

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HOSPITALS - LAUNDERING SERVICES - CONTRACT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr N. Bodha): *(By Private Notice)* asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to hygienic conditions and quality of health services in hospitals, he will state –

- (a) if a new contract for laundering services for hospital clothings has been awarded and, if so -
 - (i) when;
 - (ii) the terms and conditions thereof;
 - (iii) the terms and conditions of the previous contract, and
 - (iv) if he is aware of any problems encountered in the implementation of the new contract and, if so, the remedial measures taken, and

- (b) if he is aware of any other unhygienic conditions and, if so, the remedial measures taken.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 14 March, 2007, tenders for the provision of hospitals clothings for the period 2007/2008 to 2009/2010 were floated. The closing date for the submission of bids to the Central Tender Board was 04 April, 2007.

At closing date, five bids were received, namely –

- (i) Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry Ltd;
- (ii) Cernol Services Ltd;
- (iii) Mklen Fashions Ltd;
- (iv) Topline (Mtius) Ltd, and
- (v) Sylvana & Ven Laundry Ltd

An evaluation team was subsequently constituted at my Ministry comprising one Principal Assistant Secretary responsible for projects, the Chief Hospital Administrator and the Health Administrators of each region.

The Evaluation Team visited the premises of all the bidders to assess their capacity to implement the contract. The criteria used for appraisal of the bids were as follows –

- (i) availability of adequate washing machines, drying machines and ironing equipment;
- (ii) adequacy of human resources in each field of operation, namely, laundering, packing, collection, delivery and supervision;
- (iii) availability of fleet of vehicles;
- (iv) financial capability;
- (v) experience;
- (vi) availability of back up facilities such as generators, water supply etc., and
- (vii) place of operation and adequacy of space.

Following the visit and appraisal exercise, three bidders were discarded for the following reasons, –

- (i) Topline (Mtius) Ltd

The existing infrastructure was not meant to provide laundry services for hospital clothing, the working environment was not hygienic and work was not done in a professional manner. In terms of facilities and logistics, the firm would not be able to provide laundry services for even one region. This was the finding of the Technical Committee which was set up.

- (ii) As far as Mklen Fashions Ltd was concerned they said that there is a real space constraint at the existing laundry and the equipment is not meant for hospital clothing. The firm will not be able to cater for the one region it has quoted. It had quoted for only one health region, Mr Speaker, Sir.
- (iii) As far as Sylvana & Ven Laundry Ltd is concerned, they said the bid of this company was not retained in view of the high price quoted compared to the others.

Subsequently, the Evaluation Team recommended that the contract be awarded as follows taking into consideration the size of the health region,

thereby recommending Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry for the three biggest regions, namely, Dr Jeetoo, J. Nehru and Victoria Hospitals and Cernol Services Ltd for the smallest regions, i.e SSRN and Flacq Hospitals.

However, as by 28 June, 2007, the tendering exercise was not yet finalised in view of its complexity, my Ministry, in accordance with established practice, requested the Central Tender Board to extend the existing contract with Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry on the same terms and conditions for a period of two months up to the end of August 2007. The approval of the Central Tender Board was obtained on 29 June, 2007 and Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry was informed on the same day about the extension of the contract.

Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry, subsequently, informed my Ministry that their Board had met on 30 June 2007 and it was not agreeable to continue providing the services on the same terms and conditions. The company stated that any extension of its contract would be on the new terms and conditions which it had quoted in its bids for the new tender exercise.

On Monday 02 July, 2007, my Ministry sought the approval of the Central Tender Board on the proposals from Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry. However, the Central Tender Board did not approve the request informing that procedures did not permit extension of such contracts with change prices in the absence of provisions of price adjustments in the original contract.

My Ministry finalised the new tender exercise and retained recommendations of the Evaluation Team in spite of the substantial price difference. Recommendations were then made to the Central Tender Board as follows -

Bidder	Region	Amount (Rs) for 3 years
1. Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry	Dr Jeetoo, J. Nehru and Victoria Hospitals	104,863,505.89
2. Cernol Services Ltd	SSRN and Flacq Hospitals	38,050,495.68

The Central Tender Board convened the Senior Chief Executive and other officials of my Ministry to a meeting on 02 July, 2007 to discuss the recommendations made by the Ministry. In view of the considerable price difference of about Rs50 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, over a period of three years between the bids of Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry and Cernol Services Ltd,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: ...the Central Tender Board advised my Ministry to hold pre contract consultations with Cernol Services Ltd to ensure that the latter was capable of undertaking the whole contract, that is, for the five hospital regions.

Thereafter, a meeting was held at my Ministry on the same day between the Senior Chief Executive and other officials of my Ministry and Cernol Services Ltd. On the following day, that is, on 03 July, 2007 Cernol Services confirmed that they have the required capacity to undertake the contract.

Accordingly, a new contract for laundering services for hospital clothings was awarded to Cernol Services Limited on 04 July, 2007 to be effective as from 05 July, 2007.

As regards part (a) subparagraph (ii), the total contract value of three years is for an amount of Rs111,320,020.86, as I said earlier. However, the contract has been awarded for an initial period of one year renewable on a yearly basis for a further period of two years upon satisfactory performance. The contract rate for the first year is Rs32,746,973.26.

The other terms and conditions include, as asked for in the PNQ –

- (i) the collection, laundering and ironing of linen items and ensuring that same are clean, tidy and free from foul smell on return to the respective health institutions;
- (ii) all linen items collected at the health institutions on the particular day should be returned within 48 hours, failing which penalties would be applied. Under no circumstances should there be any owing of the linen items;

- (iii) collection of soiled linen items and delivery of clean ones must be effected everyday during the contract period at specific time to be indicated by the officer in charge or any other responsible officer;
- (iv) the service should be provided everyday during the contract period including Saturdays, Sundays, and any Public Holiday or consecutive Public Holidays;
- (v) clean linen items need to be separated from soiled ones in order to avoid cross-contamination;
- (vi) clean linen items must be delivered in clean, transparent plastic bag in lots of 10 and 20 kgs as appropriate;
- (vii) linen items from a particular institution should be properly sorted out and should not be mixed with those from other institutions; and
- (viii) the service shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Ministry in accordance with the contract documents and instructions which may be given by Hospital Authorities from time to time.

With regard to part (a) subparagraph (iii), the terms and conditions of the previous contract are exactly the same as for the new contract except for the price and new condition, that is, the contract is for an initial period of one year only renewable on satisfactory performance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that the difference between the new contractor's price and the price quoted by Dry Cleaning and Steam Laundry is around Rs50 m for the contract period. This is in no way a negligible amount or '*quelques sous*' as inferred by some persons in the press during the week-end.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) subparagraph (iv) of the question, I am not aware of problems encountered in the implementation of the new contract except for some teething problems regarding scheduling which were sorted out within a couple of days.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. David, I am asking you not to use any provocative language.

Dr. David: He started first!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I did not hear him! If the hon. Minister wants to draw my attention, he should stand up and make his point.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, I am drawing your attention that he started first.

Mr Speaker: What did he say? I would like you to repeat, I did not hear.

Mr Mardemootoo: I confirmed that the word “criminal” was heard from this side.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! To whom was the word “criminal” addressed to?

(Interruptions)

Order! Did the hon. Member use the word “criminal” to any Member of this House?

Mr Bhagwan: No, Sir. I said: “general criminal”.

Mr Speaker: Order, now!

Mr Faugoo: However, Mr Speaker, Sir, this in no way disrupted the smooth running of the service as buffer stocks of linen are always available, be it in the wards, in the linen department and the stores.

Regional Health Directors have also reported that the previous contractor did not deliver on 05 July, 2007 linen collected on the eve. Same was received only on 06 July, 2007 and this, in fact, caused some disruption in the hospitals.

I wish to inform the House that as soon as the new contract was awarded, a monitoring team was set up at the level of my Ministry to closely follow up on the performance of the new contractor in this transitional period. All necessary measures were taken to ensure that services are provided in hygienic conditions for the benefit of the patients.

There were daily meetings between the top officials of my Ministry, senior officers of the hospitals and the new contractor. I am informed that during the course of the meetings, issues such as scheduling of collection and delivery were reviewed and adjusted. A few cases of stained linen returning from the contractor were also mentioned. But this is a routine matter which also happened with the previous contractor as the volume handled is more than six tons daily. Such matters are being dealt with in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, it is the policy of my Ministry to maintain a high level of hygiene in all health institutions at all times.

In this connection, cleaning of hospitals is carried out by hospital staff and private contractors round the clock. Furthermore, my Ministry has an infection prevention and control policy. Protocols and guidelines for infection control have been established and circulated to all those concerned.

Also, as per the policy, all regional hospitals have an infection control and prevention committee, comprising of Head of Units/ Departments concerned with infection control. This committee monitors and evaluates the implementation of the various protocols and guidelines in regard to infection control.

The standard precautions that are put into practice include –

- (i) hand-washing;
- (ii) use of personal protective equipment;

- (iii) good housekeeping practices including environmental cleaning; and disinfection and proper handling of linen;
- (iv) disinfection and sterilization of hospital equipment;
- (v) proper waste disposal.

Apart from standard precautions, special transmission based precautions are undertaken whenever the need arises. All health institutions, including catering units, are regularly visited by health inspectors to oversee the hygienic conditions. Remedial actions are taken whenever required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, safe water supply is ensured by regular cleaning of water tanks and water quality is closely monitored by health engineering assistants.

Moreover, disinsectisation, which includes debugging, is regularly undertaken by the health inspectorate of the region. However, in spite of intensive debugging campaign at Brown Sequard hospital and Victoria hospital, yet, it is difficult to completely eradicate bugs because bugs develop resistance to insecticides; and some old wooden buildings containing cracks and crevices, act as hiding places for bugs.

However, entomological surveys are carried out to deal with the issue of resistance to insecticides and as far as cracks and crevices are concerned, remedial measures to fill in these crevices are being taken by the hospitals.

In addition, deratting campaign is carried out by the Rodent Control Unit. Mr Speaker, Sir, I must reassure the House that the new contract was awarded after ascertaining that the contractor had the physical capacity and logistics to handle the volume of laundry and secondly the financial and human resources required for such a contract had been fulfilled.

This confirmation has been obtained in writing from the contractor before awarding the contract. Moreover, all the Regional Health Directors have confirmed, in writing today, there is no backlog of linen with the contractor. The daily monitoring by my Ministry will continue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we must acknowledge that any new contractor needs a minimum adaptation period. I must say that the new contractor has

adapted itself within a few days and has been able to cope with the exigencies of the service.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I deplore the cheap and unfounded allegations leveled in the press against my Ministry. In fact, we need to ponder as to what could be their ...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister cannot bring in what the press has said in his answer to this House?

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Mr Faugoo: There are some Members of this House who have done it outside this House and I wonder whether this is not in the vested interest. Is it in the interest of the patients, the poor, the vulnerable or is it for a group or some parties' interest?

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is personally satisfied that Cernol has the capacity and capability to undertake this order?

Mr Faugoo: Sir, basing myself on all the reports that I have received and all the technical committees findings, I am satisfied, as at today, that Cernol has the capacity and it can only built up because there has been a monopolistic situation for 50 years. This is a new player and there is a price difference of Rs50 m. It has been given the chance and it is going to perform. This is the undertaking and my understanding, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that Cernol has done everything to subcontract some of the clothings in a laundry in Flacq and has also subcontracted the ironing to Maiden Fashion in Coromandel. Is he aware of this?

Mr Faugoo: I cannot answer for Cernol, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister should know what is happening!

Mr Speaker: Can I force the hon. Minister to say yes?

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that the hon. Minister always says that officially he is not aware, may I ask him....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, this is the third time that you are making remarks from a sitting position!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that he always says....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, I am inviting you to keep quiet! The fourth time that you make any provocative remark, I will ask you to leave this House.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that he has always said that he is officially not aware, may I ask him whether he is aware that a patient who came to hospital on Friday 06, passed away on Monday 09 in Jeetoo Hospital, and the parents complained that that patient was on a bed with dirty sheets. Is he aware of this?

Mr Faugoo: I have heard on the radio, Mr Speaker, Sir, not only this case, but so many things. What is important, Mr Speaker, Sir? We cannot take one specific case. We have to make the difference between a ward management and the services which we are obtaining from the contractor. There is a difference. In fact, I asked my officials to visit all the hospitals. They went and saw bed sheets being kept in the wardrobe and yet some beds had no sheets. This is the style of administration. The patients who are there, talk....

(Interruptions)

Let me finish! They put it on the issue of the contract, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is officially aware that in the logbook of Victoria and Jeetoo Hospitals, chirurgical operations were not carried out on Friday the 06 because of a problem of linen. Is he officially aware of this?

Mr Faugoo: I am aware officially, Mr Speaker, Sir. When I am aware, I am aware! When I am not, I am not! I am aware of these two situations in Victoria and Jeetoo Hospitals where the surgery fixed for the morning session was cancelled. As I have said in my main answer, this was due to Dry Cleaning & Steam Laundry Ltd., because they did not deliver the linen which they had taken on time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: Secondly, I am requesting explanations from the Regional Health Director as to why the cases were postponed, because we always have a buffer stock to carry out all activities. This was not done. I don't know if this is a *sabotage* or whatever. I am finding out, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I am not going to accept this. This is a fact, I admit, but I am going to accept it. I am trying to find....

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, again, I am inviting you to stop provoking, otherwise, next time, I will ask you to leave this House.

Mr Bodha: One of the conditions about the scope of services, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the linen should be clean, tidy, free from foul smell on return to the respective health institutions. Is the hon. Minister aware that there has been linen which is still dirty after washing, that ironing has been badly done, that the colour white is changing to blue and that the quality of the service has not been to the standard? I want to know if the hon. Minister is officially aware of this?

Mr Faugoo: This is not a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said today, I am satisfied, the Ministry is satisfied that the work is being done properly by Cernol Services Ltd. This is not the case at all.

Mr Bodha: May I come back again to the subcontracting, Mr Speaker, Sir? Is he aware that yesterday a private van collected dirty linen at Victoria Hospital at 11.30 hours and that Cernol Services Ltd. does not have the capacity and, in fact, it is now that they are starting a building in Coromandel and they have ordered new machines which are not yet in the country?

Mr Faugoo: If they have ordered new machines to improve the quality, where is the problem, Mr Speaker, Sir? I said that I am satisfied that the work is being done. If they can do it better, so much the better for everybody, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Bodha: Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that officers have been told not to talk to the press and that no negative report should be given to the press or to anybody on this matter? Is he aware that this has been the case in his Ministry?

Mr Faugoo: Officers have not been asked to report or not to talk to the press. My Permanent Secretary was on Radio Plus yesterday. My Regional Health Director was on Radio One yesterday. I, too, spoke on Radio One yesterday. I have spoken to the press during the weekend. 'Week-End' has put my official version. What more? The Leader of the Opposition should come with more allegations and I'll reply, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Officially, the hon. Minister is not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Minister aware whether the rotation for the collecting and the delivery which was on 24 hours in spite of the fact that the tender document provided for 48 hours and now it is 48 hours, which has caused a disruption in the service for a certain number of days?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the conditions of the previous contract and the new one are exactly the same. It is linen to be delivered within 48 hours, but, in practice, I must say that the previous contractor was delivering within 24 hours, except for last time where it caused some disruption and I wonder if that was not on purpose. I can reassure the House that the new contractor is delivering within 24 hours as from last week and this is an arrangement between the contractor and the Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am quite surprised that the hon. Minister said that he is not aware of subcontracting services. Can the hon. Minister state whether the contract, which has been allocated, makes allowances for subcontracting services and secondly, is he aware of the risk of subcontracting because all linen....

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has put the question, let the hon. Minister reply about the risks. There is no need for the hon. Member to explain the risks.

Mr Faugoo: I read all the conditions attached to the contract, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is no provision for subcontracting. This is a fact.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the past, when the Dry Cleaning & Steam Laundry Ltd. had the contract, there had been cases where they had not conformed to the norms set by the Ministry and where clothes had to be returned to them.

Mr Faugoo: As an exception, yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, as a matter of practice, they were respecting the 24 hours for delivery, but it happened that sometimes the linen which was delivered to the hospital was being returned back and conditions which were stipulated in the contract were being complied with.

Mr Speaker: May I draw the attention of the House that there are many Members of Parliament who have asked to put questions? I would ask them to put short questions.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there had been deliberate attempts on the part of a top management of his Ministry to threaten employees of junior level dealing with linen not to say that '*tout correct*'? If any report is made against them, they would be taken to task or disciplinary action.

Mr Faugoo: Exactly, it is not to say that '*tout correct*'; if it is not correct, it must be said, so that we can take action, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can assure the House, Mr Speaker, Sir.....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you have said shame on the Minister. Can I ask you to withdraw the word as a gentleman?

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, I was....

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister was answering the question....

Mr Bhagwan: I haven't! I withdraw, but I have not said it to the Minister; I said 'shame' generally.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether some patients were requested to bring their own bedsheets?

Mr Faugoo: This is bullshit, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker: I ask the hon. Minister to withdraw the word.

Mr Faugoo: I withdraw, but this is totally unfounded, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I have informed the House that there are so many hon. Members who are raising their hands to put questions. I have only seven minutes left and if hon. Members are going to behave like this, there would be no opportunity for others to put questions.

Mr Mardemootoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, will it be wise that, in the near future, all our hospitals be equipped with their own washing plant? According to my calculation, 6,000 tons per day will come to Rs7.2 m., excluding salary and depreciation, it would have come to Rs10.2 m.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The best way for the hon. Member to put the question is to ask whether it would be economical for Government to have its own washing plant.

(Interruptions)

No, there is no need for it! Let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Faugoo: This has to be studied, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, I said!

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that, in spite of all the hullabaloo about prices, the original decision was to allow Dry Cleaning to have a contract for three hospitals and one only to Cernol. Therefore, the question as to whether the pricing will be more expensive or less does not arise. Can I, therefore, ask the hon. Minister whether it is not true that the decision to give the whole contract to Cernol is due to the fact that, at the end of the contract period, Dry Cleaning refused to accept to work on the same terms as the previous one? The issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not whether it is more expensive, but it is penalising a company because the company does not want to comply with the unreasonable request of the Ministry.

Mr Faugoo: If that was the case, we would have changed our recommendation to the CTB. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we approved the decision of the Technical Committee and this is what we sent to CTB. Where is the issue of not giving to Dry Cleaning? As I said, the issue was taken up between the Ministry and CTB because this is casting aspersions on CTB and not on the Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir. CTB is an independent institution.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Ministry made a first recommendation for split tenders and then, finally, when the tender was awarded to one contractor, I understand that there is no provision in the contract for subcontracting. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether Cernol is subcontracting some of the works? The second question is: since the whole contract has been awarded to Cernol, can we know from the hon. Minister when Cernol submitted its performance bond and what was the amount thereof, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Faugoo: I don't have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received any form of representation in order to ensure the incoming of new player in the business of cleaning of hospitals' linen?

Mr Faugoo: That was back in 2004, my hon. friend, hon. A. Jugnauth, can confirm it. When the previous contract expired in June 2004, a new contract was given in March 2005. The tender was not launched for nine months, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is where the Ministry and CTB tried ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: This is a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir! It is in the file.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: The tender was not launched and it was awarded only nine months after. From that time, Mr Speaker, Sir, the CTB had made changes in the terms and conditions so as to invite new players to have price competition. This is exactly what happened, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jugnauth: As I have been asked to confirm, yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2004, the ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member put his question?

Mr Jugnauth: I wanted to come to the question because ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The House is under my control and not under the control of any hon. Member!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister himself has made mention that I had allowed it. What I am saying is that it was true. At that time, they had accepted to perform under the same terms and conditions.

But this time, the problem is that they have not accepted to perform on the same terms and conditions. This is what I just wanted to tell the Minister.

Mr Faugoo: It remains a fact that there was no tender launched for nine months, for whatever reason, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may be allowed to answer to the question of hon. Lesjongard, they were shouting and laughing as if there was no bond ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister did not have the answer and now that he has got the answer, let him reply! Hon. Members cannot expect that the hon. Minister can have all the answers at hand.

Mr Faugoo: I am sure in the “Week-End”, they would have reported that there was no bond.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Faugoo: The performance bond for the first year, Mr Speaker, Sir, is in the amount of Rs3,274,000, submitted on 09 July by Cernol Services Ltd.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that there are guidelines and regular monitoring conducted at each hospital by the Hospital Infection Committee and that they are of opinion that the nosocomial infection is far below the normal rate of 7%?

Mr Faugoo: There is an answer in the hon. Member’s question because he was a doctor for so many years in the service. I can confirm what he is saying, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether when the decision was taken by the Ministry to overrule the recommendation of the Technical Evaluation Committee, the views of the State Law Office was sought before awarding the contract to Cernol?

Mr Faugoo: There is no question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I said we retained the views of the Technical Committee and we went to the CTB on that recommendation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Since he has stated that the performance bond was submitted on 09 July, is it normal for a contractor to sign the contract on 04 July and, later on, submit his performance bond?

Mr Faugoo: I don't see any problem with that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree that, in fact, Cernol does not have the capacity to shoulder the whole contract and has the capacity only for two hospitals? But, out of incompetence, *il s'est empetré dans des draps sales à cause de son incompetence!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: And that, in fact, the havoc was created because ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I could not make head and tail of the question which is being put.

Mr Bodha: My question is very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir. Doesn't Cernol have the capacity only for the two smallest hospitals and it was given the whole order for the five hospitals with all the havoc and all the dirty sheets that we have seen in the hospitals?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have awarded the contract after approval of the CTB and I am affirming today in this House that we are satisfied with the work that Cernol is doing and we are going to see to it that it continues to do so and improve upon what is being done. This is a guarantee which I am giving, Mr Speaker, Sir. And if ever there is a problem, there are conditions; the contract is for one year, if it does not perform, if our friends want to go and open the door for Dry Cleaning

because of any interest, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to allow all these to come in. There is a huge difference of Rs50 m. which can be used for other priorities, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/755 and B/761 have been withdrawn.