is attached to each shelter.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the Ministry has two shelters under its aegis; one at Albion which is run by the National Children's Council and the other one at Forest Side is run by an NGO namely "Shelter for Women and Children Trust Fund".

With regard to part (b) of the question, presently, the shelter at Albion is providing care and accommodation to some 84 children victims of abuse/neglect and 4 adults who are victims of domestic violence. The shelter at Forest Side is presently accommodating 28 inmates and it has an accommodation capacity of 35 inmates; whereas the shelter at Albion has an accommodation capacity of 65.

I wish to remind the House that the shelter at Albion is meant to provide temporary accommodation to children victims of abuse or neglect until they are transferred to other residential care institutions or placed in foster families. It is the only place of safety where the Ministry can place a child at any hour of the day or night.

With regard to part (c) of the question, children of both shelters are provided residential facilities with all amenities. Those above the age of 3 attend school (pre-primary, primary, secondary) or vocational training/educational institutions. Those who

have never attended any school before being admitted at the shelters and who cannot be integrated in mainstream educational settings are provided with a Special Needs Teacher at the level of the shelters.

At the shelter at Forest Side, inmates of above 16 years of age who cannot pursue normal schooling are provided training in vocational skills. They are also given the opportunity to develop their IT, sports, musical and dancing skills and moral values are inculcated to them

Arrangements are also made at both shelters to offer the children creativity and leisure activities.

With regard to part (d) of the question, psychologists employed by the Ministry conduct individual and group counseling with the inmates of the two shelters on a regular basis.

I wish to inform the House that the shelter of Albion is shortly being transferred to a more spacious building at Pointe aux Sables.

PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – BUDGETED ITEMS – F/Y 2008-2009

(No. B/608) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the priorities and items to be budgeted by the Municipal Council of Port Louis for the financial year 2008-2009, he will state if he has received any representation from the councillors.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMEN WELFARE FUND – BOARD MEETINGS

(No. B/609) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to the Fishermen Welfare Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the number of times the Board has met for the past one year, indicating if the Chairperson was present in each case.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMEN – CHILDREN - SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/610) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to the scholarships granted to the children of the fishermen, he will state if –

- (a) any of these scholarships has been cancelled, and
- (b) there has been any delay in the disbursement of funds in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)