

No. 7 of 2010



# **FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION  
TUESDAY 13 JULY 2010**

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**THE CABINET**  
(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
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**MAURITIUS**

**Fifth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 7 of 2010**

**Sitting of Tuesday 13 July 2010**

**The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,**

**at 11.30 a.m.**

**The National Anthem was played**

*(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)*

## PAPERS LAID

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table -

**A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –**

- (a) Loan Agreement for Grand’Baie Phase 1B Sewerage Project dated 08 July 2010 between Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius (In original).
- (b) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2009 and the 6 months period July to December 2009 (In original).
- (c) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2009 and the 6 months period July to December 2009 (In original).
- (d) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Republic of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2009 and for the period 01 July to 31 December 2009 (In original).
- (e) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2009 and the fiscal period 01 July to 31 December 2009 (In original).
- (f) The Report of the National Audit Office on the Activity Report for the period July 2008 to December 2009 (In original).
- (g) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Implementation of the Programme-Based Budget for the period 01 July 2008 to 31 December 2009 (In original).
- (h) The Report of the Director of Audit No. 1 (March 2010) on the Administration of Invalidity Pensions and of Medical Follow-up for the Elderly (In original).
- (i) The Report of the Director of Audit No. 2 (March 2010) on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of School Building Programme (In original).
- (j) The Report of the Director of Audit No. 3 (March 2010) on the Recovery of VAT Arrears (In original).

**B. Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development & Family Welfare –**

The Annual Report 2007/2008 of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund.

**C. Ministry of Tourism and Leisure –**

The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Tourism Authority for the year ended 30 June 2008 (In original).

**D. Attorney General’s Office –**

The Code Civil Mauricien (Exemption) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 146 of 2010).

**E. Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection –**

The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 145 of 2010).

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****INFLUENZA A(H1N1) – MEASURES**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to influenza A(H1N1), she will state –

- (a) the dates on which the recent cases were detected, indicating -
  - (i) if routine surveillance tests were carried out, and
  - (ii) the number of cases resulting in death;
- (b) the type of vigilance which was maintained at the airport, port and hospitals;
- (c) the stock of vaccines, antiviral drug Tamiflu and masks available, indicating the number of persons vaccinated to date, and
- (d) if an information campaign is being launched to sensitise the public on the -
  - (i) symptoms, and
  - (ii) treatment Protocol.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Influenza A(H1N1) is a respiratory disease caused by a new strain of virus which is transmitted very quickly from person to person. The first case of Influenza A(H1N1)) was confirmed in Mexico in April 2009. This novel strain of influenza virus contains a combination of swine, avian, and human influenza virus genes. Following the first case, this virus then spread rapidly all over the world and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation in April 2009.

Clinical symptoms are similar to seasonal influenza, namely running nose, sore throat, cough, high fever, body aches, headache, chills, and vomiting and diarrhoea, in some cases. In some patients there may be complications such as difficulty in breathing and pneumonia.

Given that this virus was new and had never before circulated among humans, the World Health Organisation circulated guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of this infection.

Since May 2009, my Ministry immediately has taken necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the WHO to contain the introduction of the virus and to prepare the country to face an eventual outbreak. A Preparedness Plan was finalised with all stakeholders and immediate actions were initiated as per WHO guidelines.

In October 2009, according to the WHO and international studies, it was found that this virus was not as virulent as anticipated and the number of fatalities was, in fact, less than that caused by seasonal influenza.

As at 04 July 2010, more than 214 countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases of pandemic influenza H1N1 including 18,311 deaths. Presently, the WHO is of the view that its virulence is still very mild as the Influenza A(H1N1) virus has not shown any significant mutation up to now. However, the World Health Organisation continues to actively monitor the progress of the pandemic, and has scheduled a meeting of experts to consider the declassification of the phase of the Influenza H1N1 pandemic.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that for 2010 the first case of H1N1 was detected on 10 of February during routine influenza surveillance that was undertaken prior to the arrival of the winter season. Until now, out of 1,234 samples examined at the Central Health Laboratory, 346 were found to be positive for Influenza and of these 124 were H1N1 positive which represent 35% of the total Influenza cases.

There exists a routine surveillance system to identify the current circulating viruses. This routine surveillance system involves the participation of government health institutions as well as private medical practitioners acting as sentinel surveillance agents. This surveillance system consists of taking, at least, 5 throat swab samples per week from patients suffering from upper respiratory tract infections. These samples are then sent to the Virology Laboratory at the Central Health Laboratory for diagnosis and typing.

The virology laboratory on top of carrying influenza surveillance also carries routine testing on samples from both the public health sector and the private health sector. Up to now, the Virology and Molecular Biology laboratory of the Central Health Laboratory has tested 1,234 samples from both the public and private health institutions.

Up to now, only 1 case of death associated with A(H1N1) has been notified. This patient was admitted in a private clinic in the Plaine Wilhems.

Concerning part (b) of the question regarding the type of vigilance maintained at the airport, Port and hospitals, my Ministry has maintained a vigilant surveillance for influenza A(H1N1) in accordance with the Ministry Preparedness plan on Pandemic Preparedness, a plan that has been already vetted by WHO, and circulated to all stakeholders.

Our surveillance system was a two-phase containment or mitigation prong based on the prevalence of the virus in the country. Last year, when imported or very few local cases were present, my Ministry used a containment strategy to limit the spread of the virus in the country. The containment strategy put in place consisted of three steps, namely –

- (a) screening all passengers arriving from high risk or endemic countries for H1N1 at the airport using a thermal scanner and check for visual signs of influenza at the ports of entry;
- (b) isolation of patients after our public health inspectors tracked down any suspected cases in the hotel or residence to ensure the persons were not infective, and lastly
- (c) prophylaxis treatment of contact.

The containment strategy is used when the virus was introduced from infected cases and gradually spread widely in the community, as it is now. In accordance with our plan and the recommendations of WHO, screening for incoming passengers are not required because the virus is already present in the community. In this containment phase our surveillance consists of locating the prevalence of the virus in different risk groups. Towards this end, we routinely collect specimens representative samples of patients attending our hospitals and area health centres for the presence of influenza virus and test for the presence of the H1N1 virus. According to established protocol with the private sector, the private sector has to refer suspected cases to the Ministry for testing and confirmation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, the number of vaccines available is 171,387 doses.

The total number of antiviral drug Oseltamivir - which is commonly known as Tamiflu - available is 2,792,750 doses. These can treat 279, 275 patients representing 23.2% of the population.

The number of masks available is 595,694.

Up to now, 5,613 persons have already been vaccinated against A(H1N1) on top of the individuals who have been vaccinated by the Ministry of Social security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (d) of question, I wish to inform the House that aggressive information campaigns have been launched to sensitise the public on the signs and symptoms of the disease since August 2009 when 300,000 pamphlets were produced by my Ministry. Each student in Mauritius at the level of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary has received a pamphlet on A(H1N1) through the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. Many public and private

institutions have received posters on Influenza A(H1N1). Besides, mass media campaigns both in Creole and in Bhojpuri and community based interventions have been carried out in the community particularly in schools, workplaces and community settings such as social welfare centres, community welfare centres, women centres, youth centres and so forth.

A treatment protocol regarding case definition, guidelines for admission (adults, children), laboratory testing and prescription of Oseltamivir for Influenza A(H1N1) was issued to all doctors of private and public sectors in August 2009. An updated protocol is being circulated to the president of the Private Medical Practitioners Association and Private Clinics. An information campaign on necessary precautionary measures during the period of influenza was resumed on 11 February 2010. TV and radio spots were broadcast on MBC for periods 11-17 February 2010, and as from 25 June to date spots are being broadcast as an ongoing process.

As from 14 April 2010, all private and public health institutions, including those in Rodrigues, have been informed of the vaccination programme and its extension to other target groups. A communiqué on precautionary measures and decentralisation of the A(H1N1) vaccination programme was again published in three daily newspapers for periods 29 June 2010 to 02 July 2010 and 07 July to 09 July 2010.

At the level of my Ministry, a meeting was held for coordination and monitoring purposes on 24 June 2010. It was then decided that posters and pamphlets be redistributed and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources be asked to sensitise all schoolchildren on influenza during the morning assembly, School Health Programme be reinforced, radio and TV talks by public doctors to inform the population about the A(H1N1) virus and the increase of influenza cases due to the winter season be strengthened.

A circular letter was issued on 25 June 2010 to all Regional Health Directors, including Rodrigues, to reinforce health sector response following the recrudescence of Influenza A(H1N1) -

- (i) to ensure availability of Personal Protective Equipment, consumables, including drugs and adequate bed space;
- (ii) to reinforce infection control measures in all health institutions;
- (iii) to introduce triage system for flu patients and to set up flu clinics in each regional hospital, and
- (iv) to procure sufficient stock of reagents and primers for laboratory investigations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the Leader of the Opposition and Members of the public that the situation is fully under control and that all necessary measures are being undertaken by my Ministry to effectively manage and control this pandemic.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been informed that, for this year, the first case was detected on 10 February, and thereafter 123 other cases were detected. Doctors in the private sector had been warning for some time now that there were cases of swine flu, as commonly known, in the country. Can I, therefore, ask the hon. Minister why did she go on radio to say that there are no cases in the country?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know where the hon. Leader of the Opposition got his information. In fact, when this was broadcast on radio several times to say that I said that there were no cases, I had asked the IBA to send me copies of the recordings. I have listened to them, I never said that. Second thing is that, in spite of the fact that several newspapers have been saying that there has been a change, a volte-face and things like that, there are other papers which have said the contrary. I have got a copy of a paper in my hands which said:

“I listened to the answers given by Mrs Hanoomanjee to reporters and she pointed out that only about 2% of the total number of upper respiratory infection cases were likely to be A(H1N1) and invited those asking the questions to read the *communiqué* that the Ministry of Health had released and that contained valuable advice about precautions to take and that people should follow the advice.”

Further, that paper said...

**Mr Bérenger:** On a Point of order, the hon. Minister cannot read from a newspaper without even telling us what paper, what she is reading. She cannot go at length like that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister can just make reference to that part which concerns this question.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that there has been - and this is an affirmation on his part - a volte-face, I am saying what the paper said. It said –

“Mrs Hanoomanjee was straightforward, concise and precise in her replies which left no doubt about the fact that everything was being managed well and there was no need for any alarm.”

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister says that she never said it. Is she aware that her officers also went on radio, took part in debates, giving the impression and saying that there are no cases in the country? Will not the hon. Minister agree with me that if, as from 10 February or thereabout, everybody had been made aware that there are cases, without panicking, doctors might have behaved differently, the public might have behaved differently? Will she agree with me?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would not agree that my officers went on radio to say that there have been no cases; that is not true. Anyway, what I have to point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition is that I have nothing to hide. The figures are there. I gave the figures; we have got nothing to hide. It is a national issue. Our point is that we should not create panic in the population. We should not be alarmist. I can only reassure the House and the population that everything is being done at the level of my Ministry to prevent the spread of the disease.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister tells us that she means to hide nothing. Then why was not the population and doctors made aware that there are cases detected since February 2010? Why did we have to wait for somebody to die for then the figure of 124 positively tested cases to be made public?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, the figures are there; the figures have been made public. This is a national issue, it concerns everybody. I don't recall whether the PMPA came to me and asked me for figures. There has never been any case. My point is that the cases are there, the figures are there and we should not create panic in the population.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** The cases are there. I would say as well that out of those 124 cases, one died. Out of those 123 cases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the patients have recovered following treatment which they have had; they were given the usual treatment for flu, there was no need to panic.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are informed that 1,234 samples were sent to the lab for examination, coming from both the private and the public sectors. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that the result has been 124 swine flu tested positive? Will she agree with me that, in fact, the figure must be higher, being given that not everybody is being sample tested? Has the Ministry tried to work at estimates of what is the real situation in the country?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't go beyond what has been said. Samples have been tested. Our laboratory has a limited capacity and we can't go for analysis of all cases. What

we do is that we take samples, we analyse them and we have the result for those samples. Any case which is referred to us also by the private sector is being analysed.

**Mr Bérenger:** In India, they have decided, as from this year, to allow private practitioners to take swabs and to screen for swine flu. Are the doctors in the private sector allowed to do the same here in Mauritius?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, and, in fact, this is what is being done. They send it to us for analysis. It is our lab which does all the analysis and diagnoses the cases.

**Mr Bérenger:** Apart from that one recent last Saturday's death associated with swine flu, since the outbreak of the endemic reached us in Mauritius, can the hon. Minister remind the House whether there have been other cases of death?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** As at now, I don't have any other cases of death reported. There has been one case. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to say that for that case of one death, I would not be able to provide confidential information on the patient here with due respect to the relatives of the deceased. But what I can say is that that patient had a very heavy track record of non-communicable diseases.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister made reference to a meeting which is being called by the WHO to kind of declassify the pandemic. Is she aware that, at the beginning of last month, in fact, there was such a meeting of the WHO Emergency International Committee, which decided against - they are having another meeting this month - doing so and the WHO said that it is critical for countries to maintain vigilance concerning the pandemic and so on?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, this is true. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is right, there has been a meeting and that is why we have kept all our surveillance measures in place and we are still getting our aggressive sensitisation campaigns on.

**Mr Bérenger:** I think I heard - I might have heard wrongly - the hon. Minister saying that the check-in at the airport and the Port has been somewhat relaxed, because the swine flu is now with us inside. In fact, across the world, from what I see, this is not the case, even if it has reached us, if we have had 124 cases tested positive. As the World Health Organisation has requested, vigilance at the airport and the Port remains required. In that context, can I ask whether we have temperature scanners operative at the airport and the Port?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise on one point, that is, last year the situation was different. Now, we are not on the containment phase. Last year, we were on the containment phase because we did not want to have imported cases of the virus. But now, the virus is

already in the community and when the virus is already there, there is no point again in checking at the airport.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't pretend to be an expert. But surely, with the World Cup having just taken place, people are coming back. In India, they are being very careful at the airports...

*(Interruptions)*

In India, they are being very vigilant at the airports and the harbour. Surely, one does not exclude the other! It has reached us, but it can reach us still more from the outside.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not the information that I have. It is within the protocol of the WHO which says that, if a country has already had the virus and that the virus is already in the country, then there is no need to have surveillance at the Port and airport. The virus is already in the air, it is already in Mauritius. This is the information that I have. But what we are doing is that we are still having surveillance for Chikungunya and Dengue cases. This is still on.

**Mr Bérenger:** I did not hear the answer concerning the temperature scanners that I understand had been ordered. Are they in operation?

**Mrs Hanoomajee:** Well, these scanners are still at the airport and are still operational to identify Dengue fever and Chikungunya symptoms. I would like to reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we are strictly adopting WHO guidelines. There is no such suggestion at the moment to say that we have to check at the airport and the Port. I do not propose to do anything other than that proposed by the WHO guidelines.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I can move on to vaccines and Tamiflu. Will the hon. Minister confirm that we have no expiration problem as far as the vaccine or Tamiflu is concerned, that the Tamiflu being used have not reached beyond the due date and that no date has been extended?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I can reassure the Leader of the Opposition that all Tamiflu that I have are well within the date and there is no Tamiflu which has gone beyond the expiry date. As I said, the total number of patients that can be treated immediately is around 279,275 patients. Moreover the stock of Tamiflu in the private sector also can cater for more than 4,000 patients.

**Mr Bérenger:** I did not hear the hon. Minister replying as far as the expiry dates of the vaccines are concerned?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** We have checked that also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I can confirm to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that such is not the case.

**Mr Bérenger:** As far as vaccination is concerned, can I ask the hon. Minister why is it only on 25 June of this year that a press communiqué was issued *sur la grippe et en ce qui concerne le programme de vaccination contre la grippe A(H1N1)*, especially taking into consideration, from what I understand, that it takes some six weeks after injection for the vaccine to be fully operational?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been constantly sensitising the public on this issue. We started with certain target groups. The first target groups were the front liners, that is, hospital personnel and pregnant women. We have been phasing it. On 25 June we said that we were extending it to other target groups.

**Mr Bérenger:** Does the Minister have the percentage of health operators, individuals - I mean workers, hospital servants, nurses and so on - that have been vaccinated?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have specific figures, but what I can say is that they have all been sensitised. But, as at now, we cannot compel anybody - be it members of the health personnel or members of the public - to have the vaccine done. But we are trying to sensitise them more. Actually, I had already scheduled a meeting with the relevant associations, the Nursing Association and the relevant trade unions, so that they can also come up and sensitise the health personnel to that issue.

**Mr Bérenger:** Recently, in India, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the authorities decided to inform doctors not to wait for results of tests and so on and to go ahead with Tamiflu if they are convinced that there is a possibility or a probability of somebody having swine fever. What is the situation here?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** What we are doing is that, if ever the treating doctor finds that there are symptoms which require Tamiflu, he will, of course, give Tamiflu and the symptoms that usually he diagnoses is whether the patient has upper respiratory tract infection. But high risk groups such as people who have got diabetes problems, hypertension and cancer are treated immediately with Tamiflu.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a question which I forgot to ask earlier on. As cases were detected as from 10 February, were *les proches* - family members, people close to those cases - informed that so and so had this problem so that they make the necessary arrangements?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** What we have done is that we have ensured a follow-up on the patient, but, as I have just said, out of the 123 cases that we had, they recovered immediately from usual medicines that we take for flu.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over, but I will allow two questions; one from hon. Dr. S. Boolell and a last question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a Consent Form which needs to be signed before the vaccination is conducted and that the signing of this Consent Form acts as a deterrent, preventing people from actually getting vaccinated? Since I can ask one question only, I might as well add a second part. Does the hon. Minister consider it a good policy to have 12% of the population, the above sixties, being vaccinated by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the rest being vaccinated by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life? I would like to know whether there should be a change in the vaccination policy being considered at national level.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware of that Consent Form. In fact, that Consent Form has been a sort of inhibition for people to come over and sign. What happened was that when we had bought the vaccines from the WHO, there was legal impediment which was put therein to say that if ever something happens to the person taking the vaccine, if there is any reaction, the WHO is not to be held responsible. That is why that was done in the Mauritian context also. There was a Consent Form which was asked to be signed by those who come to have the vaccines done. This acted as a sort of inhibition. I should tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I find this ridiculous because we can't, as a Ministry, ask people to have the vaccines done and, at the same time, we say that we are not liable if something happens. Again, I asked my officers to consult the State Law Office and the Consent Form is no longer there.

With regard to the second question regarding those above 60, it has been the policy of Government. We will try to see whether we should formulate another policy so that only one Ministry does all the vaccines or whether it should continue to be done by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** This is a matter of priority. Only this morning, an officer of the Ministry stated on radio that the Consent Form has to be signed. May I humbly suggest that the hon. Minister communicates with her officers?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say that I have communicated all information to my officers and that has been done since one week. Regarding the Consent Form, that had been done since one week back.

**Mr Bérenger:** This does not do away with the fact that what took place on the radio this morning. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since last Sunday, as a responsible Opposition and today, in

Parliament – which the Minister will agree - we did not do anything which will create panic. Not at all! But if she listens to the radio this morning, there is - I won't say panic - a lot of confusion and worry out there. Will the Minister agree that there is need to better communicate on the symptoms and on what people who run the risk of having swine flu are to follow in terms of medical procedures?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Let me reassure the Leader of the Opposition that we have done our best; we have issued communiqués which were concise, precise and clear. Those communiqués were broadcast on radio, television and on newspapers as well.

The second thing is that we have done programmes in Bhojpuri on the radio at the MBC and on private radios. We have done in Creole as well and I believe this is what we can do, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Fakeemeeah!

#### NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - MEMBERS

**(No. 1B/266) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to whether, since 2005 to date –

- (a) any member thereof has resigned, and
- (b) any member whose term of office has expired, indicating in each case, if any replacement has been made.

**The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. 1B/266 and 1B/275 concurrently since they relate to the same subject.

The Protection of Human Rights Act provides for the National Human Rights Commission to be composed of a Chairperson and three other members. The Chairperson is still in office. The contract of two members expired in April 2009 and September 2009 respectively while another member resigned in September 2009.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, consultations are ongoing at the level of the Prime Minister's office, the Attorney General's Office, and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission regarding

structural changes to be brought to the Commission with a view to broadening its mandate and increasing its independence so as to strengthen its efficiency and make it fully compliant with international principles on the status of National Human Rights Institutions. This exercise will require amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act as well as the enactment of new pieces of legislation, which are being worked out by the Attorney General's office in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office.

In regard to the Sex Discrimination Division which is a Division of the National Human Rights Commission, it is composed of the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, a vice-Chairperson and another member, in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act 2002. The Division currently consists of Mr Dheerujlall Seetulsingh as Chairperson since April 2003, and Mrs Vidya Narayen as vice-Chairperson. Mrs Vidya Narayen was first appointed in April 2003 for a period of 5 years, and her appointment was subsequently renewed. The Division has the required quorum to perform its duties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the functioning of the Sex Discrimination Division is also being reviewed in the context of the ongoing consultations on the overhauling of the organisational structure of the National Human Rights Commission which I mentioned earlier.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether the commission has the required quorum at all its sittings?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** At the National Human Rights Commission, the quorum is three; there is only one Chairperson. But it does not mean that it is not functioning. It is functioning. As to the Sex Discrimination Division, it is functioning, it has a quorum.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the commission is bound to inform complainants of the outcome of the inquiries and what he proposes to ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I don't think the supplementary emanates from this question. The hon. Member will have to come with a specific question.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** If I may, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Yes, they do.

### **RELIGIOUS BODIES - SUBSIDIES**

(No. 1B/267) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to subsidies to religious bodies, he will, for each of the last ten years -

- (a) give details of the total grants, and
- (b) state whether Government proposes to request the Director of Audit to audit the accounts of the beneficiaries.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions 1B/267 and 1B/276 concurrently as they relate to the same subject.

I am tabling the detailed information relating to the amount of subsidies allocated to each religious body for the last ten years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the Parliamentary Question 1B/267, I wish to inform the House that the religious bodies are requested to ensure that the religious subsidies are to be utilised as follows -

- (i) 80% to meet the salaries of priests including their travelling expenses, and
- (ii) the remaining 20% to meet expenses on construction and maintenance of places of worship and ancillary expenses, including expenses incurred on training of priests.

Furthermore, appropriate accounting and auditing arrangements are already existent whereby each religious body has to submit to the Director of Audit within two months of the end of the year, the relevant details of how the religious subsidies are distributed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a case regarding distribution of subsidies to affiliated religious organisations pending before the Supreme Court, in the presence of the Government of Mauritius. This case is scheduled for submissions on 29 July 2010. One of the issues in this case relates precisely to the distribution of religious subsidies to religious bodies and how the Accountant General and the Director of Audit exercise control on the manner in which subsidies are used by the religious bodies.

Being given that the issues raised in the part (b) of the Question 1B/267 are *sub judice*, it would not be appropriate for me to provide, at this stage, the information requested.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been a long tradition to help religious bodies in our country. But, as only, some benefits from it, does our Government consider this an opportunity to review the whole mechanism or do away completely with the system?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take the point about auditing the accounts and who have access to the funds or not. It will be looked into. But, at the moment, the issue is *sub judice*.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell the House whether Mauritius is a laic State or not?

*(Interruptions)*

*Est-ce que Maurice est une république laïque?*

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Well, this is ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, je voudrais savoir du premier ministre par intérim sur quel critère on se base pour déterminer le montant des subsides pour chaque organisation religieuse ?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** The allocation of subsidy is based on population census of 1972 corrected as time goes along by the Central Statistical Office and there is a *per capita* allocation for each religion which is then shared among all the members.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister table a list of the beneficiaries indicating the yearly amount of each group?

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the Ag. Prime Minister saying that the religious subsidies are distributed on the basis of the 1972 population census. Fair enough! And then, he added - "corrected by the Central Statistical Office". How do they correct the 1972 population census, on what facts?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did ask this question to the Central Statistical Office. They assured me that the method they use is reliable and that the changes are so slight over a decade that there is no room for great error. Therefore, the figures are applicable. This is the information I gathered from someone who is very trustworthy on this.

**CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION - SHARES**

**(No. 1B/268) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)**

asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Cargo Handling Corporation, he will state if Government and the Mauritius Ports Authority intend to sell their shares in the Company and, if so, state the measures that have been or will be taken to safeguard the employment of its employees, particularly the casual workers.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the shareholders of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd are namely, the Government - 6%; the State Investment Corporation (SIC) Ltd - 54%, and the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) - 40%.

I am informed that in an Aide Memoire dated 05 February 2007, the then World Bank Director of the Africa region which includes Mauritius, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, had advised that Port Louis Harbour was well poised to play a lead role on the regional maritime and logistics scene, and in the process transform itself into a major logistics and transshipment platform in this part of the world. It had also recommended that a strategic partner for Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd be selected with a view to capturing substantial benefits both in terms of container traffic growth as well as foreign direct investment as a result of the window of opportunity that was unfolding in the region.

In June 2007, Government agreed to the recommendation of the World Bank and appointed -

- (a) the International Finance Corporation, the Private Sector arm of the World Bank, as the Lead Transaction Advisors to assist in the selection of the strategic partner, and
- (b) a Steering Committee under the responsibility of the External Communications Division to oversee the successful implementation of the strategic partnership project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that as part of their assignment, the IFC has carried out a due diligence exercise in October 2008 and in its Inception Report has reiterated that the Mauritius Ports Authority divests its shares in the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd in order to be able to play its role as an effective regulatory body and landlord port in accordance with the provisions of the Ports Act.

Accordingly, in December 2008, Government, *inter alia*, agreed to the Mauritius Ports Authority disposing of its 40% shares in the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. to a prospective Strategic Partner,

the more so as the continued participation of the MPA in the shareholding structure of the terminal operator is against the principles of good governance and best practices.

As regards the second part of the question, I am informed that the CHCL is having recourse to the services of contract employees for a period not exceeding one year as and when the need is felt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Steering Committee that has been set up to oversee the implementation of the strategic partnership project is working with the IFC regularly. The assignment is still ongoing. I am given to understand that IFC is currently in the process of finalising the documents for the launching of the second phase of the project, namely, the Request for Proposal and a recommendation regarding the labour issue will be made to Government subsequently.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether there have been consultations with trade unions of the Cargo Handling Corporation to reassure them that once there is a strategic partner, all the terms and conditions of the existing employees will remain as they are?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have met representatives from management and the trade unions who have come to see me on different occasions and we are taking their concerns on board.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the present Government has decided what percentage of its shares that strategic partner will hold and, secondly, whether this strategic partner will have full management control of the company?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** For sure, Government will keep the majority shareholding and the strategic partner will have a minority shareholding. As to the management, it will be decided as it is still being discussed.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following this answer, we know that in the case of Mauritius Telecom, a minority partner still exercises substantial control. Will it be the same in the case of Cargo Handling where you will have the minority foreign shareholder exercising control over the company?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all this is being taken care of as this is the whole point of the exercise. I am sure the hon. Member knows about it, he has been involved at some stage, so he knows what these issues are.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, prior to the past general election, the then responsible Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, said that *privatisation* was not in the best interest of the day. Will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister confirm that his Government today is working on the same policy?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** The vice-Prime Minister denies having said anything of this sort.

### **RODRIGUES - POLICE OFFICERS - RECRUITMENT**

**(No. 1B/269) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Force, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information for Rodrigues as to -
  - (i) the number of police officers posted thereat;
  - (ii) whether consideration will be given to recruit Police Constables from Rodrigues for future recruitment exercises;
  - (iii) the number of Officers from the Special Mobile Force posted thereat on a roster basis, and
- (b) state if Government intends to convert the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex into a Training Institution for all Law Enforcement Officers and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are currently 297 Police officers posted in different Stations, Units and Branches in Rodrigues.

As for part (a) (ii), I am informed that whenever the Disciplined Forces Service Commission carries out a recruitment exercise in the Police, equal opportunities are given to all eligible candidates from the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, to join the service. The policy is to encourage the recruitment of the maximum number of officers from Rodrigues so that, in the long run, the Rodrigues

Police Force can be run by Rodriguan Police officers themselves. At present, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of 264 officers running the Rodrigues Police Force, excluding the Special Mobile Force Task Force, 233 out of 264 are Rodriguans.

Regarding part (a) (iii), I am informed that the Special Mobile Force Task Force based in Rodrigues is made up of 33 officers, of whom 12 are on a permanent basis, and 21 are on a tour of 45 days. Around 50% of the officers of the Special Mobile Force Task Force are Rodriguans.

As for part (b) of the question, I am informed that there is no proposal to convert the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex into a Training Institution for all Law Enforcement Officers. However, I would like to point out that all organisations concerned with law enforcement are responsible to carrying out training of their officers as it is the practice in Mauritius.

The training of Police officers in Rodrigues is already being carried out by the Rodrigues Divisional Training Unit at the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex.

**Mr François:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware that there is recruitment of Police officers, but I was asking for a higher number of Police constables from Rodrigues. May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware - despite training, as he said, at the Jean Tac complex - that in the Police Department in Rodrigues, there is a kind of frustration from a lack of thorough continuous training.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I will transmit this to the Commissioner of Police to see what can be done to improve. We are always going for improvement wherever it is, we will look into it.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I have heard the Ag. Prime Minister correctly, he said that out of so many SMF officers in Rodrigues, so many are there on a permanent basis. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister clarify? No one is in permanence in the SMF itself. The Police officers spend some time and then go back to the Police Force. What does he mean by that?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** From the information that I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are 33 members of Special Mobile Force and out of these, 11 are Rodriguans posted on a permanent basis. This is the information that I have and, of those who are on rotation, there are four out of 21. So, it comes to about 15.

**Mr François:** The Ag. Prime Minister said that there are 53 officers posted there and I believe that this complex is underutilised and there is also a newly built Police station at Plaine Corail airport. Will the Ag. Prime Minister consider the possibility of shifting those officers from Jean Tac to the newly

built Plaine Corail airport and create this training institution which, I believe, is very important to the Police Force in Rodrigues? I will come later with another question more specifically about that, Sir.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will transmit whatever is being requested, but for sure, the Jean Tac Unit is strategically located and it will be difficult to find anywhere else as good as where it is now. But, as to the other proposal, I will certainly ask the Commissioner of Police to look into it.

### **PRISON INSTITUTIONS - REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES**

(No. 1B/270) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to rehabilitation activities in the prison institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number, if any, meant for –

- (a) male inmates, and
- (b) female inmates, indicating the frequency thereof.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rehabilitation of detainees forms part of the Prisons activities. The rehabilitation programmes include literacy and numeracy courses, educational and vocational training, moral and spiritual programmes, as well as leisure and recreational activities.

In addition, preventive and rehabilitation programmes are also being carried out to address the problem of substance abuse and proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the prisons. These include detoxification, HIV/AIDS care programme and offending behaviour courses which are run in collaboration with other governmental agencies and NGOs.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, there are 34 rehabilitation activities designed for male detainees and 16 for female detainees. I am tabling a list of the rehabilitation activities designed for male and female as well as the organisations which also run rehabilitation activities. I am giving full information to the hon. Member.

Some of the activities, such as the vocational training courses, are run on a daily basis while others on a weekly, monthly or on need basis, as appropriate.

Some of the rehabilitation activities at the prisons are run in collaboration with non-governmental organisations. I would like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to put on record the important contributions of NGOs working with the detainees.

**Mr Bérenger:** Again, when a question is put concerning the prisons, *tout va très bien madame la marquise*. It is an ideal world, listening to the reply provided by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister. Will he care to check the mess that exists in the prisons in terms of rehabilitation activities? Will he care also to listen to the NGOs? They are fed up; *ils sont plein de bonnes volontés*, but they cannot do what they are meant to do.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at no point did I say that everything is marvellous and beautiful. I gave the answer as it is, the number of activities and what is being done. As far as the contributions of the NGOs are concerned, I am circulating the list. So, there is no complacency and that everything is fine, but, having said that, there is a question of security and access in prison. We must be careful about how courses are run and who have access to prisoners. So, we have to balance it too. I am sure there must be some who feel that they do not have enough access and others who feel that they should be given more means. I go along with all these. Nobody is saying that it is a perfect world, but wide efforts are being made.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who carries out these activities, who gives the training apart from the NGOs? Second, I would like to know whether the officers dispensing the training have received a particular training, and the duration of the training they have received.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. There is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Institute of Development and Training Board. They have trained about 104 Prisons officers. They have trained the trainers; they also accompany these trainers and issue certificates of competence and attendance. Things are improving. This was signed early this year.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether prisoners on remand also take part in these rehabilitation activities?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I do not believe so, but I will check.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, since last year, NGOs have been refused access for rehabilitation programme.

If so, has he been informed of the reasons why an NGO, which used to offer its services at the prisons, has been refused access? As a matter of example, there was another NGO that offered training in hair dressing, and this project has been turned down.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was made aware of two problems that arose. One, with ‘*Ki nous été*’ and the second with Mrs Rogers who, for personal reasons, stopped her prison activities. I looked into these two, but what I am told - this is what I said before - is that, sometimes, there is some sort of difficulty about access. If for security reasons, resource persons have to be security cleared and if they are not cleared - they happen to change resource persons without informing the authorities - problems can arise. I think that with better communication and understanding of how the system works, things will improve. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to say that we do not find this in the prison also. I am sure the hon. Member must know. If we take the Parent-Teacher Association, we have the same problem of where one responsibility goes and when the other one lies. So, it is a matter of dialogue.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether any follow-up is done with the prisoners after they are released, to see if the rehabilitation has been effective or not?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Yes, those who are interested to get back to normal life are identified and counselled before they leave prison about three to six months before, and, following that, they are followed outside as well. But it depends largely on the voluntary bodies to do it and, as I said, they do a marvellous job though, from what I gather, there are limitations, of course.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will allow two more questions; one from hon. Barbier and one from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the rehabilitation programme, may I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether psychologists participate in it? *Est-ce que les psychologues sont impliqués dans ce programme ? Dans l’affirmative, combien ? Y a-t-il un programme à cet effet à la prison centrale ?*

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I am given to understand that, yes, there are psychologists. How often and how many there are, I would not be able to say, but I will look into it.

**Mr Bérenger:** We have been talking about rehabilitation activities. Will not the hon. Ag. Prime Minister agree with me that the beginning of rehabilitation is giving possibility to these prisoners of

performing productive work? From what I understand, even that has stopped recently; not yesterday, but recently.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that this has stopped, but I will look into it. The aim is eventually to get prisoners back into normal life, whether through training, counselling, mentoring or whatever it is.

#### **BEAU BASSIN CENTRAL PRISONS – MR J. P. I. - DEATH**

(No. 1B/271) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the interdiction of the Prison Officers in connection with the death of Mr J. P. I. on 4 March 2006 at the Central Prisons of Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to whether, the inquiry thereinto has now been completed and, if so, where matters stand.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Prime Minister to Parliamentary Question 1B/143 at the sitting on Tuesday 29 June 2010, where he indicated that following the findings of the Judicial inquiry into the cause of death of late J.P.I by the District Magistrate of Rose Hill, the Director of Public Prosecutions had advised no further action in the matter on Friday 04 September 2009. The District Magistrate had concluded that there was no foul play in the case.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on the basis of a preliminary report by the Police on the death of late J.P.I., whilst the latter was in custody at the Beau Bassin Central Prison, six prisons officers were interdicted as from Tuesday 14 March 2006 for alleged gross negligence of duty.

Upon obtaining the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions on the outcome of the Judicial inquiry, the Commissioner of Prisons informed the Disciplined Forces Service Commission on Monday 26 October 2009 of his proposal to withdraw the interdiction orders dated Tuesday 14 March 2006 served upon the six prisons officers, and of his intention to take departmental action against the officers concerned for possible dereliction of duty. I am informed that all the six prisons officers were reinstated in their respective posts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 23 November 2009, he had designated an Assistant Commissioner of Prisons to carry out a departmental inquiry to determine if there has been gross negligence of duty. I am further advised that the inquiry is still ongoing and that the report will be submitted within a week.

**Mr Bérenger:** I am sure that the hon. Ag. Prime Minister is aware what has taken place. When the DPP advises no further action, because he finds that there has not been no foul play, that's one thing. But there must have been officers guilty of gross negligence. That chap died in part of the prison, stayed there for several days, was recorded as present in and out of his cell and present at meals. All this time, the inquiry is still on. This again is the performance of this present Commissioner of Prisons.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** As I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Commissioner of Prisons gave the responsibility to an Assistant Commissioner of Prisons. He has taken some time, because I gather, he has a problem of illness, absenteeism. But this week or next week, the report will be ready.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, though we had the answer from the Ag. Prime Minister, may I ask him whether he is aware that we had two independent inquiries, one from the Police department and one from the Prison department and that both inquiries at that time concluded that there was gross negligence? Now we are four years down the lane and the poor bereaved family is still waiting for a final conclusion. We understand, from a reply given earlier and confirmed today, that the Director of Public Prosecution has advised no further action and that the Prison officers are being reinstated to their posts. Which is which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I follow what the hon. Member is saying. There have been two different issues; one is gross negligence and one is no criminal offence in terms of the death. For negligence, the Police established that there has been negligence and there is an inquiry ongoing at the moment to establish the truth.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over! We may carry on with questions addressed to Ministers.

#### **DAGOTIERE – FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTING FACILITIES**

(No. 1B/278) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground of Lower

Dagotièrè, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka/Flacq, information as to if consideration will be given for the provision of lighting facilities thereat.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that works for lighting facilities at lower Dagotièrè Football ground will start shortly and will be completed by the end of August 2010.

I am further informed that the works will be carried out in-house by labour and materials of the Council.

### **ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE - BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. 1B/279) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Additional Stimulus Package, he will -

- (a) give a list of the beneficiaries thereof as at to date, stating, in each case, the total amount disbursed and the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether any monitoring exercise is carried out by his Ministry in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. 1B/279 and 1B/299 together since they relate to the same subject matter.

The Additional Stimulus Package relating to support to enterprises comprises five components -

- (1) the Mechanism for Transitional Support (MTSP);
- (2) the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Schemes (LEMS I, II & III);
- (3) Support to Manufacturing and Services Sector (SMSS);
- (4) Support to SMEs (SSME), and
- (5) Support to facilitate access to Finance.

These five components are regrouped under the Saving Jobs and Recovery (SJR) Fund.

I am informed that under the SJR Fund, two types of interventions are provided to enterprises, including SMEs: first, direct support in terms of working capital, debentures and government guarantees to enterprises in difficulty; and second, support to enterprises to make them grow and become more

productive and competitive. A total amount of Rs3.15 billion has been earmarked for the SJR Fund. In addition to the SJR Fund, Government has earmarked Rs500 m. for Sale and Lease Back interventions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at 30 June 2010, Government has disbursed Rs226.3 m. under MTSP and under the Sale & Lease Back Scheme, a sum of Rs466 m. has been disbursed. The total number of beneficiaries under the MTSP is 15, out of which there are 5 small and medium enterprises. I am told that 4,979 jobs have been saved out of which 221 relate to SMEs. I am tabling the list of the 15 beneficiaries under MTSP.

As regards the second type of intervention aimed at helping enterprises including SMEs to grow and become more productive and competitive, I am informed that as at end of June 2010, a sum of Rs158 m. has been disbursed and some Rs153 m. have been committed for various schemes and projects. The areas of intervention cover SMEs in agriculture, manufacturing, services, catering, ICT, printing, seafood processing, fishing, utility industries, building & construction, light engineering, hotel & restaurants and others. These schemes are being implemented by three sub-committees namely, SMSS, SSME and the MTSP itself.

The SMSS and SSME components are, in fact, being managed by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection respectively. The main implementing agencies under the SMSS and SSME sub-committees are Enterprise Mauritius, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC), the Development Bank of Mauritius and the Tourism Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that there is a Mauritius Approach for SMEs Scheme where commercial banks have agreed to earmark Rs300 m. to lend money to SMEs at repo rate on the basis of an analysis by an independent consultant and a guarantee from Government. This Scheme, however, is not working as planned. Out of 22 applications under this Scheme, only 5 have been approved for an amount of Rs26.5 m. I have requested that this Scheme be reviewed so as to make it more accessible to SMEs.

Enterprises get support from the various schemes in the following areas, amongst others -

- Upgrading of standards, quality and packaging for export readiness
- Productivity and competitiveness improvement

- Market Intelligence and export promotion
- Equipment Modernisation schemes
- Market Development and Marketing
- Market Diversification
- Product Development

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that the SJR Fund has been in operation since July 2008 and that there are a number of schemes and implementing agencies involved, a list of all the beneficiaries including eligibility criteria for each scheme is being compiled and will be tabled. However, I can give the House an insight of the interventions as at date through certain implementing agencies.

For Enterprise Mauritius, 412 SMEs have benefitted and total amount disbursed is Rs39.7 m. For SMEDA, there are 119 beneficiaries for an amount of Rs15.7 m. For NWECC, there have been 1,471 participants for an amount of Rs1.1 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MTSP operates the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) which I mentioned earlier. This scheme aims at helping enterprises including SMEs to modernise their productive equipment and machinery through concessionary financing from Leasing Companies. Rs1.4 billion have been earmarked for this Scheme. As at 30 June 2010, Rs285m. have been disbursed and Rs375 m. are already committed. Some 210 applications have been approved, out of which 125 relate to SMEs.

Support is also provided to enterprises in the form of guarantees to enable them to secure funds from financial institutions. As at date, some Rs195 m. have been provided in the form of Government guarantees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the Finance and Audit (Savings Jobs and Recovery Fund) Act 2009, adequate safeguards have been put in place to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of Government money. Thus, the three sub-committees have adequate representation of Government officers on Board and their accounts are audited by the Government Audit Office. In addition, the sub-committees operate under the aegis of an apex body, the SJR Steering Committee, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Disbursements are effected in phases while the project is being implemented. The Finance Section of the concerned Ministries has the responsibility to ensure that documentary evidence of expenses is available to justify the amount disbursed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with respect to monitoring, I am informed that the implementing agencies have the responsibility to submit to their respective sub-committees progress reports on a monthly basis. On their side, the sub-committees must report progress to the SJR Steering Committee on a quarterly basis. The MTSP has a team which monitors the schemes under its purview and the Ministry of Finance is kept informed of developments, including disbursements effected.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that we are currently reviewing the whole package of support to enterprises including SMEs.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister Finance confirm that the Mauritius Stationery Manufacturers Ltd. has benefitted, although it has made losses for activities in the Malagasy Republic?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I think that the hon. Member is talking about the MTSP financing. According to the information that I have and the list that has been circulated, I can see that the Mauritius Stationery, MSM Printing - it is in the printing business, not our MSM, it is a different MSM - has benefitted from the MTSP.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find it absolutely abnormal - the MSM Ltd. forms part of Mon Loisir Group, which is itself a powerful economic player - that Government rescues such type of enterprises which definitely can survive on their own.

**Mr Jugnauth:** First of all, I am not aware about the activities of the company with regard to Madagascar, because I heard the hon. Member saying that they are making losses in Madagascar. I do not have this information. Secondly, I can reassure the hon. Member that the MTSP functions on the basis that Government will put in 40% of the amount and there is also the Bank that is committed. This is my view, that the Bank will not go and finance an enterprise if it believes that it will not recover in the future. That is the whole purpose of having a partnership with the Bank and Government under the MTSP.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Will the hon. Minister confirm to the House that he will look into the issue in the public interest?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I will definitely look again into the issue but, as I say, the MTSP has done its due diligence. They have also looked into the report that has been made by the financial institutions and they have acted on that basis. Of course, I take the point and I will look into that particular case.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it appears, therefore, that the Additional Stimulus Package has not been working satisfactorily according to what has been explained by the vice-Prime Minister. And, in the case of SMEs, only five of them have benefitted from the Additional Stimulus Package scheme. In view of the fact that so much criticism has been levelled by him in the past about the failure of the Stimulus Package to help the poor, will the content, the nature and scope of the Stimulus Package still be maintained in the meantime?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the view of the hon. Member that the Stimulus Package or the MTSP has not worked. That is his view and I take note of it. As to whether it has not been helping the poor, as I say, I have circulated the list under the MTSP and there are, in fact, five SMEs who have benefitted. But I also take the view that it should be reviewed because what we want is to help more the SMEs. We all know that there have been criticisms of the Stimulus Package, but it is a matter - I have just said that in my reply - that we are going to review. First of all, we have to assess the impact of the Additional Stimulus Package and, in the light of that, we are going to review if need be.

**Mr Ganoo:** Will the hon. Minister of Finance agree with me - since I have the list of the beneficiaries just tabled - that Infinity BPO should not have benefitted from the MTSP financing under the Stimulus Package inasmuch as Infinity BPO is in the IT and BPO sector and this financing was designed only for industries in the manufacturing sector? And, this is why, out of the 15 beneficiaries on the list, Infinity BPO is the only one beneficiary falling under the IT and BPO sector - all the other beneficiaries operate in the manufacturing sector?

**Mr Jugnauth:** No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It was meant for any company which wishes to come to the MTSP. So, it was not limited. A Parliamentary Question has been asked about Infinity BPO to which I replied. And I can remember having said - let me say it again - that the Infinity BPO had satisfied the criteria that were laid down before benefitting from this amount.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the vice-Prime Minister with regard to SMEs who have benefitted from the Stimulus Package, in which sectors those SMEs are operating?

**Mr Jugnauth:** There are three in Textile and Garment, one in Pharmaceutical and one in Jewellery.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question from hon. Li Kwong Wing!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I have heard in the reply of the vice-Prime Minister, it is very clear that the Stimulus Package which forms part of the reform of the previous Government has not worked ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question, please!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** My question, therefore, is: now that we have even a bigger crisis coming with the Euro zone problems and turbulence, where the SMEs are going to face even greater difficulties, is it not urgent that the Minister of Finance reconsiders the whole Package for SMEs instead of waiting for the study of the failures of this scheme so far?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I think the hon. Member has not listened to what I have just said in my reply with regard to the Additional Stimulus Package. The Additional Stimulus Package is not only about MTSP. I have mentioned a series of components which are under the Additional Stimulus Package. Unfortunately, I do not have the list with me - it is only a partial list - but I will circulate the list of the number of enterprises and people who have benefitted with regard to the different components under the ASP. With regard to the effectiveness, I have already replied. First of all, we are assessing, but I am not going to wait for the assessment before coming with other measures. I have just said earlier, in reply to different Parliamentary Questions, that we are monitoring the situation with regard to the new situation that is arising now in Europe with the decline of the Euro, and we will be coming shortly to the House with a number of measures.

#### **NAPOLEON BRIDGE-MALINGA ROAD - WIDENING**

**(No. 1B/280) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the main road from Napoleon Bridge to Malinga, La Laura and Rivière Baptiste, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, if consideration will be given to its widening for the safety of the road users.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the road from Napoleon Bridge to Malinga, La Laura and Rivière Baptiste is a rural road, and falls under the responsibility of Moka/Flacq District Council. However, I will request RDA to have a fresh look at it.

*At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

### **CHEMIN LA RETRAITE - UPGRADING**

**(No. 1B/281) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Chemin La Retraite from La Laura to the cremation ground at Circonstance, St Pierre, he will consider the advisability of its upgrading.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Chemin La Retraite has not yet been declared public road, and Moka/Flacq District Council has initiated the necessary procedures to do so.

Once the road is declared public, the NDU will take appropriate action for the construction of same.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is very helpful as usual. Can I suggest if he could use his good offices to expedite matters? That part of the road from La Laura to Circonstance, via l'Avenir, is very busy. At some places, it is very narrow and cannot be widened. There are other facilities and amenities that can be available at Circonstance, which is not at La Laura.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already said that we are going to expedite matters.

### **M. RAMBURREN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RENOVATION**

**(No. 1B/282) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the derelict state of the administrative block of M. Ramburren Government School at St Julien d'Hotman and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given to its renovation.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the administrative block of the M. Ramburrun Government School at St Julien d'Hotman is accommodated in a stone building, which dates as far back as 1951, where upgrading works are indeed required.

My Ministry has already completed, since June 2010, the first phase of works, which comprise tiling, cladding, partitioning, internal painting and construction of false ceiling in some classrooms. As a next phase, it is now proposed to carry out further upgrading works like additional painting, plastering, repairs to false ceiling, replacement of shed and fixing of new gutters to shed.

For the information of the hon. Member, I wish to table a list of other works that may be needed to be carried out by the maintenance team of my Ministry.

#### **AXLE WEIGH BRIDGE - PURCHASE**

**(No. 1B/283) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Axle Weigh Bridge, he will state the date of its purchase and the cost thereof, indicating if it is still in use.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an axle weigh bridge was purchased under the South Eastern Highway project by RDA in September 2008.

The cost is around Rs700,000 (inclusive of all taxes) at the time of its supply.

It was one of the equipment supplied by the contractor, Beijing Chang Cheng Construction Co. Ltd, and the cost was included in the contractor's bid.

At present, it is with the supplier for maintenance and recalibration. It is expected to be back in August 2010.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may we know from the hon. Minister what this equipment is used for?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this equipment is used to measure the weight of different vehicles in the country. According to the Road Traffic Regulations, it is stipulated that the maximum axle weight of a single axle shall not exceed 10 tonnes, and that is the mechanism by which we are able to find out whether the vehicle is fit to be utilised on the road or not.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that we don't have the equipment, does that mean that it has a detrimental effect on our tarmac?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we never had this in the past. Once we received this instrument, it was very difficult for us to utilise it because no one in the Police Department was properly trained for that purpose. Secondly, the machine itself was not properly calibrated, and that is the reason why we have sent it back to the supplier, to have a look at it over again.

### **MONT IDA - FOOTBALL GROUND**

**(No. 1B/284) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a football ground at Mont Ida, he will state if the works have started and, if not, state when, indicating the expected date of completion.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, works were completed in April 2010. Once the maintenance period of one year is completed, including proper turfing of the pitch, the football ground will be handed over to the District Council for use for the inhabitants.

**Mr Seetaram:** Does the hon. Minister consider an additional investment for the erection of fencing around the football ground?

**Mr Bachoo:** This is a fresh request; I will try to transmit it to the NDU.

### **NHDC ESTATES, MONTAGNE BANCHE - BUS SHELTERS**

**(No. 1B/285) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of bus shelters at NHDC Estates, Montagne Blanche, he will state if the works have started and, if not, when, indicating the expected date of completion.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TRMSU that works for the construction of bus shelters at NHDC Estates, Montagne Blanche, will start once land is acquired from the private sector on one side of the road. Land on the other side belongs to the State.

### EVENTS MAURITIUS LTD - ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/286) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether he will, for the period 2006 to date, give details of activities carried out by Events Mauritius on account of –

- (a) his Ministry, and
- (b) any department falling under the aegis of his Ministry, indicating, in each case, the fees paid.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Events Mauritius Ltd, a Government-owned company, was set up for the purpose of identifying, organising and promoting national and international events in Mauritius. In this regard, Events Mauritius Ltd has been called upon to organise a series of events in partnership with the Ministry and the MTPA, namely -

- (a) in the year 2007, activities in the context of the first Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;
- (b) for the year 2008 -
  - activities in the context of the Second Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;

And other events which were organised in that year -

- family fun day;
  - waiters race;
  - Ebony, and
  - concert by DJ Aqueel.
- (c) In the year 2009 -
    - we have the activities in the context of the third Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;
    - two fairs for the benefit of Women Entrepreneurs, namely one at Grand'Baie and one at Flic en Flac;
    - the launching of National Brand Strategy, and

- Divali Celebrations;

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that no fee as such has been paid to Events Mauritius Ltd. However, my Ministry and the MTPA have, among other partners, including the private sector, sponsored activities organised by Events Mauritius Ltd by contributing towards the costs of such activities.

### QUATRE BORNES – MARKET - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/287) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a new market in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to where matters stand, indicating -

- if land has already been earmarked, and
- the budget allocated for its realisation.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has decided to construct a new market fair with dismantlable steel structures on the existing site at corner St Jean and Avenue Newton. In this context, the project has been submitted on 06 April 2010 to the Project Plan Committee for its consideration.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the land earmarked for the construction is 3,930 m<sup>2</sup>, out of which 539.6 m<sup>2</sup> is owned by the Council and the remaining 3,390.4 m<sup>2</sup> has been leased by the Société Central Park.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, a request for provision of fund to the tune of Rs30 m. has been made through the Local Infrastructure Fund to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the implementation of the project and same is under consideration.

Although it is the decision of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes to house the project on the said site, concurrently, upon a suggestion of my colleague, hon. Ms Deerpalsing, I am looking actively into a possible alternative site which would be more appropriate for the construction of a market place together with parking facilities and which may, at the same time, offer the possibility of an integrated urban development plan.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le ministre, après 2005, il a été question de la construction d'un *tourist market*. Est-ce que nous sommes en train de parler du même projet ?

**Mr Aimée:** Non, M. le président.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le président, nous parlons d'un chiffre de R 30 millions. Le ministre est-il au courant d'une lettre en date du 05 mai 2009 du ministère des travaux publics où mention est faite que *the covering of the existing fair - even though it will be constructed with dismantable steel structures - will constitute an encroachment onto the mass transit alignment, as such the committee cannot recommend the implementation of the project?*

**Mr Aimée:** Bien sûr, M. le président. That's why I am looking for an alternative site to make provision for parking and other spaces.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le président, je voudrais quand même souligner que mention est faite dans la réponse du ministre qu'il y a une demande de R 30 millions qui a été faite au *Local Infrastructure Fund*. Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant qu'une motion a été déposée par l'équipe municipale pour la démolition du stade de Candos pour faire face à un nouveau marché ? Est-ce que je pourrais aussi savoir du ministre s'il peut s'assurer que provision est faite pour la construction d'un nouveau stade, et deuxièmement qu'un *proper traffic impact assessment* soit commandité, vu la gravité de la situation dans la région de l'hôpital Victoria, Candos, et aussi dans la région de la Louise ?

**Mr Aimée:** Je n'ai pas cette information à l'effet que le stade de Candos va être démoli. Par contre, le stade a bel et bien commencé à Palma. C'est tout ce que j'ai comme information.

#### **RAJKUMAR GUJADHUR GOVERNMENT SCHOOL, FLACQ – WASTE WATER - SEEPAGE**

(No. 1B/288) **Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Rajkumar Gujadhur Government School at Flacq, he will state if he is aware of seepage of waste water emanating from the Police Quarters into the school yard thereof and, if so, will he state the remedial actions that will be taken, indicating the timeframe.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a problem of seepage of waste water emanating from the Police Quarters into the school yard and the matter has been reported to

the authorities concerned. According to reports available, this is due to the fact that the existing wastewater disposal system at the Police Staff Quarters is not functioning due to high water table.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) is currently working on a wastewater disposal system with the Police Department in order to find a solution to this problem.

As a short-term solution, the Wastewater Management Authority is proposing to sort the seepage of waste water through the pumping and carting away of the waste water by the Police Department. I understand that this is actually being done. The Health Inspectorate has also taken mitigated measures to disinfect and larvicide twice weekly the yard of the school.

#### **CENTRAL FLACQ, ISIDORE ROSE & LALLMATIE – GREEN SPACES - MAINTENANCE**

**(No. 1B/289) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the green spaces at -

- (a) Central Flacq, opposite Auguste Volaire stadium;
- (b) Isidore Rose, near the football ground, and
- (c) the Gandhi Road at Lallmatie, he will state the frequency at which they are cleaned and maintained.

**Mr Virahsawmy:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the three green spaces are presently being cleaned and maintained by my Ministry once a month in winter and twice a month in summer while the collection of the refuse is ensured by the Local Authority.

I wish to inform the hon. Member that the green spaces will soon be handed over to the Local Authority for maintenance.

#### **CENTRAL FLACQ - HAWKERS**

**(No. 1B/290) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the increasing business activities

in Central Flacq, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka-Flacq District Council, information as to whether a survey on the number of hawkers operating thereat has been or will be carried out by the Council in order to relocate them.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that a preliminary survey conducted in May 2010 in the vicinity of Flacq market open fair had revealed that 92 illegal hawkers were operating thereat.

I am further informed that the Council intends to carry out a fresh survey in order to determine the exact number of hawkers operating in the Central Flacq region.

With regard to the last part of the question, I am informed that the Council has not taken any decision for the relocation of these hawkers.

Concurrently, upon the request of my colleague, the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, land Transport and Shipping, hon. Bachoo, additional provision will be made in the new market to be constructed to house some more hawkers.

#### **MEDICAL COUNCIL - MEDICAL SPECIALISTS – REGISTRATION**

**(No. 1B/291) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Medical Specialists, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to -

- (a) the number of applications for registration thereof which have been rejected as at to date, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether distance learning for post graduate medical gynaecological and surgical training is acceptable as formal specialist training to the Council for registration.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to PQ Nos. 1B/291 and 1B/292 together as both of them relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Medical Council that from January 2005 to date, three applications were rejected as they did not comply with the provisions of the Medical Council Act. Two of the applicants did not comply with the prescribed training period for registration as specialist as their course of study

was less than three years, while the other one had followed an MSc Course which is not considered as a specialist qualification.

As regards distance learning for specialist training, I am further informed by the Medical Council that such a mode of learning is not acceptable by the Medical Council for registration purposes.

The Medical Council has confirmed that all specialists, including Medical Officers employed by my Ministry, are duly registered in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Medical Council Act in force at the time of their registration. However, I wish to point out that from 2005 to date, seven specialists who were initially registered on the basis of documents submitted at the time of registration had their registration withdrawn in view of the fact that the Medical Council subsequently obtained confirmation on a basis of an enquiry carried out, that the duration of the training was less than three years.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there has been a letter by a former Attorney General requesting the Medical Council to have a further sitting to review the non-registration of a doctor, I would like to ask the Minister whether she has caused an enquiry to be conducted on that matter?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have enquired from the Medical Council as to what happened in that particular case. In fact, I have the letter which was addressed to the Chairman of the Medical Council by the former Attorney General, in which he said that he is being given to understand that there are disturbing factors and whether the matter could be looked into. The Medical Council has, at its sitting, referred the matter to the legal adviser of the Council. The legal adviser has also given the following advice that, if the Council has good reasons to still believe that the doctor in question does not satisfy the criteria set out in Section 23 of the Medical Council Act to be able to be registered as a specialist, it should not proceed with the registration. A *mise en demeure* also had been served on the Council.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, she said that seven specialists have had their qualification as specialist withdrawn. Can we know when that took place?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I don't have specifically the dates, but I can tell you that it is between 2002 and 2005.

**Mr Baloomoody:** May we know the reasons as to why these applications were withdrawn?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I just gave the reasons in my reply. I said that, in the initial stage, what happened was that the Medical Council had examined the case on the basis of its face value. Following an enquiry, it was found that those who were initially registered on the basis of documents which were submitted at the time of registration had less than three years training.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I heard the Minister correctly, those seven cases had their specialist qualification withdrawn before 2005. Can I know whether there are not other cases which are pending these days where the Medical Council does not wish to act, although Police passport enquiry has established, as in the case of those seven, that they had not been present where required, to qualify for a period of three years?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have got specialists coming from Eastern European Universities in possession of a PhD who were registered as specialists prior to July 2008, because it was not specified then in the definition of specialist qualification that the training should be clinical or academic or both. In the circumstances, a number of specialists were registered as such. When this was found out, there were regulations which were made in 2008 and these regulations stipulate that to be registered as specialist, the candidate should undergo not less than three years of practical and clinical training. But the law, prior to that, was there. In spite of the fact that an amendment was brought to the Medical Council Act in 2007, this loophole could not be corrected because we cannot backdate the law. That is why these cases are still there. Anybody will have to live with it. It was done in the days when Ashock Jugnauth was Minister of Health. He had to live with it. My predecessor had to live with it; I have to live with it. We won't be able to do anything because we cannot backdate the law.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** What are the amendments being now contemplated by the Council as per the President's Speech for certification of specialists?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** This is still ongoing. As at now, I cannot tell the hon. Member what are the amendments that will be brought because there is a committee looking into it and I'll come to this august Assembly for amendments to be made to the Medical Council Act.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Is it possible to know from the Minister as to whether many of the specialists who work in Mauritius are recognised as specialists by the donor countries of the certificates?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** In fact, before registration we ask for information from the universities concerned and it is on the basis of criteria which are established that the Medical Council will register or reject the case.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are in post actually staff that have obtained postgraduate medical gynaecological and surgical training by distance learning?

**The Deputy Speaker:** This has been answered.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** If the hon. Member had listened to my reply, I just explained that this was the situation because the law, prior to 2005 did not make mention of whether it should be three years or whether the candidate should have clinical or academic qualification or both. The law is such. In fact, there was an amendment which was made to the law in 2007. Even then, we could not amend the law, because it cannot be backdated.

**Mr Barbier:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she got any request to bring the regulation as it was prior to 2008? Has the hon. Minister got any request in that direction?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I am not in presence of any such request.

**Mrs Labelle:** I think I have heard changes as from 2005 and then the hon. Minister has mentioned 2008. Maybe she could clarify as from which year there were these changes? Was it in 2005 or 2008?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** In fact, there was an amendment in the law in 2002 to 2007 and then there was an amendment which was brought to this august Assembly in 2007, but, in spite of this amendment, that piece of law could not be corrected. That is why I say we will have to live with it because we cannot backdate the law.

#### **MEDICAL COUNCIL – SPECIALISTS - COMPLIANCE**

**(No. 1B/292) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to whether all Specialists, including Medical Officers employed by the Ministry, registered by the Council, comply with the Council regulations for registration as Specialists.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/291)*

**RODRIGUES – TRUST FUND FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE  
GROUPS AND NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

(No. 1B/293) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Eradication of Poverty and Empowerment Programmes by the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups and National Empowerment Foundation in Rodrigues, he will state if Government proposes to bring them under one entity in order to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness thereof.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may wish to note that all the Programmes mentioned in the Parliamentary Question already operate under the aegis of the National Empowerment Foundation since January 2010.

I am informed that the NEF has set up a Programme Executive Committee specific to Rodrigues and that committee has been entrusted with responsibility for implementing projects under the Eradication of Absolute Poverty and the Empowerment Programmes.

Insofar as the projects under the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups Programme are concerned, I am informed that these fall under the direct responsibility of the Fund's Programme Executive Committee in Mauritius, with the overall coordination of all Programmes remaining within the purview of the NEF Board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that such arrangements were put in place for practical reasons to meet the requirements of Rodrigues. However, I have requested the NEF to carry out an assessment of all its programmes to gauge their overall effectiveness. Also, I propose to engage consultations with stakeholders during my forthcoming visit to Rodrigues. I should thereafter be in a better position to take an informed decision.

**Mr François:** I thank the hon. vice-Prime Minister for his answer, but I just want to ask him whether, during his visit, he could look into the coordination of these two institutions, because there is actually a situation where there is an increased *assistanat* which is opposing the idea of *autonomisation et responsabilisation*, which is quite contradictory to *l'esprit d'empowerment et l'éradication de la pauvreté*.

**Mr Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we provide housing; we provide micro credits, loans to fishermen, in-lagoon fishermen, etc. I am not sure if I agree, but I'll look into it.

### **RODRIGUES – LAVIMS PROJECT**

**(No. 1B/294) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Land Administration Valuation and Information Management System (LAVIMS) Project, he will state if the System will be extended to Rodrigues and, if not, why not.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scope of the LAVIMS Project is restricted to the island of Mauritius only.

I am informed that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has recently undertaken a complete cadastral survey of Rodrigues Island. I understand that this system will be maintained and updated so that it may, eventually, be integrated into an autonomous Land Information Management System for Rodrigues.

**Mr François:** The hon. Minister said that the LAVIMS project is restricted to Mauritius, but if you will allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to refer to the Government Programme, I'll quote page 14, paragraph 124, where it says –

“It is an ongoing reform program that will deliver the essential building blocks for a modern Land Administration and Management System for the Republic of Mauritius.”

It does not say ‘Mauritius’, but ‘the Republic’. That is why I put the question as to whether the project will be extended to Rodrigues. It is quite important also for the Minister, because there is a question of monitoring of land.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues forms part and parcel of integral Mauritius. When we refer to Mauritius, we mean the whole of Mauritius and all the islands.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when is it that the LAVIMS project will be totally operational in Mauritius?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said in my speech on the Government Programme, the LAVIMS project will be finished; all the surveys and everything will be finished by December this year and we are coming up with two Bills to integrate the cadastral and information system in it so that it will be complete. I hope that it will be operational as from January next year, but these two Bills will enable us to update it every time and again when we have got survey or parcelling of land.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister, with due respect to the autonomy of Rodrigues, whether the Ministry have had a look at the cadastral survey carried out by the Regional Assembly and is he satisfied that it is up to the mark?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the cadastral survey is being done actually by officers of my Ministry who have been seconded to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. There is always a sort of liaison between my Ministry and the department of the Regional Assembly.

**Mr François:** Rodrigues forms part of the Republic of Mauritius, that's correct. With regard to good governance and control of access to State land, mainly in Rodrigues - as Rodrigues consists of 90% of State land, there is a sort of speculation going on in Rodrigues - will the hon. Minister consider taking on board this LAVIMS project to Rodrigues for a proper control. There are people from Mauritius who have residential property on State land or freehold land and they are still having access to State land in Rodrigues and there is a sort of poor control mechanism between these two islands. Can a system be put in place that will enable us to control State land both in Rodrigues and in Mauritius mainly because 90% of the State land is in Rodrigues?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, speculation on State land does not exist only in Rodrigues, but in Mauritius and in the whole world for that matter. But as far as Rodrigues is concerned, with very due respect, we cannot encroach upon the independence of the Regional Assembly. I know there have been a lot of complaints about *une braderie du patrimoine*, but we have to keep our authority within the limits of what is allowed according to the Constitution.

**The Deputy Speaker:** One last question from both Members.

**Mr François:** We had the example of the NRPT which had been worked out by the new Minister of Finance, but probably a new tax system will be coming. What will happen in that line?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** May I ask the hon. Minister if the public at large is going to have access to information provided by LAVIMS?

**Dr. Kasenally:** No, I think there is no question about that.

### **RODRIGUES - VISITING SPECIALISTS**

**(No. 1B/295) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to visiting Specialists of the Health sector in Rodrigues, she will state –

- (a) the frequency of their visits;
- (b) the number of visits effected by each specialist, since January 2010 to date, and
- (c) the measures, if any, Government proposes to take to increase the frequency thereof.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that visiting specialists proceed to Rodrigues depending upon the number of patients twice or thrice a year for a period of five days in the fields of Neurosurgery, Dermatology, Oral Surgery, Radiotherapy, Cardiology, Psychiatry, Physical Medicine, Ophthalmology, ENT and Orthodontics. In addition, a team from the Cardiac Centre visits Rodrigues as and when required.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling information on part (b) of the question regarding the number of visits effected.

As regards part (c) of the question, my Ministry proposes to take the following measures -

- (a) specialists in the fields of ENT, Ophthalmology and Psychiatry will now proceed to Rodrigues for a period of ten working days in lieu of five days;
- (b) specialists in the field of Radiology will also proceed to Rodrigues thrice a year, and
- (c) the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been advised to create posts of Specialists/Senior Specialists on its establishment so that recruitment may be effected to services restricted to Rodrigues only.

### NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND - AMOUNTS DISBURSED

(No. 1B/296) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether she will for the period 15 April to 04 May 2010, give the amounts disbursed by the National Solidarity Fund, if any, indicating the regions where payments have been effected.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information asked for concerning disbursement made by the National Solidarity Fund for the period of 15 April to 04 May is being tabled.

### NEW GEORGE V STADIUM - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1B/297) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to renovation works at the New George V Stadium, he will state –

- (a) the initial cost thereof; and
- (b) when the contract was awarded, indicating, the name of the contractor, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that contracts for renovation works at the New George V Stadium were awarded as follows -

- I. **Provision of lighting facilities** - Contract was awarded to Magnet Energise Ltd on 20 November 2008 for the sum of Rs18,948,903. Works have already been completed.
- II. **Rehabilitation of Playfield** - Contract was awarded to Active Decor Co Ltd on 01 September 2009 for the sum of Rs5,212,071. Works are expected to be completed by the end of July 2010.
- III. **Cleaning Works** - Contract was awarded to Sonalall & Sons Building Contractor Ltd on 09 February 2010 for the sum of Rs3,547,750. Works will be completed by the end of July 2010.
- IV. **Paintings Works** - Contract was awarded to Sonalall & Sons Building Contractor Ltd on 03 June 2010 for the sum of Rs4,255,000. Works are expected to be completed by the end of September 2010.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre s'il est au courant si la firme qui est supposée effectuer les travaux de rénovation de la pelouse a l'expertise voulue pour effectuer ce genre de travaux?

**Mr Ritoo:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded to Active Decor Co. Ltd. and they have other expertise, because we are dealing with them and we have got report on a monthly basis.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, concernant la rénovation de la pelouse, est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer qu'effectivement ces travaux ont pris du retard ?

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a report from the Meteorological Services whereby it is stated that we had heavy rainfall for quite some period, mainly 01 October 2009 to 22 April 2010 on the various days when the rainfall was more than 5 millimetres.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais aussi savoir du ministre s'il y a des officiers de son ministère qui supervisent ces travaux actuellement.

**Mr Ritoo:** We have officers of my Ministry who submit the report.

**Mr Guimbeau:** J'aimerais demander au ministre si c'est la politique du gouvernement de changer les noms des infrastructures sportives existantes.

**Mr Ritoo:** I don't understand the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This has nothing to do with the question.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, le stade George V à Curepipe est un patrimoine du football mauricien. Je voudrais demander au ministre s'il pourrait revoir la décision de changer le nom du stade George V qui, comme je l'ai dit, était le patrimoine footballistique.

**Mr Ritoo:** I don't know why the hon. Member is scared about the name of Sir Ram Ruhee Stadium. I made a statement to this august Assembly quite some time back. Does the hon. Member have any problem with the change from New George V Stadium to Sir Ram Ruhee Stadium?

**Mr Guimbeau:** *I am not scared, I am just saying that the stade George V est un patrimoine du football mauricien. Il y a un nouveau stade qui est construit dans le sud de l'île aux normes internationales. Pourquoi est-ce que le ministre ne donne pas le nom de Sir Ram Ruhee au nouveau stade et que le stade George V reste ce qu'il est?*

**Mr Ritoo:** I don't know if the hon. Member knows the *parcours* of Sir Ram Ruhee who has done a lot for football and sports in Mauritius and even abroad.

**Mr Quirin:** Concernant la rénovation de la pelouse, j'aimerais savoir du ministre si, dans sa réponse, il a, effectivement, cité le nom de Fineway Sandy Works comme étant le contracteur qui effectue les travaux ?

**Mr Ritoo:** Regarding the rehabilitation works, the contract was awarded on 01 September 2009 and works were expected to be completed by end of July 2010, but due to problems with the weather...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can the hon. Minister repeat the name of the contractor?

**Mr Ritoo:** Active Décor Co. Ltd., Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, je fais référence à un article qui a paru dans un quotidien en date du 22 mai 2010...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can the hon. Member just put his question without referring to the article?

**Mr Quirin:** Effectivement, il y a le nom de Fineway Sandy Works qui effectue les travaux de rénovation de la pelouse.

**Mr Ritoo:** As at to date, my Ministry has never received any request from Fineway Sandy Works. We deal with Active Décor Co. Ltd., our contractor.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Guimbeau, last question!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table all the contracts awarded for the renovation of the new George V Stadium?

**Mr Ritoo:** I have no problem to table them.

**Mr Quirin:** Est-ce que le ministre est au courant que ces travaux de rénovation de la pelouse ont été sous-contractés à une autre entreprise ?

**Mr Ritoo:** I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

### MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL - COMPOSITION

**(No. 1B/298) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he will give -

- (a) its composition, and
- (b) a breakdown of the grants made to Sport Federations since January 2010 to date.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information has been placed in the Library of the National Assembly and is available for consultation.

### ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE - SMEs

**(No. 1B/299) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Additional Stimulus Package, he will state –

- (a) the amount committed and disbursed to Small and Medium Enterprises as at 30 June 2010, indicating the names of the beneficiaries and in each case -
  - (i) the category of activities, and
  - (ii) the number of jobs saved
- (b) the eligibility criteria and mechanism for disbursement,
- (c) if any shortcomings have been identified regarding the scheme, and
- (d) whether the Scheme will be reviewed to facilitate greater access thereto to the Small and Medium Enterprises sector.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/279)*

### CORPORATE TAX, VALUE ADDED TAX & TAX ON INTERESTS

**(No. 1B/300) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the banking sector, he will for the period 2005 to 2009 -

- (a) state the amount of profits earned on its global and domestic business activities;

- (b) obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of revenue collected as tax thereon according to Corporate Tax, Value Added Tax or other charges, and
- (c) state the measures that are being taken, if any, to cease the withholding of tax on interests by banks at source during the current year.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, as regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am tabling the requested information obtained from the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I have already indicated in my reply to the PNQ on 22 June 2010 that this Government has taken a commitment to abolish the tax on interests as announced in the Government Programme 2010/2015. Accordingly, the tax on interests will be abolished as from the income year 2010 itself and necessary amendments will be made in the forthcoming Finance Bill.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are referring in this case, to a cash flow problem as such, because the banks are withholding tax on interests that is held at source. This creates a hardship in terms of cash flow to the small enterprise and the small man. Would the hon. Minister be prepared, as an interim measure, while the law will be amended, to instruct to the appropriate parties to cease the taking of the tax on the interests at source in order to relieve the burden of the small man?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we were not going to abolish the tax on interests, there would have been the withholding of interests at source. We have already taken a commitment to the people of this country that we are going to abolish this measure. We will do so - and I have stated earlier, we are not going to move in a piecemeal manner - in the forthcoming Finance Bill.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister of Finance aware that some private and State-owned banks are making multi billions profits due to a very high interest rate on loans and overdrafts which, in turn, are leading many businesses towards bankruptcy? Can the hon. Minister state the measures he proposes to take so as to review such abusive interest rates?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I won't allow this question. This does not relate to the original question. We move to the next question, please!

**GARDEN TOWER - LEASE**

**(No. 1B/301) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether in regard to the Garden Tower, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) its final costs;
- (b) the total space
  - (i) available;
  - (ii) rented, and
- (c) the names of the lessees, indicating, in each case, the –
  - (i) space rented;
  - (ii) monthly rental, and
  - (iii) duration of the lease.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information asked by the hon. Member requires time to be compiled and verified as to its accuracy and precision.

It is thus being compiled as there are many aspects linked not directly to my Ministry. I will thus place the information in the Library as soon as the compilation and verification exercise is completed.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he has a time frame as to when the information would be ready?

**Mr Aimée:** Very soon.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Can I know how soon is soon?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any intention on the part of the Municipality to lodge the hawkers in the Garden Tower?

**Mr Aimée:** Not at all!

**MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS – LORD MAYOR/COUNCILLORS – OVERSEAS  
MISSIONS**

(No. 1B/302) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether in regard to overseas missions undertaken by the Lord Mayor and the Municipal Councillors of Port Louis, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information, in each case, as to –

- (a) the countries visited and the duration thereof;
- (b) the composition of the delegation;
- (c) the total amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) the purpose of each mission.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the same Parliamentary Question was asked two years ago by hon. Jhugroo and the former Minister gave the same answer, that is, the information is being compiled. Can I know...

*(Interruptions)*

It was exactly the same question and we got the same answer, that information is being compiled.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Minister has answered that information is being compiled.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** What I mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that two years have elapsed since the Opposition asked the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member has made his point and the hon. Minister has taken note.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Barbier:** What we want to know is whether we have a time frame now for the submission of this information to the House.

**Mr Aimée:** In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got the answer, but it is too lengthy.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Barbier:** When will this information be tabled?

**Mr Aimée:** Now.

**Mr Bérenger:** I would like to know whether it is in order for a Minister to say that the information is being compiled and then five minutes later admitting to have misled the House and putting on the Table the information requested.

**Mr Aimée:** In fact, I am not misleading the House. I am saying that I will place on the Table...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, probably.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must tell the Leader of the Opposition that I have respect for any Member of this august Assembly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have got part of the information. There are parts that should be compiled. That is what I said. If it is only for the voyage, I can give it right now.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to the next question now!

### **ROSE HILL MARKET - TOILETS - RENOVATION WORKS**

**(No. 1B/303) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the renovation works to the Rose Hill market toilets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to whether –

- (a) any tender was launched;

- (b) the name of the successful bidder;
- (c) the costs thereof;
- (d) the date of commencement and completion of works, and
- (e) whether the site has already been handed over to the Council.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that direct quotation was sought on a first time on 19 March 2010 from six firms, all of which were registered in the Council's annual list of firms, but no offer was received. Consequently, bid forms were issued anew to five other suppliers on 09 April 2010, and only one offer was received from A. N. Khoystate Co. Ltd.

With regard to parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the bid was awarded to A. N. Khoystate Co. Ltd for a total price of Rs261,400, inclusive of tax.

**Mr Nagalingum:** Can the Minister state if handing over has been made?

**Mr Aimée:** The work was completed and handed over to the Council on 11 June 2010.

### NATIONAL EXAMINATION FORM III ASSESSMENT

(No. 1B/304) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to national examinations at Form III level, he will state –

- (a) the purpose thereof;
- (b) when they will be introduced, and
- (c) the options that will be offered to students who fail thereat.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish first of all to thank the hon. Member for this question. In my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/40 on the same matter on 23 March 2010, I informed the House that the National Examination at Form III is a Human Resource Strategy Plan 2008-2020, following discussions with partners of the education sector, and that there was unanimity on its appropriateness.

The purpose of the National Assessment is to provide teachers with feedback on the attainment level of their students in each of the identified subjects against a national benchmark, since all of them would be sitting, after two years of further study, for the same international examination of Cambridge School Certificate. This will be an opportunity for schools to be aware of learning gaps and bring remedial measures in the next two years.

Given the importance and the innovative nature of this project, I have decided to adopt a phased approach for the conduct of the National Assessment and, following consultations with stakeholders on the modalities for its implementation and on the basis of feedback obtained, this methodology has been agreed upon.

We are hence proposing to institutionalise the National Assessment in the system as from 2012, for it to be conducted in all secondary schools. This will give us time, as a first step, to allow the assessment to be carried out on a pilot basis for this year and next year in a phased manner.

For this year, the common assessment will be held in four subjects, namely English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies. Marking will be done at school level in these four subjects - I must give a precision - not by the teachers who teach the subjects at school, but by other teachers. As for the other subjects taught at that level, the schools will assume, as is currently the case, the responsibility for carrying out the examinations on papers set by the schools themselves. The overall assessment for the end-of-year examination and promotion to Form IV will rest on and be at the discretion of the schools, after taking into account the entire range of subjects taught there and their specific criteria.

I must inform the House that the modalities of the National Assessment are being finalised by a Steering Committee set up at the level of my Ministry, while the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is looking at the technical aspects of the examination. These include working on the syllabus, formulation of specimen question papers and their validation. In this connection, MES is also working with teachers of Form III, both from private and State secondary schools.

The pilot phase for this year will be carried out in some 32 identified secondary schools (16 State and 16 private secondary schools) and, for next year, in an attempt to cover more secondary schools, the number will certainly increase, and also the scope of subjects will be extended to include some other subjects like science and commercial studies. The list of 32 schools is made up of eight schools per zone, four from the State secondary sector and four from the private secondary sector. These schools identified for the pilot phase represent a good mix of rural and urban schools, with gender mix, and

encompass a range of schools having different performance levels, all of which have expressed their willingness to participate.

The outcome of the pilot project for the 2010 and 2011 assessment will guide the orientation and help to fine-tune the modalities of the 2012 National Assessment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the purpose of this assessment is not to pass or fail the students, but to help in orienting them towards those learning areas best suited for them. The National Form III Assessment would be held on the same basis as the end-of-year internal examinations carried out at the level of school. There will be no duplication of the examination in the four subjects being assessed at national level. It would, therefore, be at the discretion of the school to decide whether to promote a student or otherwise, based on the criteria set by the school for promotion to the next grade and considering the entire range of subjects taught there.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether - since these exams are meant to be only a feedback - he does not consider the national exams at the level of Form III to be an additional burden on our students' shoulders.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Not at all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because the students have to sit for the examinations at the level of the school, and they are not going to sit twice. The marks will be computerised and counted as if they were carried out in the school.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we all know, there is no standardisation of curriculum at the level of Form III. Will we move towards the standardisation of curriculum at the level of Form III in all schools?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, the syllabus will be a common one. It has been worked upon; it is going to be presented to the schools. They have worked on it in the course of the year and, as from next year, the syllabus will be set at the beginning of the year.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister himself had, earlier in the year, stated that the Form III National exams will be applicable both to the pre-vocational and to the mainstream in secondary schools. Is that not in total contradiction with what we have just heard, which is an exam on the basis of a common curriculum leading on to common examinations in two years, when we know full well that there is not a common curriculum for mainstream and pre-vocational and that pre-vocational students do not sit for the School Certificate?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** As from the beginning of the coming term, we are going to sit down and see what is the best way ahead for next year. In fact, *je pense que c'était sage comme décision de prendre un peu plus de temps pour introduire le système.*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Reading between the lines, what I understand is that the National examination will not concern the pre-vocational stream.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Not at this stage.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** We have 32 schools, according to the Minister, that will be concerned. Is the Minister in a position to lay on the Table of the House a list of those 32 schools, and confirm that the 16 private secondary schools concerned have been consulted and have given their agreement?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have no quarrel to circulate this list of schools. There is no problem. I have given the details of how they have been chosen. In fact, all of them have been consulted. I have been having requests of late to add up, but then, we had already decided on 32. So, we are leaving it at 32. In the beginning, we were thinking of including science in the first pilot project. Now that we are not putting science, we are going to leave that for next year and we have only four subjects: English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies. Many other colleges have thought that they could have participated, but in order to give the chance for the project to succeed, we are staying with the 32 colleges. I am tabling the list.

**Mrs Ribot:** The hon. Minister is talking about consensus on the Form III National exams, but these days we are reading something else on the part of the managers, unions and teachers who do not all agree to the Form III National exams. Will the hon. Minister agree?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Not really, because when we are in the four walls and we talk, they all speak the same language.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** As the hon. Minister well knows, in the past when references had been made to an examination at the end of Forms III and IV, it was seen as an examination at the end of compulsory schooling, yielding a certificate, so that students leaving school at the age of 16 do not go away empty handed, but have a certificate testifying to their achievement. Do we understand that the National Form III examination will be a certifying exercise?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** In the beginning, I am calling it an assessment. Let it get into the system, succeed and then it will become an examination with the National Certificate.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I am very grateful to the hon. Minister for providing all that information to the House. But is he aware that within public opinion at large, there is a state of utter confusion and anxiety? Will he, therefore, consider embarking on a proper communication exercise, with a press conference, with communiqués as appropriate to provide information to all the stakeholders within the educational community so that people can be aware, as he has made us aware today?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I started by thanking the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for this question. This question has been put on the third occasion by the same hon. Member. *Je voulais donner à la députée la valeur de ces examens parce que c'est elle qui a posé la question. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai retiré la question à deux reprises.* Now, that the question has been put, I wanted to give the importance to the House - as the question has been put here - and I have come today with all the information. In fact, the hon. Member is thanking me for that. The population will be made aware now about it. But I have already spoken with all the stakeholders and all of them were agreeable and we are going in that direction.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question, hon. Mrs Ribot!

**Mrs Ribot:** Will the hon. Minister agree that any exam produces passes and failures? Any exam will be worthwhile only if something else was offered to failures, be it technical, vocational, etc.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I said that the philosophy of this examination is not to pass or fail. It is an assessment to give an idea, first of all, to the students, to the teachers, the rectors of the college where the students go and to the parents, about the situation concerning their children, and then to give the possibilities to adapt and even to move to a better course of action.

**The Deputy Speaker:** A final question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I may be allowed a double-barrelled question? Can I know from the hon. Minister who made the decision as to which four core subjects would be taken into consideration? Secondly, from what I understand, it will be an assessment, but it will develop into a Form III Certificate in due course. In the hon. Minister's mind how does that impact on the CPE?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** First of all, the four subjects have been decided by people who are in charge of pedagogy, stakeholders and also examples from other countries on the international fields. All of these have been taken into consideration. It is so simple to understand: English, French, Mathematics are core

subjects. Computer Science, of course, being given the trend that the world is taking. There is also the question of Science and Commercial Studies which will certainly come next year.

To answer the second the part of the question as to what will be the impact on CPE, all will depend. If this strategy plan continues and if the Opposition - they have been giving us a helping hand, I must say, until now - continues in that direction, maybe that will impact positively in the sense that the CPE will become only an assessment and not a rat race.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** National exams being of national importance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an element of absurdity in what we have just heard. Given that the hon. ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should withdraw that word, please!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Fair enough, I withdraw! My point is that there is an element that does not make sense in what has just been said. Being given that hon. Mrs Ribot has put it as a matter of fact and the hon. Minister has agreed that there is no common curriculum for Forms I to III and that he said next year there will be a national curriculum prescribed as from the beginning of this year, are we to understand that since we are at the end of the second term, it is only at the beginning of the third term that the Ministry of Education will prescribe a common curriculum on which a national examination will be based a few weeks afterwards?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Je pense que l'honorable membre est en train de prendre une autre direction. Le syllabus sur lequel les examens seront conduits est un syllabus commun. Il y a un travail qui a été fait pour finaliser ce syllabus ; c'est un syllabus qui est en cours. Je dois dire qu'il y a des différences entre les écoles, mais tout cela a été pris en considération. Les questions qui seront posées seront sur un syllabus commun pour tous les élèves de ces 32 écoles; au moins pour l'instant. L'année prochaine, quand le système sera généralisé, ce sera pareil pour toutes les écoles. Cette année, il y a eu les élections générales et on a travaillé en cours de route. L'année prochaine, cela va être beaucoup plus facile parce que le syllabus sera là dès le mois de janvier.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I request the hon. Minister to clear with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what has just taken place? I agree the Chair can ask an hon. Member not to use an offensive word, but I don't think that the Chair can request an hon. Member to withdraw what is not an unparliamentarily expression.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is a question, we have to take the word in its context. We were having a very fair debate on a matter of national importance. I consider that we should keep the proper tone and in a consensual manner to have everything in a dignified way.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't mind the word used.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** A last point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that my...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please! If any Member has something to say, he catches my eye first and then he makes whatever comment he has to make.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Can I make an appeal to the hon. Minister that, given the state of uncertainty within the educational community, this pilot national examination in Form III be postponed to next year?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** We do not want to postpone it; on the contrary, this is a mock exam. It is a simulation of exam. In fact,...

*(Interruptions)*

It is a mock exam. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must inform the House that even for the CPE before it became a national exam, it went through a trial process for many years.

### **STC/MANGALORE REFINERY - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - CONTRACT**

**(No. 1B/305) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the supply of petroleum products for the period 2010-2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the terms and conditions of the contract signed between the Corporation and the Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd;
- (b) if there was any -
  - (i) tender exercise; or
  - (ii) request for quotation and, if so, give the details thereof, and

- (c) if any company has been awarded the contract for the conveyance of the petroleum products to Mauritius and, if so, the terms and conditions thereof.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 01 July 2010, the State Trading Corporation and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemical Limited signed an agreement for the supply of petroleum products during period 2010-2013, amounting to 1.2 million metric tonnes per annum, at a total value of USD2 billion for three years at current fuel prices. The agreement was signed in the presence of the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Government of India, as well as the Chairman, Oil and Natural Gas Group of Companies.

I wish to inform the House that MRPL is a subsidiary of the Oil and Natural Gas Group, in which the Government of India holds majority equity.

As regards the terms and conditions, there is a confidentiality clause within the agreement which prevents the Government from disclosing its contents.

With regard to part (b) of the question, in order to obtain a benchmark with regard to the market price, this year, quotations were sought from various companies which dealt with the STC in the past. I am going to place the relative documents in the Library of the National Assembly. Only one company submitted an indicative proposal which was not fully responsive, as it could not supply all the products from one source.

Regarding the contract for the conveyance of petroleum products, I wish to refer the House to the reply made on 16 June 2009 in reply to PQ No. B/542. I wish to remind the House that the decision to purchase a tanker was taken in the year 2005, and a study carried out in 2007 by a specialised firm concluded that it would be advantageous for the country to acquire a tanker.

In view of the high investment required for the acquisition of a tanker and the need for the experienced professionals to manage and operate such a tanker, Government decided that local firms be invited to participate in the project with a 15 years guarantee of operation. Based on this decision, 400 local firms were contacted through the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry and only six showed interest for the project. These firms were invited to submit formal proposals and were informed of the 15 years guarantee. Only Betamax Ltd in joint venture with Executive Ship Management of Singapore made a formal proposal.

On 12 January 2009, Government agreed to the proposal of the company subject to the conditions, *inter alia*, that -

- (i) the company should fully finance the purchase of a double hull tanker vessel, without any financial commitment of the Government;
- (ii) the vessel should be registered locally, and
- (iii) freight rates would have to be agreed with STC, based on rebates available with regard to the indicative market rate.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agreement relates to the supply of petroleum products worth USD2 billion. Last year, the then Minister of Business Enterprise stated in this House that he was prepared to allow the contract to be inspected by Opposition Members at the State Trading Corporation. May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that this year for the same contract with the same party, the Minister has decided to have a confidentiality clause and not disclose its terms to this House?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I mentioned in my answer that we are dealing with Government to Government, not with a *courtier*, not with a trader or an agent with due respect to the Government of India. In Mauritius, we cannot just question this agreement. According to the information that I have, the former Minister invited the hon. Member, including myself - I was in the Opposition - and nobody went to the office of the Minister to see the terms and conditions.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the importance of this agreement, may we know whether the price is fixed? Is it fluctuating? Do we have an exit clause if the world price crashes? We are completely in the dark as to what we have committed ourselves.

**Mr Soodhun:** I do not know what price the hon. Member is mentioning. Can he give more precision?

**Mr Uteem:** The price at which we are buying petroleum products. The hon. Minister himself stated that the contract was worth USD2 billion.

**Mr Soodhun:** The hon. Member is completely in confusion because he cannot differentiate the price of petrol. This is the premium and freight. We have to differentiate it. I would like to give the hon. Member a good explanation once and for all. The price of petroleum products rises on a daily basis as per *Platts* publication. There is no control over the price of petroleum products, but the premium is

the fixed element and comprises the following: freights, insurance, profit margins of refinery, that is, when we purchase on CIF.

*(Interruptions)*

Why not? It is the freight. Let me tell him if he does not know!

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister should address the Chair, please!

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am addressing the Chair, but it was for those who do not know. They cannot now ask me the question, because I personally negotiated; I know there is no way of getting back.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Have I heard correctly the hon. Minister saying that the petroleum product that is being purchased is on a CIF basis? If this is the case, then, that includes by necessity freight; 'F' in CIF stands for freight and, therefore, the contract for transport would be included in the price of petroleum products.

**Mr Soodhun:** I just explained that we don't buy petroleum as such. What we discussed is the premium, a fixed element. This is what we used to discuss and this is what we call FOB - Free On Board. It is on that basis.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please! Order!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just stated that there is a confidential clause because it is a Government to Government deal. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are here talking about taxpayers' money and I feel we have the right to know where our money is going.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, please!

**Mr Soodhun:** This is because we are dealing with India. This is the only reason. There is no other reason. The hon. Member must sit down. He has asked me and I want to give him the answer.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition can address on a point of order.

**Mr Bérenger:** Our Standing Orders are perfectly clear that no Member can impute improper motives to anybody in the House. The hon. Minister is imputing improper motives that we want a copy of that agreement because it is India. This is improper, he should withdraw.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he mentioned the word '*mafia*'.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I should first rule on the point of order and I think that it is not proper to impute motives. If ever the hon. Minister has imputed motives, he will have to withdraw.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Soodhun:** The hon. Member used the word '*mafia*'.

**Mr Guimbeau:** The hon. Member referred to India. This is not the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am talking about taxpayers' money, taxes which are coming from the pockets of the people of this country. We have the right to know whether we have got the best quotation from the STC and Mangalore.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order, please!

*(Interruptions)*

I understand that the hon. Minister...

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please!

I understand that the hon. Minister explained that there is a confidentiality clause which prevents him from disclosing whatever has been stated and the hon. Member made his point and we listened to the Minister.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to explain the position of this clause.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please!

**Mr Soodhun:** The fact is that, in Mauritius, we do have contracts at the CEB. We know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister and he knows very well. There are certain clauses in the contract that we cannot disclose and now let me explain why we cannot disclose. Mangalore Oil Refinery is a producer. We negotiated for a better price and we got it, thanks to the good relationship that the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam has with it. On this basis we had a very good price which we cannot officially put on the world market because it is going to embarrass the Mangalore Oil Refinery when they export their products to other countries. This is the only reason.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will allow a last question from hon. Guimbeau!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I maintain it; we are talking here about taxpayers' money and we have a right to know. This is why we are asking the hon. Minister to table the agreement signed between the STC and Mangalore, if he has nothing to hide, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am ready to show all the files if the hon. Member comes and sees me. If he can get cheaper than we have received, I am ready to again consider it.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I can see the files, why not table it and let the public see the file? The hon. Minister just said that I can see the file. Does that mean that he is going to table the file?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please! Order! Order! I will allow, exceptionally, a last question from the hon. Member who sets the question. Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have heard from the hon. Minister that there has been a contract signed between STC and Consortium of Betonix and ESM. He also mentioned some of the clauses and one of them is that the STC will agree the price for the transport. May we know from the hon. Minister what price has been agreed between the STC and the promoters of this tanker for the transport of petroleum product for the Mangalore contract?

**Mr Soodhun:** The hon. Member must come with a very proper question and then I will answer to that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to the next question, please! Hon. Baloomoody!

## **HORSES – EXPORTATION**

(No. 1B/306) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he will state if during the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 to date, if any horses have been exported and, if so –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the country of destination, and
- (c) whether any veterinary certificates were issued prior to the exportation.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Division of the Veterinary Services of my Ministry that in 2008, 204 horses were exported to France and the United Kingdom. In 2009, 67 were exported to the same countries and one to South Africa. No horse has been exported so far in 2010.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please! No crosstalking!

**Mr Faugoo:** As regards part (c) of the question, the Division of Veterinary Services had, in each case, issued a veterinary certificate prior to exportation. This is a mandatory procedure according to OIE norms.

**Mr Baloomoody:** I did not hear much. So, probably, you will have to repeat some answers. Can I ask the hon. Minister who are the exporters of the horses in Mauritius?

**Mr Faugoo:** I understand there are two groups - one is Gilbert Merven and the second one is Kevin Connolly.

**Mr Baloomoody:** May we know from which country the horses come from before they are exported?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mainly from South Africa.

**Mr Baloomoody:** May we know from the hon. Minister whether a veterinary certificate is issued prior for it being exported to the European Commission?

**Mr Faugoo:** As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is mandatory under the OIE, they have to be accompanied by a certificate given by the competent authority which is, in our case, the Division of Veterinary Services.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the European authorities or European Union is satisfied with the certificate issued by the competent authority in Mauritius?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a FVO mission, which is the Food and Veterinary Office mission of the EU, to Mauritius which carried out a study here from 24 March to 02 April last year in order to evaluate the animal health control in place for horses destined for export to European Union, and they found that there were certain shortcomings in our system. In fact, they said the competent authority failed to identify that they were certifying horses for export to the EU, which did not comply with the required guarantees for AHS, which stands for African Horse Sickness, and presented a tangible risk of harbouring the AHS virus. The choice of systematically certifying the exported horses for temporary admission to the EU was not adequately substantiated, but required less stringent measures for residency and isolation, and after the visit of the FVO we have changed the norms now. We have put the norms according to the requirements of the OIE and the EU. We are actually working on a MoU with the EU.

**Mr Baloomoody:** We have changed, but can I know what action has been taken vis-à-vis the veterinary officers who issued these certificates when, in fact, they were not in consent with the European Union?

**Mr Faugoo:** They were, in fact, complying with the rules of the OIE and the EU had accepted those certificates. They had accepted those standards but now, there was a case whereby, in the first place, horses are exported on a temporary basis to France and, apparently, I am given to understand that there was one horse which was destined to France and then to another country from France, but it disappeared in France. I do not know what happened to it and this is where they started questioning, and they were under the impression that we were also having this African Horse Sickness here. This is what made them come to do the study and they found out that we are clear on most of the issues. The only issue which was not to the satisfaction was the number of days which was required for horses to be kept under quarantine both in South Africa and in Mauritius. As I said, we have corrected that and they are happy with the measures which we have taken so far.

**Mr Bérenger:** My information is that the report which that mission introduced is damning for Mauritius and it does not concern one aspect only of this *trafic de chevaux* between Mauritius and *Union Européenne*. Being given what the Minister has said, is he prepared to lay a copy of that European Union Team report? Will he agree that this can have a very serious impact if the European Union starts challenging the way our veterinary work and so on is done here in the case of horses? This can have a very serious impact on other exports, including tuna exports. Can we have a copy of that report in the Library?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that we have been exporting horses since 2004 and we have been exporting tuna for I do not know how many years. And today, as I said so many times in this House, we have a full-fledged competent authority, which has been segregated, which has been brought and made independent from the veterinary services, which is functioning to the satisfaction of the EU. The EU has come so many times here on mission and they have given report which is very positive and which shows that Mauritius can be a window to the other parts of tuna exporting countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As far as horses are concerned, as I said, there were certain problems but, at that particular time, the horses were exported to EU, to France. If they were not happy, they could have come to us, but there were certain issues which they took into account when they came and, as I said, we are in talking terms with them. We are trying to sign an MoU whereby we will agree on whatever was not to the standard set by EU; we are going to work on that and see to it that it is done.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Will not the hon. Minister agree that, in that report, the authorities made serious remarks regarding incorrect data entered - incorrect sampling, incorrect dates - into the certificates issued by the veterinary office?

**Mr Faugoo:** I do not know the details of the report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but not all that is said by EU is correct. I would tell you one thing, for example, which has been said in the report. They have said in their concluding remarks that Mauritius is regarded, according to the OIE rules, as AHS virus infected, which is not correct. In fact, why are we allowed to export? Why EU imports horses from Mauritius? We do not produce horses. They import from other places, other countries, they come here only for the quarantine period and it is re-exported to other countries. Why do they allow this? It is because Mauritius is free from so many infectious diseases and this has been declared by the OIE which is the organisation responsible to declare countries free from these diseases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this report now is an official report of the European Union. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether Mauritius has replied to that report? Because up to to date, this is the official report which has remained unchallenged by Mauritius and by his Ministry.

**Mr Faugoo:** We do not have to reply. What I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that we are working with the EU. It is a report which has been given to us. We are in correspondence. We are talking to the EU to see to it that whatever shortcomings have been found by the EU, we are addressing them and find a solution.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Is the hon. Minister aware that Mauritius is listed as one of the country, according to the World Organisation for Animal, as AHS virus infected and this, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, will have serious effect on our export to the European Union with regard to food and animal products?

**Mr Faugoo:** I will ask the hon. Member to table a copy of that report from OIE.

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Member is confused, this is not what I said. I said: EU in its mission said that Mauritius is AHS virus infected, which is not correct. The hon. Member is saying that there is a report from OIE which classifies Mauritius as a VHS infected country. Table the report!

*(Interruptions)*

I just said that the report of the EU on this score is not correct.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister is answering, the hon. Member should wait for the reply!

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said that whatever EU has stated in the report does not mean that it is crystal clear, that it is the Bible, that it is totally correct. This is what I said. I said we stand guided by the report of OIE. OIE report is not EU report. This is what I am saying and, according to OIE, Mauritius is not classified as an infected country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Serious remarks have been made by the European Union. The hon. Minister considers that these remarks are not factually correct. My question is: why is not the hon. Minister replying to that remark and challenging that report?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I understand that the hon. Minister has stated that he is having talks with the EU to try to sort out matters and to see what measures have to be taken. He did answer to that part of the hon. Member's query.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Does the hon. Minister intend to reply officially and let this House have a copy of the reply given to that report?

**Mr Faugoo:** I said we are talking to the EU. We are trying to sort out the problems which we had and to sign a MoU. This is what I said. I don't see the need to table copy of correspondence at this stage and, as I said, the hon. Member can go and read – maybe it is online - the report of EU or OIE.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to the next question.

### **PORT LOUIS CENTRAL MARKET - STALLS**

**(No. 1B/307) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to stalls at the Port Louis Central Market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the number of stallholders who, since 2006 to May 2010, have been dispossessed of their stalls and, if so, whether any of the stalls have been re-allocated, giving the details in each case.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that, according to its records, no stallholder of the Central Market had been disposed of his/her stall during the years 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

I am further informed that 13 stallholders were disposed of their stalls at the Central Market during this year because of excessive arrears due by them. These stalls were subsequently reallocated during the same period.

With regard to the latter cases, on 19 January 2010, the Public Health Committee decided that all those who have an arrears of Rs150,000 and above be allowed up to February 2010 to settle the amount due, otherwise their stalls would be declared vacant.

On the 01 March 2010 the Public Health Committee decided to declare 13 stalls vacant. However, four stalls were not declared vacant because of arrangements made with the Senior Usher. Therefore only nine were declared vacant.

Out of nine stalls declared vacant, six have been reallocated to persons other than the previous holder. Out of the remaining, one has been restored to the spouse of the previous holder and two have been restored to the previous holder.

Six stalls have been reallocated to persons other than the previous holder as follows –

- |       |                                |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (i)   | Mr Mohammad Rashid Khadaroo    | 25 Benares Street, Port Louis        |
| (ii)  | Mr Zamaldine Raffick Guillaume | Guillaume Lane, Terre Rouge          |
| (iii) | Mrs Marie Anne Collet          | 12 Cité Briquetterie Road, Ste Croix |
| (iv)  | Mrs Daniella Chowry            | 5 Rte Militaire, Terre Rouge         |
| (v)   | Mrs Mauricette Brigitte Sevère | Cité Briquetterie, Ste Croix         |
| (vi)  | Mr Maslamaney Tangonvel        | Avenue des Mulets, Albion            |

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that one of these stallholders, according to the document I saw, has reimbursed up to a total balance of less than Rs100,000 and as the hon. Minister just stated that those who owe more than Rs150,000 were dispossessed of their stalls. Is the hon. Minister aware that there is at least one case where the stakeholder owes less than Rs150,000, around Rs102,000 and, despite of that, he has been dispossessed of his stall? Is the hon. Minister aware of such case?

**Mr Aimée:** *Si tel est le cas, M. le président, si je suis en présence des noms et tous les renseignements possibles, I will try to find information from the Council and come back to the hon. Member.*

**Mr Barbier:** Is the hon. Minister aware that the stall has been reallocated to someone else? Is the hon. Minister also aware that one of these stallholders had a case still pending in court where he was challenging the arrears which the Municipality of Port Louis has asked for? I have just learnt that the case is coming tomorrow and, despite of that, he has been dispossessed of his stall which has been reallocated to someone else. Is this legally correct? Will the hon. Minister see to it whether action can be taken against those culprits who are actually operating with the *complicité* of some people to have these stalls allocated to their families?

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am somebody who wants justice to be done and seen to be done. *Si jamais il y a un de mes officiers qui est mis en cause ou même si c'est un conseiller, je vais prendre les mesures qui s'imposent.* You can rest assured.

(Interruptions)

**Mr Baloomoody:** The hon. Minister has mentioned six stalls and even gave the name of those who acquired these stalls which were reallocated. May I know from the hon. Minister what criteria were used to identify those six persons out of the totality of Port Louis?

**Mr Aimée:** For me, this is the tip of the iceberg. *M. le président, nous sommes en 2010 et je regrette de dire dans cette auguste Assemblée que nous avons deux lois. Nous avons the Local Government Act de 1989 et parallèlement nous avons la loi de 2003. La section 61(1) de 1989 met des critères pour les allocations des stalls au marché en général et l'honorable Barbier le sait parce qu'il était conseiller. Mais ce n'est pas le cas pour la loi de 2003. Cela a été fait par proclamation without repealing the existing law of 1989.*

I suppose this is the how certain people are misusing our law to do certain things which the hon. Member mentioned. But I am prepared to look into it. That is why, right from my nomination as Minister of Local Government, *j'ai commencé à revoir les lois parce qu'il y a plusieurs anomalies entre la loi de 1989 et celle de 2003.*

**Mr Barbier:** Can I ask the Minister whether he had a meeting in his office with the stallholders who were complaining about what was happening to them at the level of the Municipality of Port Louis concerning their stalls? Did he have a meeting with these stallholders together with councillors or one councillor of the Municipality Port Louis? Will he state to the House what has been the outcome of this meeting?

**Mr Aimée:** *M. le président, je n'ai pas pu recevoir tous les stallholders qui ont eu des problèmes à la municipalité, mais effectivement j'ai reçu à mon bureau quelques stallholders suite à la requête de l'honorable Baloomoody, qui les représente en cour. Mais je crois que l'honorable membre est tout à fait au courant que, lorsqu'il y a une affaire en cour, it is sub judice. I won't be able to clear anything until the case is over. If they can remove the case, then I can look into it.*

**Mr Barbier:** Is the Minister aware that councillors at the Municipality of Port Louis pointed fingers at one councillor who is being considered as *le manipulateur, la mafia à la mairie de Port Louis*? Is he aware of that?

**Mr Aimée:** *M. le président, je ne peux me permettre to rely on hearsay evidence. If somebody has got something very concrete to substantiate what is being said, I am prepared to look into it.*

**Mr Baloomoody:** The Minister has made very good speeches, but has not replied to my question. What criteria were used? We don't have to repeal an old law when a new law is passed. There is only one law regarding reallocation of stalls. So, my question is: what criteria were used to select the six persons whose names have just been mentioned? Simple question!

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which law is he talking about? Is it the 1989 or 2003?

*(Interruptions)*

No, the criteria are not the same! The law of 1989 is something else, there are criteria. In the law proclaimed in 2003, there are no criteria.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister should just state what were the criteria used in these particular cases.

*(Interruptions)*

No, the question is simply to state what were the criteria used in those cases. If the Minister has the answer, he gives it.

**Mr Aimée:** As from 2003, the Council is *autonome* and they can decide for the criteria without even the intervention of the Minister or any other body.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Is the hon. Minister not aware of the criteria used or has he not been made aware by the Council about which criteria they used?

**Mr Aimée:** I am not aware, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over!

## MOTION

### SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy 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 Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth)** rose and seconded.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*At 4.14 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 4.52 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

## **PUBLIC BILL**

*Second Reading*

### **THE SUGAR CANE PLANTERS TRUST (REPEAL) BILL**

**(No. XIV of 2010)**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the Sugar Cane Planters Trust (Repeal) Bill (No. XIV of 2010) be read a second time.

The Sugar Cane Planters Trust was set up as a corporate body by an Act of Parliament in 1997 to encourage tea growers who were allocated less than 1.90 arpents of land in the context of the diversification of the tea sector, to join the Trust for the cultivation of sugar cane. Some 446 planters were concerned with that project for a total area of 86.9 hectares.

In 1995, Government decided to diversify the public tea sector because of the high subsidies required to maintain the competitiveness of the sector on the export market. Most of the planters joined the project. However, some 450 planters who had small plots not exceeding one acre did not do so. Thus, to encourage them to join the diversification project, Government took the decision to give them additional land so that they could have two acres instead of one acre only. The additional plots were managed by the Sugar Cane Planters Trust on behalf of the planters.

The responsibility for sugar cane plantation rested with the sugar estates found within the catchment area of the different blocks of land covering the 86.9 hectares. The Trust took a loan of Rs4.5m, in 1999, from the DBM for the plantation of cane. Unfortunately, cane yield started decreasing

from 5,478 tonnes over a harvested area of 77 hectares in 2000 to 443 tonnes over 31 hectares in 2006. The yield went down from 58.1 tonnes per hectare in 2006 to 14.3 tonnes per hectare in 2006.

Dividends paid to planters also decreased from Rs3,000 per acre in 2001/2002 to Rs2,500 in 2003/2004. After 2003/2004, the Trust decided to pay back the loan rather than pay dividend.

In 2006, the crop had reached its sixth ratoon and the Trust had to decide whether to replant cane in view of the reduction in price of sugar exported to the European Union under the Sugar Protocol. To enable it to take an informed decision, the Trust set up a Technical Committee comprising representatives of the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute and the Farmers Service Corporation to advise on replantation of cane. The Committee did not recommend replantation in view of the low return on investments. In addition, a survey among members of the Trust indicated that 70% of the members were not in favour of continuing with the project. Consequently, the Board of the Trust decided, at its meeting of 26 April 2007, to dissolve the Trust. The dissolution was approved by the then Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security on 25 July 2007, in accordance with section 14 of the Sugar Cane Planters Trust Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a sum of Rs2,611,358 which remained in the General Fund of the Trust was shared among the 446 planters as per the number of shares they were holding. In November 2007, the Board of the Sugar Cane Planters Trust determined 31 December 2007 as the date of dissolution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all procedures for dissolution have been completed as per advice of the State Law Office. Now, the Act can be repealed.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

**Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.**

**(4.57 p.m.)**

**Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River):** Very briefly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Sugar Cane Planters Trust, as the Minister reminded us, was set up in 1997 by the then Labour/MMM Government. In fact, the law was adopted by the Assembly then and this Trust had, as its mission, the responsibility for the cultivation and the selling of the sugar cane on behalf of some of the

former tea planters. This Trust, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was set up, in fact, in the context of the gradual diversification programme from tea in order to reduce our tea production in the public tea sector. As we all know the public tea industry was then being run on a highly deficit basis and Government had to subsidise heavily that sector. Additionally during those days, the country had been allocated an additional export quota of 85,000 tonnes of sugar as you will remember. That was in view of accelerating the diversification programme. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, planters of the public tea sector were encouraged to diversify to sugar cane production and Government then was agreeable to that diversification programme with a package of incentives. As part of this programme, Government had decided that the former tea small holders would be given additional land to bring their plots to two arpents in case their respective plots were less than two arpents, as the hon. Minister had reminded us. So, with regard to these small planters who were about 490 of them, their land had to be topped up and the topping up exercise amounted then to about 225 arpents or 86.9 hectares, as the hon. Minister has just told us. This was, in fact, an ingenious device. The Government then had proposed to group the land given for the topping up in big blocks for the manifest advantages of proper monitoring and financial control and for other evident reasons, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It was these blocks of land which were going to be managed by the Trust, set up by the Bill and which came to be known as the Sugar Cane Planters Trust. Each planter was allocated units, equivalent to their land entitlement so as to ensure an equitable distribution of profits for the sale of sugar cane to the planters concerned. So much for the history, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and the reasons motivating the setting up of this Trust in 1997! We are, of course, in agreement with the Bill, but I would just like to query the hon. Minister on a few points.

In fact, in answer to a parliamentary question which he answered in this very House in March of this year, the Minister gave certain information to the House concerning the eventual dissolution of the Sugar Cane Planters Trust. I would like to ask the hon. Minister a few questions. Firstly, he should perhaps enlighten the House on the inordinate delay which took place before this Bill is now before the House. He, himself, said in the last part of his speech that it was in July 2007 that the then Minister had approved the decision of the Board to dissolve the Trust in July 2007; it is now two years afterwards. So, we would like to know the reason for this inordinate delay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Secondly, what will happen to the land itself? How will the Ministry dispose of the 86.9 hectares for which the Trust was responsible and which the Trust was managing during all these years? What will be the fate of this land?

Thirdly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 14 of the law which we are now repealing, says –

14. Dissolution

“ (2) In the event of the dissolution of the Trust, all assets of the Trust shall be transferred to such organisation as may be designated by the Board.”

Would the Minister be so kind as to inform us which other organisation or any such organisation has already been designated to receive the other assets of the Trust?

Fourthly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Section 7 the Act which we are now repealing talks about the general Fund, a Fund into which shall be paid all the monies accruing to the Trust. I understand the Minister has already answered my question by saying that about Rs2,611,000 have already been shared among the planters, but can the Minister enlighten us of any other assets which the Trust has been holding at the time of its dissolution?

Finally, as regards the employees of the Trust, what will be the fate of the staff and the personnel of the Trust? The hon. Minister has not said a word about that. Would he care to enlighten us also about the redeployment or transfer or the procedure adopted for the employees of the Trust? These are the few questions I wanted to ask the hon. Minister.

As a concluding remark and plea to the Minister, may I also say the following, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. At that time, *il y avait 2,500 petits planteurs* in the public tea-belt which had decided to uproot their tea plantations. The majority, of course, had opted for sugar cane, but a good many of these 2,500 tea planters had replaced their plantations by vegetables and fruits at that time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think, today, the most relevant issue when we are debating this Bill is what use will be made of these 215 arpents of land - as I have just asked the question - because as we all know, we are living in times of threats to our food security, where the need to safeguard our nation against the food crisis is high on the agenda. We all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are still compelled today to import essential food items, dairy products, spices. We are even today still importing fruits as well as a fair proportion of our vegetables, potatoes, onions and garlic. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the production of vegetables has to be stepped up to meet the enhanced demand from our more health conscious population and also to cater for the tourism sector, therefore, the question of availability of land for local production remains vital. Today, the land under food crops should be increased in the country; it should be high on the agenda. We have to boost up our food crop production and to make a

proper allocation of land that is available. This is the reason for the question I am putting to the hon. Minister. Can I make a plea to him to see to it that the allocation of this land is done in a transparent manner? Would he come up with a transparent mechanism to allocate this land to the small planters, to the 70% of them, who have already signified their intention and are agreeable to the dissolution of the Trust, so that the country can make another better use of so much land which is available to enhance our food crop production? These are the remarks I wanted to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I thank you.

**(5.07 p.m.)**

**The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to thank my friend, hon. Ganoo, for his intervention on this Bill. I would try to answer some of the questions that he has raised.

First of all, as I said, there were compelling reasons at that time in 1997 to set up the Trust. With the circumstances prevailing at that time, there was a high demand for our sugar, especially on the US market. This is why we had to ask the tea planters, holding less than one acre of land, to switch to sugar cane cultivation, because we had to produce some extra tonnes to be able to supply the US market. Back in 2006, there were also compelling reasons why we could do no more with the Trust and we had to find a way forward to dissolve it and then put the land available for a different use, if not a better one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

On the question of delay, I must tell the House that, in fact, this particular Bill was before this House at the last session of the Assembly. We had gone through the first reading of this Bill and then Parliament was dissolved. So, I had to go back to Cabinet and get its approval.

I must also say that it took some time when we decided in 2006 to dissolve the Trust, because there was a balance in the general Fund, as correctly pointed out by hon. Ganoo, which had to be distributed in the form of dividends to the shareholders. It was apparently very difficult to trace back all those members, I mean the shareholders. That took some time and again for the enacting of the Bill, in fact, we received the final draft of the Bill from the State Law Office only in November 2009. After November I brought the Bill to the House and, as I said, it could not go through all the stages in this very House.

The second pertinent issue which was raised by my friend was on the issue of the 89.9 hectares of land and what happens to this. According to the provisions of the law, this land, in fact, has already been returned to the Ministry. This will be allocated, precisely, in the context of food security programme. Maybe, we will be doing clusters to encourage small planters to cultivate food crops. We have already elaborated a food security plan, we will go strictly according to the plan and we will reallocate land to planters so that they can cultivate food crops in the context of food security, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

On the question of assets, apart from the lands which were leased to the planters and through the planters to the Trust, that is, which were managed by the Trust, there were certain assets which were not of value, I must say. These were transferred back to the Ministry as was provided for under the Act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Concerning the remainder of the funds that will be transferred to the Accountant General; there is a very small sum which remains and that will be transferred to the Accountant General. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have answered all the questions which were raised by hon. Ganoo.

*(Interruptions)*

There are no employees, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so the question does not arise. I have answered all the questions which were raised.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read a second time and committed.*

## **COMMITTEE STAGE**

*(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)*

*The Sugar Cane Planters Trust (Repeal) Bill (No. XIV of 2010) was considered and agreed to.*

*On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.*

*Third Reading*

*On motion made and seconded, the Sugar Cane Planters Trust (Repeal) Bill (No. XIV of 2010) was read a third time and passed.*

**MOTION****GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015**

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms S. Anquetil).*

*“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved”.*

*Question again proposed.*

**(5.14 p.m.)**

**Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is with a great sense of humility, honour, privilege and deep gratitude that I am addressing the House for my maiden speech. First and foremost, I extend my warmest congratulations to you for your election as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

I sincerely believe that your guidance and blessings will help me a lot in my career as a young parliamentarian. As a Parliamentarian, I am looking forward to be guided by your wisdom, experience and fairness in your deliberations. I may be new to this House, but my involvement in politics dates back to more than a decade ago.

As a youngster, the great values preached and defended by the Labour Party, made it easy for me to join the one and only Mauritius Labour Party.

The history of this party is pregnant with the lives of great leaders who have sacrificed themselves at the altar of this country and while departing, they have left their footprints on the sand of time. As a Parliamentarian, I have always been captured by the exuberance and passion, the insight and candour of great political stalwarts, like Emmanuel Anquetil, Guy Rozemont, Renganaden Seeneevassen, Pandit Sahadeo and the most beloved of all, Chacha, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

Their intelligence, sacrifice, initiatives and sense of duty are the foundation of a modern, multi-faceted, diverse and integrated Mauritius.

The Mauritius Labour Party has had great leaders who have always worked hard for the emancipation and welfare of the population at different periods of the history of Mauritius. I personally have not known those great leaders, but I must say that I am privileged and honoured to be working under one of the greatest leaders that Mauritius has ever known for building modern Mauritius. He is no other than the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

For the last general election, I was blessed by the hon. Prime Minister who gave me the opportunity to stand as candidate in Constituency No. 9 - Flacq and Bon Accueil along with my two other colleagues, namely hon. Minister Anil Kumar Bachoo and yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I got elected with flying colours. The hon. Prime Minister found in me someone who can defend the ideals of the Labour Party and who can serve the Constituency and the country without fear or favour. I was elected in the second position and Constituency No. 9 had one of the highest percentage of votes compared to other Constituencies in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very much thankful to hon. Minister Anil Kumar Bachoo who, as *chef de file* in the Constituency and being someone with great political experience, guided me throughout the campaign. I also have a special word for you as the other colleague who despite being new to the Constituency No. 9 joined us hand in hand to work as one team. With the three of us working together, the right synergy was created towards the massive success of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* in Constituency No. 9.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must admit that I am very proud to be associated with the aforesaid Constituency. Allow me to take this opportunity to say a few things about Constituency No. 9. I was born and brought up in Central Flacq, a village which has constantly developed into the biggest business centre where tourism, business, educational sectors are thriving hand in hand. The Constituency of Flacq and Bon Accueil is made up of the eastern coastline with a mixed of small and big hotels which

have brought employment for many people in the eastern part of Mauritius. My Constituency is made up of a pluri-cultural base comprising people from different ladders of the economy, all of them living very peacefully and in harmony.

During the past five years, we have witnessed considerable infrastructural development giving the Constituency an altogether different outlook with all major services available. A few examples are a new wing under construction at Flacq hospital, a modern Police station is almost ready, a new fire station has just started operating, two new bridges at La Source and Hermitage after the flooding in 2008, road upliftment programmes, NDU related projects and other developments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these structures would not have taken shape without the sincere, untiring and dedicated effort put forth by my senior colleague, hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo.

*(Interruptions)*

As a young Parliamentarian, I will do my utmost best to contribute positively to the debates and in all businesses of the House. In the House, we can see many young people who get elected for the first time and together with the senior Members of the House, a good mix of Parliamentarians has been constituted. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have also witnessed during the past general election that the youth of today participated actively. At one time, the younger generation used to say that politics was a dirty game in which they would not indulge themselves, but with the bold leadership of the hon. Prime Minister who projects the image of a new, modern and charismatic statesman, confidence has been reinstated among the youth which culminates in their massive participation in the last general election.

The youth of today does not believe in division, communalism and casteism but rather, believes in the language of unity, inter-community interaction, solidarity, fraternity, peace, justice, transparency and these are the same values which are preached by the one and only hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

The youth in 2010 has high aspirations as they are always in search of new opportunities. Thanks to the vision of the new elected Government. These aspirations will be a reality for our young generation as lot of emphasis has been laid down in the Government Programme 2010-2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to open the door of opportunities for any Mauritian, education is one of the most important means to climb the social ladder. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, remember the words of

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about India waking up at midnight to make her tryst with destiny. The destiny of Mauritius is linked to progressive measures taken in the education field by our founding fathers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if India can provide engineers, programmers for the world; if Israel can provide new technology product in communication; if Ireland can excel in attracting FDI, why can't we create our own model of development through education? Why can't we position ourselves regionally as an educational power house? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need to continue investing in the human capital to develop a skilled workforce. This is the 'home truth' and we have to keep reminding ourselves.

The Labour Party has been the pioneer for free education and, in the Government Programme 2010-2015, new measures have been explored and will be implemented. One of them is to reach an objective of one graduate per family. This will definitely help to develop a skilled, versatile and competent workforce and therefore promoting social mobility. Increasing access to education, in particular access to tertiary education, has also been one of the priorities of this Government. Our Government has set up a new Ministry of Tertiary Education to pursue its policy to transform Mauritius into a centre of excellence in higher education and the knowledge hub in this part of the world.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to increase access to education, it is important to create more space and develop new infrastructures as well as to ensure provisions to quality education for all. The idea for setting up a new *Campus Universitaire* in different parts of the island is evidence of the good intention of Government to this effect. Recognition of prior or experiential learning is another milestone in providing pathways for continuing further education. People with school certificates can now have access to university education through foundation programmes.

It is good to note the commitment of this Government to further consolidate equity, quality and relevance at all levels of the education and learning system. The use of mother tongues, that is, introducing Mauritian Kreol and Bhojpuri as optional subjects in schools is to facilitate teaching and learning.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that Mauritius has no natural resources and its most important asset is its people, education therefore plays an important role in the development and emergence of modern Mauritius. Some of the measures mentioned above and undertaken by the Government will no doubt boost the provisions for quality education at all levels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICT sector has turned out to be an important pillar of the Mauritian economy. It is interesting to point out here that, thanks to the wishful thinking and continuous effort of our hon. Prime Minister, the Ebène Cybercity is a reality today. The Cybercity has really changed the landscape in the Réduit-Rose Hill regions and it is with great pleasure that we see a lot of young Mauritians working there. The ICT sector will continue to expand and guarantee a lot of employment opportunities for our youth. The ICT sector also includes BPO activities and Mauritius is bound to become the focal point in the region and thus, the regional ICT hub. Access to information and internet at affordable rates has become a priority issue for our Government as well as promoting E-government applications. In days to come, we shall witness the E-judiciary, E-education, E-agriculture, etc.

The ICT sector will be called to further develop and progress significantly in the near future. This will be in line with the Government's vision to make Mauritius an Intelligent Mauritius. The ICT sector has the potential to continue generating a lot of employment especially at a time when the impact of the global recession is being felt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the *Maurice Ile Durable* concept is testimony to the fact that our Government is conscious to ensure development and, at the same time, to improve the quality of life of future generations. Nowadays, we find young people showing serious concerns about issues relating to the protection of our environment. This will definitely have a positive impact on our flora and fauna and, at the same time, will make Mauritius a better place, clean and green to live. In the words of the former Vice-President Al Gore on climate change, I quote –

“We don't have time to play around.”

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, indeed we don't have time to play around because of the nightmarish scenario caused by climate change. Important measures have been envisaged to protect our natural environment such as forests, beaches, coral reefs for the benefit of our present and future generations. A beautiful environment will also attract a lot of tourists to our country and we all know very well how much we depend on the tourist industry for revenues as well as for employment, be it direct or indirect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has already put the standards very high on the issue of environment. This Government has implemented in-depth policies as regards to preserving our environment, in particular, its flora and fauna. You cannot have a better example than the one of modifying the South East Highway Project by saving the Valley de Ferney which is unique and still in its endemic state.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this courageous decision of our hon. Prime Minister, demonstrates the seriousness with which this Government is committed to make Mauritius a better place to live.

It is only now that the population realises the beauty of this valley which could have been easily destroyed by the action of chainsaws and heavy machines. The paradox in all this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that our hon. Prime Minister saved the Valley de Ferney, thus preserving the calmness and fresh air, whereas others wanted to bring dark smokes and pollution to that region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we are aware, the demand for energy is increasing day-by-day and as at today we are dependent to a major extent on fossil fuels for generating the energy we consume. This Government is committed to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and decrease harmful greenhouse gas emissions through setting up and tapping on other sources of green energy such as wind farms, hydropower stations, land fill gas also optimising the utilisation of solar energy.

All those measures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are directed towards creating a clean and green environment in Mauritius in the future thereby making our beautiful island a nice place to live. To this effect, a Master Plan for renewable energy will be prepared by this Government for the development of renewable energy projects up to the year 2025. The development of the Land-based Oceanic Industry which will use deep sea water for cooling purposes and other activities is also another area to which the Government is giving serious thoughts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the water sector is concerned, the construction of two dams at Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles by 2013 will definitely increase storage capacity by some additional 30 million meter cube, thus improving water supply in Port Louis and in the South.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the commitment of this Government concerning the energy sector, electricity generation and water supply will further be strengthened by the enactment of the appropriate pieces of legislation like the Energy Bill, the Water Resources Bill and so on.

It is good to point out that one must not forget that, under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, during the last mandate, decisions were taken to encourage households to use solar energy and appropriate facilities were extended through the Development Bank of Mauritius for the purchase of solar water heaters to the population.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government will encourage the democratisation of electricity generation by providing the necessary incentives to small producers and households to

generate electricity. Through this initiative, Government is encouraging the population to save energy in their households and, at the same time, it is sending the right signal to them that the combined effect of their actions will lead to saving energy and, at the same time, protecting the environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the health sector has witnessed significant improvement over the past five years and our Government has continually endeavoured to improve our health services and to benchmark it to the best. Government has showed its intention to set up an Institute for Women's Health, a National Geriatric Hospital and a National Paediatric Hospital. These units will cater for the specific and specialised needs of the different clusters. The health system is being modernised with the latest medical equipment. Specialist services such as cardiology are being extended to all hospitals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a new building is under construction at the Flacq Hospital to improve the quality of health services provided in this region. It is also to be noted that a brand new hospital at the cost of Rs1.5 billion is being constructed in Port Louis with modern facilities. Moreover, together with modern medication, this Government is also encouraging the use of natural and traditional medicine. To this effect, Ayurvedic services will be strengthened and extended to all regions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over the past years we have been hearing a lot about the increase in the number of people suffering from hypertension, cardiovascular disease and, unfortunately, we have one of the highest rates of diabetes in the world. On the basis of all the facts and figures, this Government, during its last mandate, did not stay idle. A series of bold measures were initiated with a view to compel people to think differently about their eating habits and lifestyle; once such measure is the banning in schools of fizzy drinks, oily and fatty foods, foods containing colourings and a high level of sugar.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to encourage the public to exercise and indulge in physical activities, health clubs have been set up throughout the island. The Ministry of Health as well as the Ministry of Youth and Sports through the Mauritius Sports Council had started mass physical exercise activities such as "Keep Fit Mauritius" and the Community Based Sports Development Programmes across the island. In the Government programme 2010-2015, these activities will be continued for the benefit of the population at large. As the saying goes "A Nation wealth depends on the Nation's Health" and our Government is committed to further strengthen the health sector throughout its various units across the island.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the last mandate of this Government under the inspired leadership of our hon. Prime Minister, Mauritius witnessed considerable changes in its infrastructural

landscape. New road networks were built with a view to alleviate traffic congestions. In furtherance to this, our Government is continuing to implement the measures already started in 2005. It is a fact that the standard of living in Mauritius has gone up and as such the majority of household nowadays possesses a motor vehicle. This is building up additional pressure on our traffic network and congestion problems are costing a fortune to the Mauritian economy in terms of fuel and unnecessary time spent in traffic jams, without forgetting, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the stress generated on a daily basis. This Government is determined to remedy this situation by undertaking a series of concrete measures.

Several bypasses are being created in order to avoid busy villages such as Goodlands, Triolet, Central Flacq and others. Additional lanes on the motorway between Pont Fer and Caudan roundabout are under construction. The Verdun-Terre Rouge Link road which will lighten the traffic flow pressure between the north and the south of the island is also under construction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not later than last week, the population got a glimpse of the new ring road starting from Soreze to end at Quay D roundabout. I must say that from the feedback I got people are amazed and overwhelmed by the size of this project which will definitely ease traffic flow northbound and southbound, thereby making our capital city easily accessible.

Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Programme 2010-2015 gives an indication to the population of the enormous tasks lying ahead and this Government under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, is ready to take up these challenges and complete all the projects stated in the programme as per the expectations of the population who supported us massively and bestowed their trust in the last general election to run the Government during this mandate 2010-2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me conclude by quoting the following Indian proverb -

“The more you enjoy putting in good efforts, the greater will be your happiness on receiving the fruits of those efforts”.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**(5:40 p.m.)**

**Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the outset, to take this opportunity to convey my sincere congratulations to you, as well

as for the unanimous election of the Chair of the Speaker of this House and Chairman of Committees. Having known you personally for several years, I feel immensely honoured and privileged, as one of the youngest Members of this august Assembly, to deliver my maiden speech before you. I am confident, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that you will do justice to this Chair, and more importantly I will benefit from your professional and impartial guidance, as well as from this team guidance of veteran Members of this House. I also wish to congratulate hon. Dhiraj Khamajeet for his excellent maiden speech.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to heartily thank the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, for the trust he has placed in me to serve this country. Indeed, it is a great privilege and honour to serve under his strong leadership, and I am confident that I will benefit immensely from his vast experience in political matters. I am also very grateful to my leader, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, for having given me the chance to be part of his team. He can always rest assured that I will always be sincere and loyal to him, be it in victory or in defeat, unlike those who left the MSM when we were in the Opposition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to congratulate all the hon. Members on both sides of the House upon their election to represent their respective Constituencies and, in particular, the two colleagues of my Constituency, hon. Sayed-Hossen and hon. Dr. Jeetah. Last but not the least, my deepest gratitude goes to the constituents of Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East for having placed their trust in me to represent them in this august Assembly. I undertake it as a solemn duty to represent my constituents to the best of my ability, without fear or favour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the electoral programme of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir - l'avenir ensam*, the vision of the Leader of the House was to *rassembler, construire et servir*. The people of this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, have voted for continuity and not for a change. That is a professional job that we are interested to do, and we shall fulfil their aspiration. They see the hon. Prime Minister as someone who has the will and ability to improve the life of our people, to pave the way for a better Mauritius, *et de faire de ce pays un endroit où il fait bon vivre*. The reason is simple, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is because the hon. Prime Minister is a person committed to action, and he is not a bluffer. He means business; he leaves no stone unturned to further the cause of the citizens of this country, mostly the deprived and the vulnerable. In our electoral manifesto, we made it clear that one of our main objectives is towards alleviating poverty.

True it is that this cannot be done overnight, whereas I must here congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for having, as he promised, created the Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. This Ministry will definitely pave the way to tackle the problem of social exclusion, and there will be ways and means to alleviate poverty in the country. With the loyal support of the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, I am confident that the Mauritian population will get its fair share of the cake. No one should be left out of the mainstream economic development. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need to harness the efforts of everybody in fighting poverty - the public, the private sector, and the NGOs altogether.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to the visions and goals of this Government; what we want to achieve for the next five years. The Government Programme, as announced by the President of the Republic, in his Presidential Address, is an ideal mix of social and economic development, and I must confess that this programme caters for all, be it for the young generation or for our elders. It already shows that this is a caring Government. The underlying theme of the Government Programme is 'Building our Future Together' and, as set out in paragraph 303, this Government's objective is, I quote

—

“Government is committed to making the children and youth of the country accomplished and proud heirs to the worthy legacy they will inherit, a nation united, a society more equitable, in a spirit that is forward looking and modern.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a gist, the Government priorities and aims are, *inter alia* -

- improve the quality of life of the nation;
- increase the purchasing power of the people;
- wind down the gap between the rich and the poor;
- create more jobs;
- build some more than 10, 000 houses;
- alleviate poverty;
- make Mauritius a duty-free island;

- continue with the process of democratisation of the economy;
- improve our health and educational services, and
- more importantly, to continue the process of maintaining law and order.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate that law and order is one of the main concerns of this Government, and we are going to be tough on crime. We are all alive to the social and economic consequences that may affect our society. When there is a deterioration in law and order, as set out in paragraph 12 of the Government Programme, our primary purpose is for 'the safety and security of our citizens and visitors, and the protection of our national interests.' We always yearn for this country to be a safe place, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I must acknowledge that the previous Government came forward with several measures to fight crime, especially by increasing the terms of imprisonment in serious cases. One of the most fruitful measures was the installation of CCTV cameras in high risk areas as in Flic en Flac region, with the result that, in these areas, the number of crimes has decreased considerably. In this respect, I would urge the Government to install more CCTV cameras in other parts of the country since this would be a major step forward to reduce the level of crimes and also make easy investigations of crimes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is fully committed to improve security, maintain law and order in the country. To achieve this objective, Government is investing heavily to modernise the Police Force. The reason is that it must meet the expectation of the public. It is to be noted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the reform in the Police Force has already started under the previous Government, as the hon. Prime Minister pointed out at the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations of the SMF at Gymkhana where he stated, I quote –

“The Budget of the Police has increased by 68% from the year 2004 to 2010 and has reached the 5.2 billion mark.”

This has been well spent, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because the crime rate has decreased by 8.5% between the years 2008-2009 and I am sure in future the decrease would be more apparent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has come up with the initiative of recruiting, at least, 5,000 Police officers during the coming five years. On top of creating those 5,000 jobs in the Police Force, I have no doubt that the recruitment of those additional officers, in addition to the modernisation

and ongoing reforms in the Police Department, would definitely have a positive impact on the level of crimes in this country. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am of the view that more incentives and encouragement should be given to new recruits and those actually serving the Police Force. It goes without saying that many recruits are young ones and they are very determined in clamping down on violence and crimes as soon as they join the Force, but we must confess, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, after a couple of years, some are demotivated and leave the Police Force whereas others just work for the sake of having a job. This is the reason why Government's aim, as enunciated at Paragraph 13 of the Government Programme, is to properly equip and train Police officers permanently. What we need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is people who want to join the Police Force and serve the country as their solemn duty, and not those who wait for better opportunities and to leave the Force thereafter. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, new and modernised Police stations should be constructed so that Police officers can work in a safe and proper environment. I am not saying that Police stations in this country are in a poor state, but my opinion is that some Police stations are not really equipped. More can be done to improve the standards in which these Police officers can perform their duties efficiently as professionals. National and overseas training should be provided to them so that they are in touch with modern techniques in detecting crimes and tracking criminals.

Last but not least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, members of the Police Force should be provided with a proper career plan, and, where necessary, there should be some sort of allowances to reward performances. In the same line, the present system for promotion exams for Police officers should be reviewed and performance at work should be taken into account when considering promotion. With all these reforms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government will achieve its ultimate aim in helping to shift the Police from a 'Force' to a 'Service'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, touching the issue of Law and Order, I take note that Government's intention is to revise the Bail Act. This is indeed a most welcome initiative. Much confusion has resulted in the dictation and application of the present Bail Act. It is high time that the opinion of our recent Supreme Court rulings as well as those of the Privy Council be recast into clear legal provisions and lead to a clear and unambiguous Bail Act; one that will strike a balance between the presumption of innocence and the ability to keep in custody those who show high propensity to commit crimes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for those released on bail, some jurisdictions have found that the use of electronic bracelets will be very effective. Our prisons are almost overcrowded and it is costly to cater for the needs of a prisoner on remand. It will be less costly if the use of electronic bracelets is adopted even

with a GPS, if need be. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also welcome the fact that any breach of any conditions of bail will lead to the arrest of a person released on bail and more importantly, for the imposition of stiffer penalties. In that sense, those released on bail would be reluctant to breach any of the appeal conditions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the issue of Health, this House has had the opportunity to listen to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, on the mission, vision and objective of her Ministry. I must point out, that she has the will and the determination to bring about the changes proposed. I will not dwell much on the subject of health. However, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to a major cause of concern. Indeed, the hon. Minister, herself, stated that many health centres need improvements; we agree. I, too, also agree with her that health centres should be given more attention since they are major tools in the health system.

In fact, these health centres are the key for the decentralisation of health care inasmuch as people do not need to travel long distances to attend treatment at hospitals. However, it remains a fact that many people prefer going to hospitals rather than to health centres or dispensaries for that matter. Why is that so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Is there a misconception in the mind of the public that hospitals provide better treatment than health care centres or dispensaries? Is that so? Such is totally unfounded.

The population need to cease attending mainstream hospitals for non-emergency cases once and for all. The casualty departments are only meant for emergency cases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Our mindset must evolve to a regional direction. I will agree with the hon. Minister that a well-organised and aggressive sensitisation campaign should be undertaken to explain to the population the benefits of health centres in terms of speedy access to treatment, as to the nature of the standard of treatment provided by those centres. Serious cases coming at mainstream hospitals are being jeopardised due to a situation where we have lesser serious cases which are being given priority. In my humble opinion, this would reduce the present bottleneck and overcrowding of hospitals which involves more delay in treating less serious cases whereas we can obtain the same treatment much promptly at health centres.

Concerning the remark made on the quality service in our hospitals, I would wish to highlight that bridging the gap between public and private is, indeed, totally unfounded inasmuch as the private and public hospitals have a partnership which already exists in certain specialised fields such as dialysis, CT scan and HRI services. I am aware that the ministry resorts to the services of private clinics in these fields as and when required. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, I am given to

understand, offers training to the health care personnel of private health institutions. Besides it is not a secret that many patients, who have complications and who cannot be treated in the private clinics, are referred to our hospitals. For instance, clinics, which do not have ICU, refer their patients to public hospitals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Presidential Address mentions about transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island. This project will, of course, give a new image to Mauritius as a tourist destination. It will create much dynamism in our economy and make this country one of the first duty-free destinations in our region. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what are the incentives for a tourist to shop here as opposed to purchase from his own country? Only if the goods are cheaper in Mauritius, the tourist would come and find it convenient to shop here. Removing duties and taxes on imported goods will definitely bring down prices and boost up shopping by tourists. Singapore has done that several years ago and, today, Singapore is reaping the dividends of such an initiative. Smaller in size than Mauritius, today Singapore is a shopping hub for people coming from all parts of the world. The number of people visiting Singapore is three times more than its population. This is what is called vision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is a vision coupled with commitment which will create the dynamics for the project to go through. With the vision, intelligence and firm commitment of the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, this project will definitely materialise and, in the coming years, the number of tourists visiting this country will surely increase.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have read some comments in the press where some local manufacturers have felt themselves threatened by this project. Let me state that, in line with the policy of this Government which is to put our people in the centre of all developments, their concerns will be taken on board and, at the end of the day, local manufacturers will be those who will profit the most out of this project.

As far as democratisation of the economy is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is nothing more than a fair distribution and creation of wealth, and, at the same time, it will reduce inequality in the distribution of wealth. All over the world, the tendency is to delay, to make fat entities become slimmer, to outsource, to sub-contract. This is an economic reality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is no sinister motive. It is the only way to boost up economic activities like in hotels, for example. Hotels should not only operate as a remote palace near the sea.

The tourists coming to this country cannot solely enjoy a package which brings the tourists from the plane to the hotel and from the hotel to the plane. I consider such practice totally outrageous. Inhabitants around the hotels and people in the region should also participate. They should be part and parcel of any hotel project. They should participate in activities of any kind, in the spin-offs activities of the hotels. In fact, they can contribute to the development of the tourist industry so why should they be kept apart. Getting them involved in hotel activities through democratisation will reduce alienation and create greater cooperation among stakeholders.

Regarding public infrastructure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, inasmuch as the Light Rail Project is concerned, it is a long-term solution and will be reconsidered in the future. We must, in the meantime, put our minds together to tackle our immediate traffic congestion. At present, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure has already embarked on multiple projects as, for example, the extension of the highway towards Port Louis, to deal with that problem which is highly commendable. The construction of the Phoenix/Beaux Songes route will be a briefer, I think, to the highly congested Vacoas/La Louise and St. Jean Road link. The Moka bypass will be implemented soon. This is also a briefer for anyone travelling from Port Louis to Plaine Wilhems to the east or back for that matter. There is the widening of the highway towards Grand' Baie; we do not have a dual carriageway there. A dual carriageway is under construction. We also have the very ambitious project of the east-west connector, that is, from Flacq to Flic-en-Flac which is also a highly commendable project. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, traffic congestion is acute in Port Louis and the introduction of a third lane towards Port Louis, in my humble view, will not be enough. In this respect, I humbly propose that the flexitime should be considered by contrasting the time frame from private and public sectors, that is, instead of the public sector starting at 08.45 a.m. for instance, why not start at 09.30 a.m. and, consequently, to review the closing time accordingly. All the departments in this country do not have and do not need to follow the 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. approach. The work time frame can be altered according to the relevant traffic congestion. Moreover, to alleviate congestion, in my humble view, a flyover at Phoenix roundabout is much needed. The eastern highway or the east-west connector from Flacq to Flic-en-Flac is also a huge step towards curing this traffic disease in the short run.

We have also to upgrade our bus services, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The new Curepipe/Port Louis corridor is a much awaited project. There are proposals for the introduction of low floor buses for the elderly-friendly and eco-friendly buses. Eco-friendly buses, that is, low floor buses using wind

energy will encourage bicycle-friendly movements. These buses with low floor space for bicycles will travel in town or city centres.

Furthermore, CCTV cameras are not only meant for protection of the public, but also to regulate traffic efficiently and more smoothly to clamp down on obstructions on the roads, to clamp down on temporary and recurrent congestion most of the time at the same area so that the use of that same CCTV camera would be at its optimum level. Also a futuristic and travel friendly approach would be to remove all the humps that we have on our roads all around the island and replace them by well regulated speed cameras with its well scheduled zoning and conspicuous speed limits clearly identified by any user.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to avoid constant and eternal road repairs causing traffic, we should have a proper underground network system including all cables for public use, that is, telecommunications and electricity cables, together with water pipes. This complete networking system would also be protected during cyclone seasons for example. This adds up all to it and it is to the benefit of the population. Much thinking is to be done in such suggestions. Concerning the environment, besides the commendable *Maurice Île Durable* project to reduce heavy emission of carbon monoxide from all vehicles, solutions can be for the introduction of eco-friendly engines at more competitive prices with high incentives and loan facilities mostly for heavy vehicles. Noise pollution is also a worry - a worry for our inhabitants, a worry for our elderly - mostly during night time. Drastic measures such as heavy taxes on engine tuning and appliances which are usually sources of noise pollution should be looked at and adhered to.

As regards the cultural aspect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will touch the educational and social parts of it. I am for a unilateral re-introduction of *baïtka* classes or other similar ones. This will enhance our Mauritian moral values for young ones and will bring back basic moral values in our neighbourhood. As we say it, they are our *sanskars*, our values in our community. This would also revive respect among peers, elderly in our society.

With regard to social finance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, most of our lower middle class households are hung with debts mostly from the DBM or the MHC. These debts have been contracted most crucially by hard-working individuals, basically to buy their own plot of land, to develop it further, to purchase their flat or house, and to provide education or higher studies to their children. These hard-working individuals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are from rural areas. I am of the view that the Government

should come up with new schemes so that these people can be alleviated from their huge debts; if need be, they need to be helped on a case-to-case basis.

Consequently, I would move on to the fishing industry, if I may refer to paragraph 274 of the programme - the self-entrepreneurship of the fishermen. The target should be to bring the fishermen to a businessman approach. That is a solution and the key to it is to enhance and to put forward an idea which is, firstly, to fish, to pack and to sell. This is a value-added project that can be put forward in such an industry, that is, to further promote our seafood hub industry. That is the road to success in this industry. Obviously, the same must be done in conjunction with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. Concerning breeding, investment on aquaculture, loans, must also be taken into consideration when improving on aquaculture, basically projects in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

As regards the Consumer Protection issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must change our mindset. *On consomme trop, on devrait dépenser moins, mais dépenser mieux. Il faut cesser de courir après les soldes qui passent devant les yeux.* There should be a more sensible approach. The advice to the consumer should be as aggressive as that of the big chain of production as the advertising campaign is as aggressive for its company. The keyword for our population should be: *il faut dépenser moins, mais dépenser mieux.*

Lastly, I shall move on to my Constituency. Firstly, I would have to congratulate our constituents for a *trois zéro pissot*. Most of the political *pandits* predicted otherwise. Concerning the various projects in our Constituency, the waterfront at Grand River South East is shaping up.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, there was a site visit two weeks ago and all plans and layouts are on the final move.

Constituents are very eager and in grand anticipation for such a project. It is a major step forward for Grand River South East waterfront. As for future projects suggested by the constituents to benefit their Constituency, these might divert a little bit from what hon. Khamajeet has stated earlier, there is a link road from Kewal Nagar to Anse Jonchée. There is an existing off-road track already, but it is imperative that the condition to do same is to obviously uphold all the environmental issues as it should be.

The other projects are a new bridge and the dredging of a river at Rivière Sèche in Morcellement Sohawon Bel Air Caroline to prevent the looming flooding in that area. Also, to put an end to the flooding at Morcellement Dowthal in Bramsthan, a new project has already started as kindly reminded by the Minister himself. Next, there will be the water supply project. As stated by the Deputy Prime Minister, more than Rs 60 m. is earmarked to put an end to the irregularity and shortage of water supply in the regions of Bel Air Caroline, Ecroignard and Bramsthan. To tackle the flooding and soil erosion problem at Belle Rose Clémencia which is at the foot of a mountain, the previous Government has accomplished a quite remarkable task, I must say, with the Belle Rose bridge, but much work is left to be done to ensure the security of the inhabitants of that region. Obviously, a special drainage system would have to be put forward to combat such recurrent flooding and also a specific retaining wall at some location to prevent such erosion.

Furthermore, in my humble opinion, there should be new installations, new drains at Melrose, which is at the gate of Constituency No.10. Besides a new drainage at Morcellement Sans Souci, Montagne Blanche; a new volleyball and basketball pitch at Pellegrin, Sebastopol; the renovation of the fish landing post with landing shelters at Grand River South East and Trou D'eau Douce are much needed. In our vision, a multi-purpose ring is needed for the youth of Medine, Mont Ida and Trou D'eau Douce to conduct their activities, be it *arts martiaux* or other.

As it has already been highlighted, a well-fenced football ground at Mont Ida was earmarked. A CCTV system was installed in the heart of Bel Air, Trou d'Eau Douce and Montagne Blanche with a view to reduce crime and to enable the Police to regulate constant and temporary traffic congestion caused by multiple obstructions, mostly on peak hours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, time constraint does not allow me to dwell further on the Presidential Address but, before ending my speech, I wish to make some comments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have had the opportunity to listen to some hon. Members on the other side of the House. I must say that criticism is a good thing, but you have to criticise constructively and come forward with alternatives, proposals, concrete solutions to make a better Mauritius. From 2005 to 2010 when the MSM was in the Opposition, we also made a lot of criticisms, but that was not the only thing we did. We came up with several proposals to change the lives of our people. The job of the

Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to come up with suggestions. If the Opposition comes up with concrete solutions may be the Government might retain some of them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated earlier, the population has voted for continuity, not for a change of Government. They have accepted our *projets de société*. As it is well said - *la voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu*. So be it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would, therefore, request the Opposition to accept the wish expressed by electors through the ballots and to respect same. They should be patient because it is this team, on this side of the House, which will improve the daily lives of our people and put everybody on the same wavelength. It is the intention of this caring Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the second generation of *l'Alliance Bleu Blanc Rouge* and I am proud to be part of this team which will bring *unité, égalité et modernité*. Whenever this Alliance has been in power, the country has gone through substantial developments. It is the Mauritian population who has benefited from it. In 1983, when this country was in the dark, the Bleu Blanc Rouge Alliance came to the rescue of the population. We should not forget at that time the Governor General was Chacha Ramgoolam, the Father of the nation and the Prime Minister who is the actual President of the Republic. Both had the support of Sir Gaëtan Duval. Today history repeats itself and only those who wish to be blind will obviously not see.

With the determination of our Leaders, let us express our hope and confidence in a better and peaceful country. May God bless this Government! May God bless our Republic!

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**(6.23 p.m.)**

**Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish, first of all, to congratulate the two hon. Members who spoke before me for their maiden speech although I am not on the same wavelength as the hon. Member who has just spoken, especially when he says that people have to spend less. It seems that the Member is not aware that in Mauritius, itself, there are people who do not have one cent to spend a day.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to congratulate you also for your election to preside over, from time to time, the debates of the House.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were all astounded by the incident narrated on the air and in the press about a girl who attempted to her life because she has constantly been harassed, been bullied by her school mates. She was repeatedly harassed on the colour of her skin and the fabric of her hair. Some people may think that this is an isolated case and there is no need to make a fuss about it, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, such remarks need to be condemned; such remarks need to be banned. I won't go as far as saying that we must punish these children. They are not to be blamed personally. The system is to be blamed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said this was not an isolated case. The fact is that, because of such attitudes calling people names, calling our children names, making fun of their names, as pointed out by Father Alain Romaine, in one of his books: "*Les Noms de la Honte*", some of our children refuse to attend schools. The society has failed somewhere. Teachers should be taught to assume their role as educators. Unfortunately, some of the teachers themselves encourage such attitudes. We should know our history, where do we come from. We should know each other's culture in order to be respected and respect others. Unfortunately, the education system, as it is, has failed considerably. We, the MMM, have always looked forward to a just society in which creed or race shall form no point of reference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2005 President Address, at paragraph 15, mentions, I quote -

‘An Equal Opportunities Act will be adopted providing for equal opportunities in employment and in access to resources.’

The Equal Opportunities Act, if duly proclaimed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has to adopt an approach intended to provide a certain social environment in which people are not excluded from the activities of society; in the present case, in the education system on the basis of immutable traits. The legislation has been voted, yet it has never been proclaimed, I wonder why. This morning the Secretary General of the PMSD, ex-Attorney-General, in l'Express, a widely circulated newspaper, has this to say. I quote him:

«L'Equal Opportunities Act menace les privilégiés»

Notre interlocuteur – c'est le journaliste qui écrit – souligne qu'il existe un fort lobby pour que le *statu quo* soit maintenu. Pour lui - 'ce refus d'accepter l'Equal Opportunities Act est une façon de dire oui à toutes les injustices de notre société'."

Ça c'est le secrétaire général du PMSD, l'ancien *Attorney General* du gouvernement.

The Equal Opportunities Act, which has never been proclaimed, was one of the famous issues on which *l'Alliance de l'avenir* campaigned and made people believe that it was *en vigueur*. *Ce n'était que de l'arnaque politique*. *L'Alliance Sociale* made the population believe that everyone was considered in a just and equitable way. It is not true. It is not fair and this is called *la malhonnêteté intellectuelle*. I put a parliamentary question two weeks back, Debate No. 5 of 29 June 2010. The question reads thus –

“(No. 1B/145) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Equal Opportunities Act, he will state if Government proposes to proclaim same and, if so, when and, if not, why not.”

The reply came from the Attorney General and it reads thus –

“The answer to the first part of the question is ‘yes’.

That is, it will be proclaimed.

“The answer to the second part is soon.”

So, how soon is soon?

My second case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after that of the little school girl, relates to a poor old widow who lives with her son at the low-cost housing estate, NHDC Riche Terre. Both the mother and the son are mental patients. They survive on an allowance granted to them by the Ministry of Social Security. Needless to say that an important proportion of this money is spent on medicines. Last year or the year before, they received a letter from the Ministry of Housing and Lands informing them that their lease would increase from Rs450 to Rs1,000 annually. They were very upset. They came to see me. I consider that it is not fair, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we know that some profit-making organisations have been given State land and are paying same R100 annually per arpent, this is most unjust. They were upset, they came to see me. I intervened personally with the Minister so that they may be exempted from such increase. I called the Ministry several times, but till today there has been no response. The person is still waiting for an answer. At the time I am talking in this House, the widow is in Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. Only yesterday, she had undergone a delicate surgical operation, a vasectomy. This is to tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how miserable people are in this country. This is *Ile Maurice profonde*. The Equal Opportunities Act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is closely related with

the ideas of meritocracy and goes hand in hand with a Freedom of Information Act. At paragraph 261 on page 30 of the 2005 President's Address, we read further. I quote –

“(...) Government will also adopt a Freedom of Information Act, which will provide citizens with a right of access to personal information held by the State agencies and to information relating to Government businesses.”

These two legislations, that is, the Equal Opportunities Act and the Freedom of Information Act, work in parallel. The Freedom of Information Act had been announced several times by the Government, but it has never come before this House. This time the Freedom of Information Bill is not even mentioned in the President's Address of 2010. It has completely disappeared. The Government seems to have some confusion on the merit of such legislation. Now it is proposing a Media Commission which is totally different, which is not the same thing at all and consultations had taken place here in Mauritius on the media law and now we learn the Prime Minister is abroad for further discussions on the matter. This is not the Freedom of Information Bill, it is different. The Freedom of Information Act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, contains rules that guarantee access of data held by the State. They establish a right to know legal process by which requests may be made for Government-held information because the population has the right to obtain information on a number of issues, for example, the right to know in the absence of a clear policy on land management, how State land is managed, how State land is granted; how is it that plots of land have been distributed *à gogo* on a basis of ‘*En veux-tu?*’ ‘*En viola!*’ to friends and political agents? The population has the right to know how applications have been approved within a very limited time frame. On the other hand, poor people have to go through long processes and more often than not, at the end of the day, do not get a single *toise* of land or if they do have a plot of State land they apply for a transfer of lease so that their children can build *en ti bout la case* or an extension in order to have a loan. We know the time that it takes very often years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! I have mentioned the case of that poor lady and her son still waiting for a reply from the Ministry to lower their rates. I have personally intervened for an application for transfer of lease on behalf of a relative. I have had to call at the Ministry several times. They are still looking into the matter. After several calls, one officer told me to call another person - nothing abnormal! I called the officer who informed me that there is one document missing. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I had not called, I would have never known if there was one document missing. Instead of relieving the plight of the poor, the authorities are making matters worse. I wish to voice out the fact that distribution of land in Mauritius is a matter of great concern. There is a lack of transparency. We could not believe

our eyes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when, in a well-circulated newspaper, someone revealed that a very high personality called him on the phone to offer him - a political agent - a plot of land which he had never asked for. He went on to explain in detail how he sold that land to a foreigner and got a jackpot of Rs110 m. for a land he had never asked for.

Second, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is also the fairy tale of one driver at Mauritius Telecom, who turned out to be more than millionaire with transactions made out of State land and his several *péripéties* in Switzerland or Belgium. He is asking people to let him alone because otherwise *il va dénoncer*.

Third, there is also the case of the Managing Director of the Beach Authority. This is a flagrant case of *passé-droit*. This is a man who, himself, decides to grant land on the beach of Mon Choisy, and to issue authorisation to use land on the same public beach.

Fourth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have learned that, after the general election, one councillor in Black River has been granted *trois arpents* of land near the Albion Research Centre and more recently, State land has been given at Albion again. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are not against development and progress, but transparency should prevail. That is why I insist on the fact that the Equal Opportunities Act and the Freedom of Information Act do operate in parallel. Government is duty-bound to publish and promote openness. Although in many countries, there are constitutional guarantees for the right of access to information, usually these are unused if specific support legislation does not exist, and Mauritius is no exception.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, still on the lines of equal opportunities, freedom of information and transparency, there has always been a perception, maybe a wrong one, that, to have a job in the public sector, one must imperatively get a political backing. The selection process and recruitment in the public sector has always been a matter of concern and has always been questioned by the whole public, *avec raison ou pas*, especially by those who cannot find a job in the public sector. It happens that there is some abuse relating to the concept of delegation of powers given to some officers. There is discontent about the promotion opportunities in the Police Force, and the statement of the hon. Prime Minister to the effect that taking part and being successful in exams in the Police Force is no guarantee of promotion has created a certain uneasiness, you will agree with me.

The educational sector is not spared. There is growing discontent in the promotion and transfer exercise. It would seem that there is a lack of transparency on these different issues. With a Freedom of

Information Act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this perception would have disappeared. A basic principle behind most Freedom of Information legislation is that the burden of proof falls on the Body which asked for information, not the person asking for it. The requester does not usually have to give an explanation for the request, but if the information is not disclosed, a valid reason has to be given.

In the same breath, we cannot understand the refusal of Government to publish the Noël/Ramkissoon report on the small planters of Riche Terre when the Minister, himself, assured the House, to a question put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that same would be done. We can continue like that.

Concerning the Fact Finding Committee set up to throw light on the incident involving Mr and Mrs Ringadoo with employees of Air Mauritius during a flight, we have learned through the press that the crew has to present its apologies to Mr Ringadoo and his wife. It is the same thing for the committee set up on the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. Public money has been used to set up these committees.

Even in the admission exercise for students willing to have a seat at the University of Mauritius, at the University of Technology, as well as for the recruitment of staff especially at the University of Technology, there is no transparency at all.

There are also conditions surrounding the Tianli project, now Jin Fei project; the petroleum products and the STC. We have heard the answer this morning of the Minister concerning the recruitment at the MBC and other parastatal bodies. This is not serious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can they be? How can the Government ask the population to trust them, when the Prime Minister, himself, had declared, on several occasions, that he did not trust his Ministers? How can they be serious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the Government keeps changing sides on national issues depending on their audience? Some examples are - I talked of the Equal Opportunities Act and the Freedom of Information Bill - the electoral reform, the NRPT and tax on savings. We can continue like that on and on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Government should be more serious. Those who represent a country should be more serious and credible. We all agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is against convention and decorum that a Prime Minister meets a Foreign Secretary at his residence. I do not know who has advised the Prime Minister on such an issue, but this is against all fundamentals of basic diplomacy. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius going at a residence of a newly elected Secretary of State to discuss such an important issue as the Chagos issue! Shocking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! *Mo disang*

*marsé!* This is unbelievable, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! He is the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, he has not gone there in his own name as Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam; he has gone to the UK as the Prime Minister of Mauritius. A little decorum or convention would have sufficed. *Ça, c'était pour la forme. Venons-en au fond.* The issue of sovereignty on the Chagos *transcende toute politique partisane.* It is a national issue and it has to be handled in a patriotic way and not through any sort of political fanaticism. Trying to do exactly the contrary of what the previous Government had done, this is not serious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The issue of sovereignty, as we know, should also be handled on a humanitarian ground. This is also very important. The plight of the Chagossian community - although personally it is a very emotional matter, everyone knows that my parents are born there - the issue of sovereignty is of utmost importance. Is it being handled in a professional way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I would like to come to the suggestion of the Prime Minister relating to Mauritius setting up a Tribunal to prosecute pirates in the Indian Ocean. I think that the Government has to inform the population about all that this project entails, taking into consideration the recent episode of prison break at Borstal prison. The population needs to be informed on the issue.

M. le président, comme on parle de Borstal et que c'est dans ma circonscription, je profite de l'occasion pour me faire l'écho des habitants sur la présence d'une prison en plein quartier résidentiel. Comme vous le savez, le mur de la prison est à proximité de la cité - c'est même à l'intérieur de la cité - ce qui cause un sentiment d'insécurité. Il paraît qu'autrefois la prison accueillait que les *first offenders*, mais aujourd'hui tel n'est plus le cas car il y a également les *high risk detainees*, ce qui accroît davantage le sentiment d'insécurité. Les habitants demandent la délocalisation de cette prison au plus vite. Cette prison, comme je vous l'ai dit, est une source d'insécurité et d'inquiétude. Je ferais donc un appel au gouvernement afin que diligence soit faite sur le projet de délocalisation le plus vite possible. Vous réalisez, M. le président, que pour la seule circonscription numéro 1, il existe trois prisons : Borstal, Richelieu et Petit Verger à Pointe aux Sables. Quel modèle pour nos enfants ! Je vais continuer à dire quelques mots sur ma circonscription avant de conclure mon intervention.

La circonscription numéro 1, M. le président, est une circonscription de la classe ouvrière et des personnes se trouvant au bas de l'échelle: des pêcheurs, des ouvriers et ouvrières d'usines, des maçons en particulier. Il y a également depuis ces dernières années une migration de personnes qui ont pu grimper l'échelle sociale et qui habitent des quartiers comme, par exemple, au Morcellement Rey à Pointe aux Sables, au Morcellement Raffray à Pailles. Il y a eu parmi la classe ouvrière une prise de conscience sur l'importance de l'éducation et le désir de mobilité sociale vers le haut.

A la cité Richelieu, par exemple, M. le président, les parents sont parties prenantes de l'éducation de leurs enfants. Des enfants ont été primés à l'Alliance Française. Certains ont eu de très bons résultats au *C.P.E.* Il y a des jeunes qui ont même fait des études tertiaires. C'est une circonscription où divers talents se côtoient: l'intellectuel, l'artiste et le sportif. Ils veulent tous évoluer. Or, il y a un sentiment d'injustice à leur égard. Cela n'est pas seulement un sentiment, il repose sur des faits. Quand le ministère de l'éducation - je ne dis pas le ministre - bloque un projet de partenariat entre l'Agence de la Francophonie, et le ministre sait de quoi je parle, et l'école primaire de Richelieu sur un projet sur l'environnement...

*(Interruptions)*

Je n'ai pas dit que le ministre avait bloqué le projet. Je lui avais parlé sur ce sujet car certaines personnalités de la Francophonie du Canada devaient rendre visite à cette école. Le ministre avait fait le nécessaire, c'est bien mais la suite du projet, M. le ministre, a été bloquée. Je vous demanderais, M. le ministre de voir ce dossier de près parce que les enfants de la Cité Richelieu attendent beaucoup de vous. Il y a un sentiment que, parce que c'est la Cité Richelieu, le projet a été mis au frigo. Il y a différents cas où la municipalité et le *District Council* refusent d'allouer les infrastructures sociales à ceux qui, selon eux, n'ont pas voté pour les candidats de l'Alliance sociale. J'ai eu l'occasion de soulever la question lors de l'ajournement la dernière fois. J'ai parlé personnellement au ministre concerné. Je parle de cas précis nous ayant été rapportés à mes deux colistiers et moi tout récemment: le centre polyvalent de la Tour Koenig, le centre polyvalent de la Cité Borstal tombant sous l'administration municipale de Port Louis et le centre polyvalent de Jonction à Pailles sous la juridiction du Conseil de Village de Pailles et le District Council de Rivière Noire, d'où une question parlementaire sur le sujet. Comme je l'ai dit, j'ai eu l'occasion d'en parler au ministre qui m'a assuré qu'il va personnellement veiller cette situation de près. J'ose croire que ce ne sont là que des caprices de conseillers et que ce ne soit pas la politique du gouvernement de boycotter, de punir certaines circonscriptions spécifiques. Nous suivrons la situation de près. Mes deux colistiers, l'honorable Jean Claude Barbier, l'honorable Veda Baloomoody et moi, nous veillerons la situation de près. Il y a actuellement la construction de certaines maisons dans notre circonscription. M. le président, nous veillerons la situation de près également en ce qui concerne l'allocation de ces maisons et le recrutement dans certains corps paraétatiques et la fonction publique.

Je voudrais aborder un autre problème, M. le président. C'est celui que rencontrent les résidents des cités à côté du Domaine Les Pailles. Il y a cinq cités : cités St Louis, Dargahed, Mon Plaisir, La Butte, etc. Les gens rencontrent pas mal de problèmes lors des funérailles. Alors que les cités se trouvent à côté du Domaine Les Pailles, l'Eglise St. Vincent de Paul se trouve de l'autre côté de l'autoroute ce qui fait que pendant les funérailles, les gens doivent faire le tour, passant devant le Domaine, prendre le tunnel, traverser la route et, à ce moment là, atteindre l'église. Dans le passé, il y avait une clef du *District Council*, sous la garde du poste de police de Pailles, qui permettait dans ces moments difficiles de traverser directement l'autoroute en face de l'agence Leal sous la supervision d'un policier. Malheureusement, depuis quelques années, cette pratique n'est plus courante. Je fais un appel au ministre pour qu'il puisse rétablir la situation le plus vite possible.

Je voudrais terminer en remerciant les électeurs de ma circonscription qui, encore une fois, m'ont fait confiance et cela depuis 1995. J'avais eu l'occasion d'être au service de la population de Savanne/Rivière Noire une première fois en 1982. Je voudrais remercier mon leader, l'honorable Paul Bérenger, qui m'a toujours inspiré confiance, qui m'a toujours fait confiance et qui m'a donné l'occasion de servir mon pays à plusieurs échelons en tant que conseillère municipale, députée, *junior minister* et ministre, de représenter le pays sur le plan international, le représentant de temps en temps comme ministre des affaires étrangères et de représenter le pays quand le Premier ministre d'alors, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, ne pouvait faire le déplacement lors des sommets.

J'ai eu l'occasion, M. le président, de rencontrer les grands de ce monde mais je n'ai pas été impressionnée. Je n'ai été impressionnée par personne, ni quoi que ce soit. C'est pourquoi après chaque mission, si enrichissante soit-elle, j'ai toujours hâte de rentrer au pays, de rentrer à la maison, de rentrer chez nous. Mon cœur reste ancré à Maurice et je suis toujours au service de la population. J'en ai terminé et je vous remercie, M. le président.

**(7.03 p.m.)**

**Mr S. Moutia (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like, at the very outset, to convey my warmest congratulations to Mr Speaker, Sir, on his well-deserved election as Speaker. I equally extend to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and to all hon. Members on both sides of the House, my sincere felicitation on their election to serve Parliament, the people and the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 05 May 2010, the people of Mauritius gave a clear and comfortable mandate to the present Government to govern this country for the next five years. I must congratulate hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister and Leader of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* for his forward-looking and high calibre leadership that has been instrumental in leading him and his alliance party to be at the helm of Government once again for another term. I am confident that his rule will continue beyond 2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme 2010-2015 addressed by the President of the Republic in Parliament on 08 June 2010, bears testimony to the determination of scaffolding the entire nation in order to allow rapid and sustained economic growth, social justice, cohesion and harmony, equity and poverty alleviation, participation and empowerment, gender balance, institutional development, mobility, peace, law and order.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no sector of the economy that has been left out. Every citizen of this country is on board. I am sure that during the coming five years, this Government will achieve the objectives set and realise the projects mentioned in the Government Programme 2010-2015 and make the Republic of Mauritius a place *où il fait bon vivre*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme 2010-2015, has laid pathways in a roadmap for a sustainable development. It reflects a multi-prolonged approach to economic, social, cultural, ecological and political development that will definitely promote unity, equity and modernity. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a Member of Parliament who will serve this august Assembly for the fourth time, a few pertinent questions come to my mind and these questions may also concern other members of the society.

These questions are, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir -

- How will Mauritius change during the next five years?
- How will people live and what kind of society we will have in 2015 and beyond?
- What changes will people bring at their houses, workplace and consumption pattern?
- How will they spend their leisure?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answers to these questions are found in the pragmatic proposals contained in the Government Programme 2010-2015. I will now briefly comment on a few of these sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, welfare is a broad concept. Every aspect of a person's life is important. We have to give equal consideration to all actions. Government Programme is proposing precisely consolidating social security, health, leisure, poverty alleviation, social aids, gender balance, business, entrepreneurship in an integrated manner through its various programmes in the relevant Ministries. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of every citizen *où il fait bon vivre*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last term of office of the Social Alliance Government from 2005 was faced with the unprecedented global economic crisis, but due to his foresight, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, was able to steer the economy in the right direction. Mauritius has come out of the crisis brilliantly and has achieved a fairly robust economic growth and social justice. Once again, Government has resolved to adopt economic policies geared towards progress and prosperity for the whole nation while ensuring a fair balance between economic imperatives and social exigencies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has experienced constant economic growth and development and although income level has risen, these do not provide a reliable measure of poverty. What is perceived as social necessities varies over time and, therefore, poverty paradigm does not necessarily coincide with a crude measure of disposable income. Thus, there is a need to re-examine, in much broader perspective, poverty in all its aspects in the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues and the Outer Islands. In order to fulfil this exercise, Government has created a new Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment with a clear mandate to focus on the quality of life of the poor and vulnerable groups.

The main areas of operation will be in social housing, skill and capacity building, education, health, access to resources and empowerment. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this gigantic task, Government alone cannot reach all the poor in a reasonable time. It is imperative to partner the civil society, the NGOs, the private sector and the international agencies and to work in a coordinated and integrated manner. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recognising the size of the task of poverty alleviation, I am of the opinion that there is urgency to draw an Action Plan. This will be a "route map" for the next five

years and we will be able to measure the progress achieved as recommended by the United Nation Organisation in the Millennium Development Goals to halve poverty in the years to come.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the size of the local market makes us continue to be dependent on external markets for growth, investments and infrastructural development, and the business expansion which result in employment creation. The overriding aim of all actions is geared towards maximum job creation. A regular income in the family is a *sine qua non* condition for a stable, peaceful and harmonious country and Government is fully committed to play a major role in this field.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, small and medium enterprises will be the driving force for job creation for the next five years. The SME sector already employs more than 200,000 people and there are more than 100,000 small enterprises contributing about 22% of the country's GDP. The SME strategic plan 2010-2013, which lays emphasis on six pillars namely: access to finance, marketing, training facilities, transfer of technology, review of institutional support, and development of new sectors, will contribute to further consolidate and expand the sector. Moreover the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme has been launched to support enterprise productivity and competitiveness.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the water section, we must welcome the declared intentions to increase our storage capacities through the construction of additional reservoirs and other related measures that seek to improve the distribution capacity. It must remain a priority that, in the not too distant future, non-stop domestic water supply will become a reality throughout the inhabited parts of the country. As a Parliamentary Private Secretary having operated in different Constituencies, I am aware that irregular or inadequate water supply is a frequent source of public wrath. Here I would like to impress upon Government to give a special attention to some of the localities in my Constituency such as Vieux Grand Port, Bois des Amourettes, St. Hilaire/St. Hubert and other localities. The inhabitants of these localities suffer a lot because of inadequate water supply in these regions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must all be glad to note that Government takes very seriously the threat of climate change that has already wrecked havoc across the globe. On this score we must all be aware of our responsibilities and support every measure that seeks to reduce the level of CO<sub>2</sub> emission even if it means changing our daily habits with a certain measure of sacrifice, while no effort must be spared to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Some measures announced show that we have a foreseeing Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, has given me the opportunity to continue to serve the country, thereby renewing his trust in me as Parliamentary Private Secretary. Serving the country and the people is a matter of great joy, privilege and honour for me and I pledge to continue to the best of my ability to meet the expectation of the Prime Minister and to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am glad to note, as Parliamentary Private Secretary, that Government renews its trust in the National Development Unit which, during its nearly quarter of a century of existence, has contributed massively to improve the physical living environment, hence the quality of life, throughout the country so much so that today NDU is a household name. Given its track record, I wonder if it is not time to revisit the organisation with a view to enhancing its mission statement and allowing it to move into higher gear to play a bolder role in social upliftment not only in terms of infrastructural projects, but also to allow the Citizen Advice Bureau to play a more pro-active role. I am sure my colleagues Parliamentary Private Secretaries will readily support this view.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the voters, the people of my Constituency Vieux Grand Port and Rose-Belle, who have elected me to represent the Constituency for a second consecutive mandate. I am also thankful to my good friend, hon. Dr. Arvind Boolell, for his constant guidance and my newly elected friend, hon. Mahen Seeruttun, for his support. I cannot also forget my hon. Friend, Dr. Rajeshwar Jeetah, for his inestimable contribution to the welfare of the inhabitants of the said Constituency as well as hon. Anil Bachoo and hon. Lormus Bundhoo for helping in the materialisation of so many necessary projects in my Constituency through funds allocated to the National Development Unit and the RDA. Here I must place on record my appreciation to hon. Anil Bachoo for the construction of three bridges in my Constituency. The contract of one bridge at Quatre Soeurs has already been allocated, if I am not mistaken, and two bridges at Old Grand Port. We know how people suffer when there is heavy rain in the region. People have to wait for hours in order to cross the Old Grand Port Bridge. So, I am very thankful to hon. Anil Bachoo for his support and help as usual. Last, but not the least, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family and my dear ones who have always stood by me in difficult times and have endured a lot of sacrifices for me all throughout my career as Member of Parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as outgoing and incoming Parliamentary Private Secretary, I feel a legitimate sense of satisfaction and pride when I take stock of the number of basic infrastructure, social

amenities and drainage network implemented all over the island from 2010 by the Social Alliance Government under the inspiring, visionary and dynamic leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navindchandra Ramgoolam. We must not forget that this has been achieved in spite of the tight economic situation. Undoubtedly, the projects undertaken through the National Development Unit have gone a long way in improving the quality of life of all the citizens of the country. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, more than Rs423 m. has been spent in my Constituency Vieux Grand Port/Rose Belle...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Moutia:** During the last five years, I mean to say!

*(Interruptions)*

Among others, there is the construction of the Rose Belle market which, in itself, is the jewel in the crown, as we say. In the same breath, the National Development Unit will pursue the implementation of community-based infrastructure and amenities as well as effective land drainage programme over the country. It will be a real pleasure and honour for me to work once again with my old good friend, hon. Anil Bachoo, as Minister responsible for the National Development Unit.

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bachoo is known for his hard work, intelligence, vision and commitment for improving the living conditions of our fellow citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, “Building our Future Together” is a spring boat that will allow the nation to reach a higher level of development. I am confident that we can do it. In fact, we must do it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is the main reason why people have placed their hopes on us.

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

**Ms Anquetil rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the House to Tuesday 20 July 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

**Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have been apprised that seven hon. Members wish to intervene at Adjournment time and I shall pray that Members be brief so that all hon. Members could have time to raise the issues.

**(7.21 p.m)**

**FLOREAL KNITWEAR LTD/ABELA STORE - BUS STOP - CONSTRUCTION**

**Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to be as brief as possible.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House a problem regarding a bus stop at Floreal. In fact, from Purlait near Floreal Knitwear Ltd and near Abela Store there is no bus stop all the way, which means that the people face great difficulties and we all know how it is in this place. It is very rainy. True it is that the topography of this region does not facilitate the installation of a bus stop. That is why I would suggest if consideration could be given to use a piece of land near the Floreal Health Centre so that a bus stop could be installed there. This will alleviate the problems of people from Rivière Sèche and those going to the Health Centre.

As I am at Floreal I will very quickly speak about a piece of land found near the Government quarters which is in a very deplorable state. I think this matter concerns the Ministry of Environment because this piece of land has to be cleaned. It is a danger and an eyesore to the inhabitants of this region.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will request the NTA and the TRMSU to have a proper look at the sites, and then to go ahead with the construction of a bus shelter as well as a bus stop.

(7.23 p.m)

#### **ST. PIERRE MARKET FAIR – LIGHTING & TOILET FACILITIES**

**Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point I am going to raise concerns the Ministry of Local Government. The premises of St. Pierre Market Fair presently cause much inconvenience to the vegetable sellers and the fruit sellers as well as the customers because of absence of proper lighting thereat, which severely handicaps the work of the sellers who start business early in the morning and especially, in the winter season. Therefore, my plea to the hon. Minister is if this matter could be addressed the soonest possible.

Secondly, the toilet there is in a deplorable state if this could be attended to.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into it.

(7.24 p.m.)

#### **PAILLES, MORCELLEMENT GUIBIES - VACCINATION PROGRAMME**

**Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may raise one request from the inhabitants of Morcellement Guibies, Pailles. This concerns both the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Health.

On 09 June, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was an organisation, in conjunction with the *Mouvement Social Vigilance de Pailles* and the Ministry of Social Security, which organised a Vaccination Programme for those aged over sixties. The vaccination was against the flu of course. Some posters were put in the vicinity that the vaccination will be from 9 o'clock to 2 o'clock.

Unfortunately, it would seem that this vaccination was done in the *garage* of one of the members of that Movement and the authorities came only at 11 o'clock and left at 12.15 hrs with the result that many pensioners could not get access to that vaccine. The dispensary does not provide for that vaccine, I am being told so there was no other alternative in the vicinity. There is a request that a new session be held for the elderly to come. They suggest that it should be done at the dispensary which is more accessible to all the old-age pensioners in the vicinity.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me inform the hon. Member that the vaccination campaign which was carried out by the Ministry of Social Security is over. Let me further inform him that all the vaccination centres start operating early in the morning. Upon request of people in certain areas who would not be there early in the morning, the vaccination was to start a bit later; which request was made to the Ministry after informing the people of the region. However, we do understand that the Ministry of Health is actually proceeding with its Vaccination Programme. Maybe, the request should be re-directed towards the Ministry of Health. As far as the Ministry of Social Security is concerned for this year the vaccination campaign is over. We shall start up next year again.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of urgency. Should I make another request to the Ministry of Health? She is present today and probably she can look into it.

**The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mrs S. Hanoomanjee):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, surely I have taken note of the hon. Member's request and I shall look into the matter.

(7.26 p.m.)

**PLAISANCE, ROCHES BRUNES, STANLEY, NHDC CAMP LEVIEUX -WATER SUPPLY**

**Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will recall that I addressed this Assembly through a Parliamentary Question on Tuesday 15 June 2010 concerning an important problem affecting my Constituency. I raised the issue of water supply in the regions of Plaisance, Roches Brunes, Stanley, and NHDC Camp Levieux. The hon. Minister gave the assurance to remedy the situation, unfortunately, things have worsened off. Now, nearly all the regions of Rose Hill are being deprived of regular water supply. Even, in some regions, there is no

water at all. Can I again appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to look into the matter urgently on humanitarian grounds, and, being given that the Ramadan is coming very soon, to look into the problem as soon as possible?

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am surprised that there is no water at all. It is a fact that we are approaching a water scarcity period at the moment, but to say that there is no water at all is serious indeed. I would like some more information on that.

I would like to remind the House also that, at this time of the year, we have to plan for the next three or four months for the dry season until November/December where it will start to rain again. So, I appeal that we all join in the Save Water Campaign for a judicious use of water. Having said that, there has been curtailment in the hours of supply, which is quite different from no supply at all. I make an appeal to those who are used to a 24-hour water supply a day; many of the regions are now on 8 to 10 hours. I will certainly look into the issue, if the hon. Member gives me the areas affected.

(7.28 p.m.)

#### **PAILLES TRUNK ROAD - ACCIDENTS**

**Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my plea concerns the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was with much pain again that we learnt the death of a woman around 50 years old Sunday last on the trunk road of Pailles. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not the first time that there are accidents in that region. There were many accidents in the past and the fatal one that we had Sunday last. Actually, major road works are being carried out in this area. The barriers and rails have been removed, the roads enlarged, and usually, people try to cross the road at this spot. Despite the fact that we have one overhead crossing, maybe, some 100 metres *plus loin*, unfortunately, most people in that area used to cross the road facing the Firestone building. Being given now that the road has been enlarged and barriers removed, the danger is more and more evident in this area. So, may I impress upon the Minister to see to it that a decision is taken rapidly to enhance the security of the inhabitants in this region and to take the matter very urgently before we have any other people killed there?

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are concerned about the road security issue. In fact, there were a few meetings which were held recently. Last week we had two meetings and we have requested engineers of the TRMSU and RDA to come up with certain solid proposals. The hon. Member has to accept that it is a very dangerous road and we have to, at least, educate people not to keep on crossing the road because it is a very dangerous place. I can assure the hon. Member that Government will try to bring some relief – what is humanly possible - to the inhabitants of that region.

### **CAMP LE JUGE, CUREPIPE - SEWAGE SYSTEM**

**Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a short point I wish to make concerning sewage, if I may catch the hon. Minister's attention. This concerns the locality of Camp Le Juge in Curepipe and it is something of a mystery. It is a locality which is surrounded by places which are connected to the sewage system, but somehow Camp Le Juge is excluded. So, the inhabitants still have recourse to latrine pits which is certainly a shame. I would wish to appeal to the Ag. Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities if he could look into the matter. The inhabitants attribute this state of affairs to their political affiliation and I am sure that this cannot be the case. Would the Ag. Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities kindly and urgently look into this issue?

Thank you.

*At 7.31 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 20 July 2010 at 11.30 a.m.*

### **WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME – REPORT**

(No. 1B/272) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of the recent Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in which Mauritius has been ranked among the countries with the highest prevalence of opiate use in Africa and, if so, will he state the measures Government envisages to take to address the issue.

**Reply:** I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the World Drug Report 2010 which was released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on 23 June 2010. This report which is published on a yearly basis, provides a statistical view of the global illicit drug market situation.

It is to be pointed out that the UNODC has admitted that the 2010 edition of the Report presents certain limitations such as -

- (i) irregularity and incompleteness in reporting by Member States;
- (ii) the irregular intervals at which some Governments report may result in absence of data in some years. The lack of regular data, for which UNODC tries to compensate by referring to other government sources, can influence the reported trend in a given year;
- (iii) submitted questionnaires are not always complete or sufficiently comprehensive, and
- (iv) many of the data collected are themselves subject to limitations and biases. These issues affect the quantity, quality and comparability of information received.

In the Report, mention is made of Mauritius at page 157 in a paragraph entitled “*Opiate use is perceived to be increasing in Africa*”, which writes about the countries in the region with the highest prevalence of opiate use. However, I wish to inform the House that the figures mentioned for Mauritius in the 2010 report date back to 2007. On the other hand, for other African countries with which Mauritius has been compared, figures mentioned date back to between 2001 and 2006. In some cases, no mention of any figure has been made in the absence of recent reliable statistics.

The figures contained in the 2010 World Drug Report in respect of Mauritius do not reflect the current drug situation in the country. In fact, figures of 2007 have been used to analyze the situation in 2010.

The attention of the UNODC has already been drawn to the shortcomings contained in the report.

It is important to note that in 2004, a Rapid Situation Assessment and Response on Substance Abuse carried out in Mauritius with the assistance of a Consultant from the UNODC, estimated the number of Injecting Drug Users in Mauritius as being between 17,000 to 18,000. However, another Survey carried out in 2009, still with the assistance of the UNODC and the World Health Organization, estimated this figure as being in the range of 5,699 to 10, 444, which represents a decrease of more than 50% as compared to the figures of 2004. The conclusion must be that there has been a decrease in the number of opiate drug users in the past five years. This indicates that the measures implemented by Government during the past five years to counter the proliferation of drug abuse have yielded positive results.

Notwithstanding this, Government is fully conscious of the need to reinforce the measures taken to combat the drug problem. A multi-pronged strategy has been adopted geared towards supply and demand reduction, education, treatment and rehabilitation.

At the level of the Police Force, the Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit, assisted by other Units and Branches and through the use of modern equipment and technology, is sparing no efforts to detect and prevent smuggling. Particular emphasis is laid on the main entry and exit points through which drugs may penetrate the island, that is, the Harbour, the Airport and the Parcel Post. In this respect, a well structured cooperation mechanism has been developed among ADSU Officers and those of the Customs Department and the Financial Unit for targeting of suspects and intelligence sharing.

At regional and international levels, the Police shares criminal and drug intelligence with neighbouring countries through agencies such as the UNODC, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Serious and Organized Crime Agency, the Indian Ocean Commission as well as INTERPOL. Agreements of cooperation on the fight against drug trafficking and related crimes have been signed with Mozambique, Madagascar as well as the Republic of Seychelles.

### **IRON ROD OPERATION - POLICE DEPLOYMENT**

**(No. 1B/273) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Iron Rod Operation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to

- (a) the date it was first put in place;

- (b) the circumstances in which it is triggered, and
- (c) the procedures laid down for Police deployment in connection therewith.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the “Iron Rod” Scheme became operational as from 29 February 1996 and is still in force.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the scheme is triggered by the Officer-in-Charge of the Police Information and Operations Room and it aims at responding promptly to serious offences by checking and arresting persons who are fleeing from the scene of crime after committing a serious offence, and stopping and checking vehicles at strategic points of the island.

As for part (c) of the question, for security and safety reasons it is not appropriate to give such other information as asked for by the hon. Member.

#### **NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY - LARCENY**

**(No. 1B/274) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the larceny on the premises of the National Transport Authority on or about 4 July 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House

- (a) obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to
  - (i) the amount of money stolen, and
  - (ii) if any arrest has been effected so far, and
- (b) state whether the premises was equipped with the Close Circuit Television Surveillance System (CCTV).

**Reply:** In regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that an amount of Rs991,945.00 in different bank notes was stolen from the safe of the National Transport Authority between 1600 hours on Saturday 03 July 2010 and 0900 hours on Sunday 04 July 2010.

Concerning part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the Police enquiry is on-going and 9 persons have been questioned.

In regard to part (b) of the question, a tender exercise has been initiated for the installation of a CCTV system focusing on the strong room and its surroundings, with a monitor in the security guard gate post.

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION & SEX DISCRIMINATION DIVISION -  
MEMBERS**

(No. 1B/275) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission and the Sex Discrimination Division thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information, in each case, as to -

- (a) the names of the members, and
- (b) their respective date of appointment.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/266)*

**RELIGIOUS BODIES – SUBSIDIES - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. 1B/276) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to subsidies to religious bodies, he will give a list of the beneficiaries, indicating the yearly amount of grants in each case.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/267)*

**MBC - DIGITALIZATION PROJECT**

(No. 1B/277) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the digitalization project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting

Corporation, information as to if the project is fully operational, and, if not, why, indicating if any additional fee will be charged to the public.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that around 80% of the digitalization project has been completed. This comprises the digitalisation of, inter alia, Radio and TV Studios and editing facilities.

The remaining 20%, which consists mainly of the installation of servers and satellite recording services, will involve major changes in the current infrastructure. This part of the work is planned to be implemented when the MBC will move to the new building at Ebene so as to avoid further investment in the infrastructure at Forest Side.

Regarding the issue of additional fee to be charged to the public, this is a matter to be considered by the MBC Board.

#### **VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES - *MOUVEMENT CIVIQUE* - COMPLAINT**

(No. 1A/19) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if he has received a complaint from the *Mouvement Civique* of Vallée des Prêtres in connection with infrastructural problems in the region and, if so, will he state the measures that Government proposes to take to address the issue.

**Reply:** A letter dated 10 May 2010 was indeed addressed to the Prime Minister by the *Mouvement Civique de Vallée des Prêtres* containing a request for the implementation of various infrastructural projects in the area of Vallée des Prêtres. In fact, the letter was also copied to several other Ministers and the Lord Mayor of the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

The different Government departments concerned have already been requested to look into the issues raised in the letter.

**POLICE FORCE – OFFICERS - NUMBER**

(No. 1A/20) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Officers –

(a) in post;

(b) who have left or retired during, each of the last five years, indicating in each case, the grade.

**Reply:** The information requested by the Honourable Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

**SCHOOLS – STATE SCHOLARSHIP**

(No.1B/308) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the existing State Scholarship for higher studies, he will state if Government proposes to bring changes thereto and, if so, will he give the details thereof.

**Reply (The Minister of Education and Human Resources):** As already announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government intends to bring changes to the existing State Scholarship Scheme for higher studies in order to ensure greater equity and inclusiveness in the system. It is also envisaged to explore the possibility of awarding scholarships to a larger number of meritorious students.

In this context, my Ministry is setting up a Task Force to analyse the various possibilities and come up with recommendations for implementation.

**PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS – SUBSIDY SCHEME**

(No.1B/309) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if Government proposes to extend the existing subsidy scheme for Pre-Primary Schooling to the 3-4 age group and, if so, when.

**Reply:** In line with the measures announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, the existing grant scheme applicable to children aged 4+ will be extended to cover the 3-year old.

It is proposed to implement this measure as from 01 January 2011.

### PORT LOUIS – INDUSTRIAL STATE LAND LEASES

(No.1B/310) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Industrial State Land leases in the region of Port Louis, he will state if the terms and conditions of the lease have been revised to reflect the actual market value and, if not, why not and, if so, give, in each case –

- (a) the names of the companies and extent of land leased, and
- (b) the yearly rental.

**Reply:** I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the Industrial Site Leases within the City Centre.

The State Lands Act as amended by the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Acts 2008 and 2009 provides for an offer, to enter into a new 60-year lease, to be made to existing Industrial/Commercial Lessees over State land situated within the City Centre.

Subsequently, the Valuation Department has been requested to assess the rental value of each property.

The Valuation Department has completed the exercise in respect of rental assessed assuming the land to be with vacant possession. This implies that the effective rental to be charged would be lower as the lessees would be offered a new lease after the surrender of the existing lease. The Valuation Department is currently assessing the effective rental for each property.

In regard to part (a) of the question, a list of the 26 lessees with information on the extent of land leased is being placed in the Library.

In regard to part (b), the information will be communicated once the exercise regarding the assessment is completed.

**BALACLAVA - WHITE WATER CONSULTING SERVICES LTD –  
LAND LEASE**

(No. 1B/311) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State Lands in Balaclava, he will state if White Water Consulting Services Ltd. has been granted a lease of a plot of land thereat and, if so, state –

- (a) when the reservation letter was granted;
- (b) the letter of intent was issued;
- (c) the terms and conditions of the lease, indicating -
  - (i) the extent thereof;
  - (ii) the annual rental value;
  - (iii) the purpose of the lease, giving details of the project, and
- (d) the amount of taxes and levy paid to Government.

**Reply:** I would like to refer to PQ Nos. 1B/166 and 1B/265 to which no reply could be given due to the fact that either the Question Time was over or the hon. Member was absent at the relevant time. Both questions refer to the same subject of lease of State land at Balaclava, in respect of which the hon. Member has, himself, made a statement to the Police last year.

I am informed that the Police have been conducting an inquiry on a number of leases allocated on State land including the lease of State land at Balaclava to White Water Consulting Services Ltd.

As the Police inquiry is on, it would neither be in order nor proper to make any further statement on this matter at this stage.

**MORCELLEMENT ST JEAN AND SODNAC – TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

(No. 1B/312) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in

regard to alleviating traffic congestion in the regions of *Morcellement St Jean* and *Sodnac*, he will state if Government proposes to –

- (a) widen Tulipes Avenue, and
- (b) create an access road from Hillcrest Avenue to the Motorway and, if so, indicate the timeframe.

**Reply:** Following representations made by hon. Ms Deerpalsing, I am pleased to announce that works order has already been issued and land already acquired through negotiations.

#### **HOSPITALS – CAESARIAN OPERATIONS – IN-ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE**

(No. 1A/22) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she will state if an additional fee is being paid to doctors who perform caesarean operations at night.

**Reply:** Since hospital services are provided round the clock, doctors operating at Specialist level are on call on a roster basis after normal working hours against payment of an on-call allowance. When they are required to attend hospitals, they are paid, in addition, an in-attendance allowance at the approved rate as recommended in the 2008 PRB Report.

Accordingly, Specialists/Senior Specialists or Consultants-in-Charge in the fields of obstetrics and gynaecology are being paid the abovementioned allowance when they attend hospital at night to perform caesarean operations.

#### **SIR GAËTAN DUVAL STADIUM – SYNTHETIC TRACK**

(No. 1A/23) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the synthetic track at the Sir Gaëtan Duval Stadium in Rose Hill, he will state -

- (a) the brand name of the track, indicating the number of lanes;
- (b) the name of the contractor who was awarded the contract and the cost of installation, and

- (c) if his Ministry has received any complaint from the Athletic Federations in connection with the quality thereof.

**Reply:** The Sir Gaëtan Duval Stadium is vested with the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. The project Tartan (synthetic) track at the stadium is being implemented by that Council and financed by the Local Infrastructure Fund.

I am informed that -

- (a) the brand name of the track is synthetic surface Conipur M and the number of lanes is six;
- (b) the name of the Contractor is COLAS (Maurice) Ltée, formerly known as A. J. Maurel Construction Ltée. The contract has been awarded for the sum of Rs32,958,635.45 inclusive of VAT;
- (c) the Ministry of Youth and Sports has not received any complaint from the Athletic Federations regarding the quality. However, we have received some recommendations from the Mauritius Athletics Association regarding adjustments to be made in order to comply with IAAF norms.

I am further informed that these recommendations are under consideration at the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and I propose to request my colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, to follow up on the matter.

#### **BEAU BASSIN/PETITE RIVIERE – BARE LANDS**

(No. 1A/24) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused by bare lands to the inhabitants of Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if any remedial actions have been taken since January 2010 to-date.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that, taking into account the inconvenience and danger caused by bare lands, a survey was conducted and has revealed

that there was a total of 600 plots of land left abandoned by their respective owners within the Council area.

I am informed that the Council has initiated the following measures from January 2010 to date in order to address the nuisance -

- (i) 256 request notices have already been served on known owners to clean their lands;
- (ii) 37 owners who have failed to comply with the notices have been contravened and prosecuted;
- (iii) 215 bare lands have already been cleared, trimmed and carted away, and
- (iv) the cleaning work is ongoing.

**SIR SEEWOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM STREET –**

**PONT DE PARIS - TENDER**

**(No. 1A/25) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Pont de Paris at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) whether tender procedures have been carried out thereunto, indicating -
  - (i) the names of the bidders and the bids, and
  - (ii) the name of the successful bidder, and
- (b) a breakdown of the expenses incurred.

**Reply:** I am informed that the project is being implemented by my Ministry and, after its completion, it will be handed over to the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

With regard to part (a)(i), my Ministry invited bids on 16 January 2009 through Open Advertised Bidding and the closing date was on or before 13.30 hrs (local time) on Wednesday 18 February 2009.

The Bidders and their respective bid amounts -

<b>N</b>	<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Bid Amount (Rs)</b>
	Pad & Co Ltd	35,579,058.52
	Keep Clean Ltd	35,151,177.40
	J. Annauth Construction Ltd	23,738,950.00

As regards part (a)(ii), the successful bidder was J. Annauth Construction Ltd. for the corrected sum of Rs23,744,125.00 inclusive of VAT and a contingency sum of Rs1,000,000.00.

With regard to part (b), the breakdown of expenses incurred as at 13 July 2010 is as follows -

<b>N.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount (Rs)</b>
.	Contractor's claims (Part Payments effected out of contractual value of Rs 23,744,125.00)	10,516,680.65
.	Central Electricity Board (Full Payment for displacement of poles)	57,700.00
.	Allowance to Consultant (Part Payment of allowance out of a total estimate of Rs 368,025.00) (Staff of Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping – Public Infrastructure Division)	

	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,605,130.65</b>
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### **MONT ROCHES, COROMANDEL & BELLE ETOILE - WATER SUPPLY**

(No. 1A/26) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water supply in the regions of Mont Roches, Coromandel and Belle Etoile, he will state if he is aware of the irregularity and quality thereof and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** I am informed by the CWA that the region of Mont Roches is supplied with water from Roches Brunes and Stanley service reservoirs; Coromandel and Belle Etoile from Meldrum and Rose Hill service reservoirs, which are fed from Herchenroder, Trianon and St Jean boreholes.

The quality of the water from these boreholes is monitored by the CWA Laboratory and complies with the World Health Organisation Standards for potable water.

I am further informed that CWA registered 21 complaints of water supply problems in Roche Brunes and Mont Roches during the period January to June 2010. The water supply is disrupted due to damaged water network during the on-going sewerage works in the region which also resulted in infiltration of muddy water. After completing the repair works and prior to restoring the water supply, CWA carries out flushing of the affected parts of the network.

I also wish to inform the House that some 10 km of CWA pipes are being replaced during the implementation of the sewerage project to improve reliability of supply in Roches Brunes and Mont Roches.

I am also informed that, prior to the commissioning of the Meldrum reservoir on 20 April 2010, the regions of Coromandel and Belle Etoile were supplied on a 24-hour basis from Herchenroder pumping station. Following the commissioning of the Meldrum reservoir, the hours of supply in Coromandel and Belle Etoile have been reviewed in order to fill the Meldrum reservoir. The hours of supply are presently as follows -

4.00 a.m to 9.00 a.m

4.00 p.m to 9.00 p.m

### **BRUSSELS & GENEVA - TRADE COUNSELLORS**

**(No. 1A/27) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, with regard to the Trade Counsellors posted in our Missions in Brussels and Geneva, he will-

- (a) give their terms and conditions of service, and
- (b) state whether they have submitted any report on the impact of the Euro crisis on our trade with the European Union.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, the two Economic and Trade Advisers posted in our Missions in Brussels and Geneva draw a monthly salary of Rs80,000 and are entitled to the payment of allowances and other benefits in accordance with the PRB Report 2008.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Economic and Trade Advisers posted in Missions abroad report to the Head of Mission who, in turn, reports to the Ministry on a regular basis, either in writing or orally depending on the importance of the issue. Regarding the Euro zone crisis, our Missions have drawn the attention of the Ministry on the magnitude thereof and the possible impact on exports, on the tourism sector and development aid given that Mauritius is a Eurocentric economy.

A Technical Committee has also been set up at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to study and monitor the Euro crisis, to fully assess its impact on our economy and to recommend appropriate policy responses.

### **NHDC FLATS - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**(No. 1A/28) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the NHDC flats, he will, for the benefit

of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company, for each of the years from 2005 to-date, information as to -

- (a) the number, constituencywise of -
  - (i) applications received therefor;
  - (ii) allocated, and
- (b) the eligibility criteria.

**Reply:** The information requested for is annexed. However, records are kept on a districtwise basis. The eligibility criteria are *inter alia* -

- (i) applicants should not be owner of a house or of a residential plot of land;
- (ii) applicants should be able to make a deposit of at least 10% of the selling price, and
- (iii) applicants should have the repayment capacity to service the mortgage debt for the purchase of a house. The monthly repayment should not exceed 25% of household income.

#### **BLACK RIVER – FOOTBALL AND VOLLEYBALL GROUNDS - FEE**

(No. 1A/29) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to lighting facilities at the football and volleyball grounds in the Black River area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to whether sports clubs in certain regions of the area are requested to pay a fee to their respective Village Council for the use thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Black River District Council that a nominal fee of Rs200 per match is payable by sports clubs for the use of lighting facilities on football grounds to partly meet the minimum electricity charge claimed by the Central Electricity Board which amounts to Rs2,908 per month and also for overtime payable to the attendant.

**CHARLES TELFAIR PRIMARY GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – PLAYGROUND -  
UPGRADING**

(No. 1A/30) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that the playground at the Charles Telfair Primary Government School at Chemin Grenier is in a poor condition and, if so, will he state if Government proposes to upgrade same in the interest of the pupils.

**Reply:** With regard to the playground at Charles Telfair Government School situated at Chemin Grenier, I am informed that upgrading works, waterproofing the resurfacing of the tarmac, upgrading the block wall and replacing the chain link fencing around the whole school including the football playground, are included in the list of priority projects to be implemented during 2010 and that funds have been already earmarked for this purpose.

Bidding Documents are being prepared at the level of my Ministry and works are expected to start in October 2010 and will be completed in January 2011

**BEL OMBRE – PUBLIC TOILETS**

(No. 1A/31) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the public toilets in Bel Ombre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to when they will be handed over.

**Reply:** I am informed that the toilets on the public beach at Bel Ombre have been constructed by the Beach Authority and that the Tourism Authority was not involved in the project.

I am further informed that the works have already been completed and the toilet blocks have been opened to the public on 12 July 2010.

**NAVIN SOONARANE GYMNASIUM – POLITICAL MEETINGS**

(No. 1A/32) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Navin Soonarane gymnasium at Ebène, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to whether it is its policy to put same at the disposal of political parties for the organisation of political meetings and hosting of receptions.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that it is not its policy to put the Navin Soonarane gymnasium at Ebène at the disposal of political parties for the organisation of political meetings and hosting of receptions.

However, during the last electoral campaign, special authorisation was given for political gatherings/meetings for any applicant whether it was from the Government or from the Opposition.