

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MCB/NPF FRAUD - INVESTIGATIONS

**The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. N. Ramgoolam)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the investigation into the MCB/NPF fraud, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the investigation has revealed any other significant fraudulent and irregular transactions and, if so, will be state -

- (a) the amount involved;
- (b) when these transactions were reported to the Bank of Mauritius;
- (c) what action has been taken by the Bank of Mauritius;
- (d) whether these cases have been reported to the Police and, if not, why not, and
- (e) whether any bank officials have made confessions of frauds and, if so, when and the number thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition speaks of the investigation. In fact, there have been four investigations: one by the Bank of Mauritius which started on 17 February 2003 following a report made by the Mauritius Commercial Bank on 14 February 2003, the second one by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in March 2003, the third one by the Police which was initiated on 26 September 2003 and the fourth one by N. Tan Corporate Advisory Services as from 10 March 2003 at the request of the Bank of Mauritius.

Eventually, the investigation started on 17 February 2003 by the Bank of Mauritius merged with the one undertaken by Nicky Tan pursuant to Section 27 of the Banking Act 1988.

Mr Nicky Tan submitted a report to the Bank of Mauritius on 02 February 2004 which included recommendations.

I am informed that the Governor and the Managing Director of the Bank of Mauritius met the Board of Directors of the Mauritius Commercial Bank on 26 March 2004 and discussed the findings and recommendations of Mr Nicky Tan. The Bank of Mauritius advised the Mauritius Commercial Bank to take necessary measures to redress the situation at the Mauritius Commercial Bank. The Bank of Mauritius also issued a public communiqué dated 26 March 2004 on the findings of the investigations into the

irregularities at the Mauritius Commercial Bank by Mr Nicky Tan. I am laying on the table of the Assembly copy of that communiqué.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the reply made by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development in reply to Parliamentary Question B/85 on 15 February 2005 regarding the N. Tan Report.

I am advised that the Bank of Mauritius and the Police investigations are still ongoing.

In regard to part (d), I am informed that apart from the MCB/NPF fraud, no other fraudulent and irregular transactions have been reported to the Police.

Finally, as regards part (e) of the question, I am informed that an employee of the MCB confessed in August 2002 having been involved in fraudulent transactions not associated with the MCB/NPF case. He refunded the amount concerned and submitted his resignation on 12 August 2002.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Mr Speaker, Sir, what I need to know from the hon. Prime Minister - and what the public wants to know - is whether, during whatever investigation was made following the MCB/NPF fraud, whether it revealed any other significant fraudulent and irregular transactions. The Deputy Prime Minister did not answer that question, because that was never asked from him.

**The Prime Minister:** There are different parts to one question and I shall start with the last part. I remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that on 15 February 2005, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development did state in the House that the report from NTan Corporate Advisory Services is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act and cannot be made public. We stand by the advice received and by the statement made then. I repeat and add that I am informed that, apart from the MCB/NPF case or fraud, no other fraudulent and irregular transactions have been reported to the Police.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am sure the hon. Prime Minister would know - even though you don't have to be a lawyer to know this - that if there has been any criminal offence, there has to be criminal investigations. If somebody steals money from somebody else, you don't say: well, return the

money, everything is OK. You must have a criminal investigation. What I need to know, first of all, is if there has been a discovery of substantial and irregular transactions involving accounts of MCB customers, whether that has been reported not only to the Bank of Mauritius but to the Police also. Is that the case?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said that there is no customer, since the word has been used by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, no client of the Bank that has reported any case to the Police.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to make it clear. It seems that 16 customers were not aware that their monies have been taken out of their accounts and given to other people and all these things. These criminal transactions have happened without even the customers knowing. That is why I am asking whether, during the investigations, such frauds were found out and what action has been taken.

**The Prime Minister:** I did say, I did point out that there were several investigations. As far as the investigation by Mr Nicky Tan is concerned, I have already replied. I repeated what the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development said, that the NTan report is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act and cannot be made public.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Is the Prime Minister categorically stating that neither he nor the Bank of Mauritius is aware of other substantial fraudulent and irregular transactions that have taken place - besides the massive fraud concerning the NPF - involving bank accounts of many public listed companies, many customers who are not even aware that their monies have been taken. Is he not aware of that? Is the Bank of Mauritius not aware of that?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think it is fair to lump the Prime Minister and the Bank of Mauritius together. The Bank of Mauritius acts under the law, it is the regulatory body, it ordered this inquiry, got its report; and we are advised, as I said, that the report is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act and it cannot be made public. In that case I consider myself to a member of the public. When I said so the other day, the hon. Leader of the Opposition seemed surprised. I am surprised that he is surprised. This being the case, I have not seen and I have not tried to see the NTan Report, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is the private property of the Bank of Mauritius and we are

advised that it should not and cannot be made public. So, I repeat: I have not tried to see the NTan Report and I have not seen the NTan Report.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** It is well-known "*il n'y a pas de pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir*".

*(Interruptions)*

You have covered your eyes! You wanted to cover your eyes, you cover your eyes and you do the cover up!

**The Prime Minister:** Are such comments required before introducing a question? I do not think it is fair at all.

**Mr Speaker:** I allowed the hon. Leader of the Opposition to lay some basis to his questions, but not this type of comments.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** We are a responsible Opposition; we do not want to go into the details. But if Government refuses to reply to the questions, we will go into the details; we will have to do so, because the public has a right to know what kind of cover up has happened at the MCB.

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, on a point of order, there is no cover up. We have legal advice to the effect that this report should not be made public. As a responsible Prime Minister I go by that advice, Mr Speaker, Sir. The NTan Report is the property of the Bank of Mauritius for its internal use.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** The Prime Minister tries to hide behind the report. I am not talking about the report; I am talking about massive fraud that has happened and criminal activities, it seems, which have not been reported to the Police. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us why it has not been reported to the Police?

**The Prime Minister:** As I have said, the other investigations have found no evidence of such cases of fraudulent transactions other than the MCB/NPF; and in the case of the NTan Report - I am not going to repeat myself ten times - I have said what legal advice we have received and we are going to stand by this legal advice.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** That's what I wanted to hear. The Prime Minister says no other fraudulent and irregular transactions have taken place apart from the NPF scandal. That is what he has just said...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, I said that as far as the other investigations are concerned, I am advised that no other fraudulent transactions have been uncovered. I repeat, in the case of the NTan Report, I am not going to repeat again what legal advice we have received and this is not going to be made public or discussed here, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** We have appointed a consultant who has been paid over Rs60 m and now from what the Prime Minister is saying, it appears that the other investigations have found nothing. But the way he answered the question, the consultant must have found something. Can he confirm that? He said the other ones...

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Minister wants to answer in his place, he can do so.

**Mr Speaker:** This amounts to surmising. What the hon. Prime Minister has said is that a consultant was appointed, a report has been made to the client, the Bank of Mauritius; and he is not aware of the contents of the report as it is confidential. I do not think it will serve any purpose for us to ask for information which is in the report and which the Prime Minister says he is not entitled to give according to law.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Does that mean, therefore, the report will be made, people can steal money, then there will be confidentiality and nothing will happen? Is he aware, for example, that these transactions involve over Rs1 billion? Is he aware of that?

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** Apart from the communique which I am tabling, which the Bank of Mauritius issued on the report of NTan Corporate Advisory Committee, quite a lengthy one, what they chose after receiving their legal advice to make public is available, it is quite detailed and it makes interesting reading. I quote one part -

"The report dwells comprehensively on certain practices that date as far back as the early nineties when the Mauritius Commercial Bank Finance Corporation was still in operation".

So, it is quite a lengthy communiqué. Apart from that communiqué, I am not aware of anything contained in the NTan Report. And we are advised that this is the property of the Bank of Mauritius and cannot be made public.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am saying over Rs1 billion - in fact, it is over Rs1.5 billion - have been fraudulently misappropriated. Does that mean that over Rs1.5 billion have been fraudulently misappropriated and nothing will happen? That is what I am asking.

**The Prime Minister:** The Leader of the Opposition is giving the impression that more than Rs1 billion have been stolen and so on. But the simple fact is that there has not been any single case of theft reported to the Police. None at all! So, whatever is in the NTan report, I am not aware of. Whether he made recommendations on how the Mauritius Commercial Bank should sort itself out and so on, I am not aware. But as Prime Minister, what I know is that - although the Leader of the Opposition is giving the impression that there is more than Rs1 billion of theft and so on - there has not been a single case of loss or theft by any client, by any customer reported to the Police....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I thank the hon. Prime Minister because now he has admitted that, in fact, there has been a cover up...

*(Interruptions)*

That is the cover up! The fact that there has been no report to the Police!

**The Prime Minister:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, Order, please! Let us listen to the point of order, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**The Prime Minister:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Let me decide whether, in fact, it is a point of order.

**The Prime Minister:** It is in order for the Leader of the Opposition to come and say that I have admitted to this or that when I have not admitted to any of the sort? The only thing I am saying is that there has not been a single case of loss or theft reported to the Police, Mr Speaker. This is what I am saying.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** This is the cover up! There has been no report because there has been a cover up. That is the cover up!

*(Interruptions)*

You should know and, in fact, that is why there has been no report to the Police....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order please! We have it on record what the hon. Prime Minister has said and what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said. We are not going to surmise? We are not going to draw inferences from what is being admitted and what is not being admitted. One thing is clear is that what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is stating certain things as facts. He said that he is a responsible Opposition and I know he will assume his responsibility of what he is saying...

*(Interruptions)*

But what I am saying is that whatever has been said by the hon. Prime Minister and hon. Leader of the Opposition is on record. We are not going to surmise; we are going to draw inferences from whatever has been said.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Mr Speaker, Sir, photocopies of cheques have appeared in the press and I can lay copy of that on the Table.

**Mr Speaker:** Unfortunately, we do not go by what is said in the press.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** If you want to see, you can do so. But it seems no action has been taken at all. Explain why no action has been taken! And the Prime Minister says that I am talking about Rs1.5 billion. I'll give him the exact figure; it is Rs1,516,408.810 have been fraudulently misappropriated from clients. That is what I am saying.

**The Prime Minister:** I don't know what is in the NTan report, Mr Speaker. What I know is that not a single case of theft or loss of money by any client of the Mauritius Commercial Bank has been reported to the Police. This is a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir. The rest I am not aware of. I don't know where the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition come from. I repeat, the fact is that not a single case of loss or theft has been reported to the Police. That is the fact and the bottom line.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** The Prime Minister does not seem to understand English any more!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** What I am saying is that there has been no report to the Police, because there has been a cover up. The clients are unaware that their money has been fraudulently taken away. They are unaware. It is only when this has happened, that money has been transferred back. That is what I am saying. That is why there should have been criminal investigations.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the word "cover up" is used all over the place.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** And I have decided to ask the Police to approach those who make such allegations. What have we just heard? That there has been a cover up at the Mauritius Commercial Bank! Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Commercial Bank does its internal work as advised.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** Mr NTan produced a report I am not aware of, but I quoted from the communiqué from the Bank of Mauritius pointing out that he made a series of recommendations. So, what has happened inside the Mauritius Commercial Bank is that they have put their house in order.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** Is that the cover up, Mr Speaker, Sir? We should use the word as appropriate. So, the Mauritius Commercial Bank does its work...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dulloo and hon. Minister of Labour, please! I am calling to order hon. Dulloo and hon. Minister of Labour. You cannot just cross talk when a Minister is replying to questions in the House.

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir. There has been...

*(Interruptions)*

I am on my feet, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** He is not answering the question. He is repeating himself!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I am on my feet now. I am calling the House to order. Questions have been put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Prime Minister is replying; and I understand that Members are not able to follow up what he is saying because of interferences and interventions.

**The Prime Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I am not going to give...

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I have a duty to ask questions in this House.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, I know. I have a duty to enforce the Orders. Yes, you are allowed to put questions.

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**The Prime Minister:** The bottom line, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact is that no statement has been given to the Police about anybody having lost money or about any depositor having lost anything.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am saying that this is deliberately so. No action has been taken so that no complaint can be made to the Police, because that is the cover up that has been made. I am saying it involves over Rs1.5 billion and it involves 16 customers and the bank wilfully covered up. That is what I want to say.

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, this has nothing to do with the cover up. I refer again to the communiqué...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** ...issued by the Bank of Mauritius after they had received the NTan report, after they had briefed - they chose to brief - the Board, the top management of the Mauritius Commercial Bank on the recommendations and the findings and they requested that action be taken, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** So, I suppose that action must have been taken. This has nothing to do with the cover up. You have a central bank that receives such report, that calls in the top management of the biggest bank and they discuss measures to be taken by the bank and it is called a cover up.

It has nothing to do with the cover up. It is at the request of the Bank of Mauritius that the Mauritius Commercial Bank must have taken the required measures. And the result is what? That we do not have a single case of a report of fraud, of loss of money, of anything before any Police station, Mr Speaker, Sir. If the Opposition has any information, they should come forward. And, as I said, I am going to ask the Police to interview those who keep referring to cover up when there is no cover up, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** The consultants state in black and white that when other transactions unknown to the public - I stress on the words, "unknown to the public" - were found and it became apparent that they involved substantial amounts, the levels of access decreased markedly!

**The Prime Minister:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. Whatever the press prints is another matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are advised that the report, I repeat, is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act and cannot be made public. My point of order is it is out of order for the Leader of the Opposition to supposedly use the press to quote from a report that is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Can I ask the Prime Minister who prides himself about knowing everything, is suddenly not aware of this biggest cover up!

**Mr Speaker:** Let us take the point of order. What the hon. Prime Minister is saying is that what you are quoting, supposedly comes from the report. And this has been...

**The Prime Minister:** I am not at all saying that what has appeared in the press, if you would allow me, is, in fact, contained in the report. I don't know. All I am saying is that it is out of order for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to quote from the press in reference to a report which is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act.

**Mr Speaker:** This is what I am saying. What the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is according to him supposedly part of the report and that the report has not been published, it is subject to confidentiality. I don't think it is proper for us here to come and break the law. If it is confidential according to law, you cannot breach the law by quoting from the report.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am asking those questions because of the banking institutions in Mauritius. We have to protect the banking institutions in Mauritius. It is no good to cover up because there are friends who might be involved in the problem. That is why I am asking. It is surprising that - and I hope that the population and the press have noted - a Prime Minister who prides himself in knowing everything, in presiding over all sorts of committees does not know about the biggest fraud which occurs in the country!

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, on a point of order.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am not giving way.

**The Prime Minister:** I don't find this is in order at all, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please! It is not correct to reflect on the personal behaviour of a Minister or a Member for that matter. We are not going to do that here.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I am saying that he prides himself to knowing everything, but when the biggest fraud happens, he does not seem to know. That is what is surprising. That is what the country should know that here he is at the helm of the country and not knowing about the biggest fraud. Is he aware that, in fact, there are recommendations that say that the Bank of Mauritius should follow these illegal transactions?

**The Prime Minister:** Again I repeat, I am not aware of the findings and the recommendations of the NTan report; and I am advised that the law provides that that report is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act. I am not aware of any fraud that has not been reported to the Police, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have, as Prime Minister, to stand by the advice that we have received and which the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development referred to on 15 February.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Is the hon. Prime Minister asserting, therefore, beyond doubt, that the Bank of Mauritius is unaware - and that he is unaware also - that there has been hard evidence of a Director of the Bank, who has done all sorts of illegal transactions at the Bank?

**The Prime Minister:** Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition is pretending to refer to something contained in the NTan Report, I am not aware of the contents of the NTan Report. I have made myself clear several times on that.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Is he saying that, as the Prime Minister, he is unaware that massive illegal transfers have taken place by bank officials, that 16 customers have unknowingly had their accounts tampered with? Billions of rupees involved, over Rs1.5 billion! Now, I am saying that a Director of the Bank itself has done illegal transactions.

**The Prime Minister:** You are saying it!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** So, we are to stay quiet. The hon. Prime Minister is unaware of that and even of the Report? So everything is fine!

*(Interruptions)*

There is cover up! This is the kind of cover up the Prime Minister is doing! We are not going to do anything about it!

*(Interruptions)*

He doesn't know or he does not want to know?

*(Interruptions)*

Cover your eyes if you want to!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I repeat: If what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying is contained in the NTan Report, I am not aware of that because I have not looked at the NTan Report. I am not allowed under the law to do that.

Now, I again invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition, if he has such information, it is his duty to go to the Police.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** If he has such information, it is his duty, I repeat, to go to the Police...

**Dr. David:** It is the duty of the Prime Minister first!

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** I repeat: if he has such information, it is his duty to go to the Police, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have no such information.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** I repeat: I am not aware and I am not entitled under the law to be aware of the NTan Report. This is the law. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has information, he goes to the Police...

**Dr. David:** You should go first!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dr. David! Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** Now that we have reached this stage, I am going to request the Police to come to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and take a statement.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Now, we have a situation where the Prime Minister of the country is unaware about the biggest fraud, and he wants the Leader of Opposition to go to the Police – I should know more than he does!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order Please!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** That's the situation! Look how they want to prevent the Opposition from asking questions!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Now, we have a situation where the Prime Minister is the Prime Minister of this country - I hope - not the Prime Minister of a group of people. He should act in the interests of all the people of the country!

*(Interruptions)*

There has been a massive fraud....

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** On a point of order...

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** There has been a massive fraud in this country...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I am calling the House to order.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, you have ordered the Leader of the Opposition not to make personal remarks and this is exactly what he is doing!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Order, please! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Members of the Government:** *Communal!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** *Ala banne voleurs labas!* There has been conspiracy! They are the conspirators of the MCB! These are the cover up people!

*(Interruptions)*

These are the people who have covered up! This is what has happened to this country!

*(Interruptions)*

This is the biggest cover up and, if the Prime Minister does not want to know, I challenge him to give the Leader of the Opposition a copy of the report!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! We have one more minute for the Private Notice Question.

*(Interruptions)*

Minister of Labour, please! Order!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Mr Speaker, Sir, you allow him to say so?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Minister, you cannot address the House from a sitting position. You have not been given the floor. Yes, Leader of the Opposition?

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** I want to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he, as Prime Minister of this country, in the name of transparency, in the name of accountability - and the MCB, I remind him, is a public company, a listed company - in order to prevent such massive frauds from happening again, does he not have an obligation to seek to know the truth, and only the truth, and expose those fraudulent things that have happened?

**The Prime Minister:** As Prime Minister of Mauritius, I have to abide by the law of his country, of this land. That's the first thing that I have to do, unlike others before me, or at least one person before me. I stand by the law, as advised by our legal advisers; and the law says that this report from Mr Nicky Tan is protected by the provisions of confidentiality under the Banking Act and the Bank of Mauritius Act, and cannot be made public. I add, again, Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I add, again, that the Bank of Mauritius did what it deemed fit to do. It issued a communiqué, it called in the top management of the Mauritius Commercial Bank and they discussed findings, recommendations and actions to be taken, Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** *Bla-bla-bla...*

**The Prime Minister:** As a result thereof, I suppose, not a single case of theft or loss has been reported to the Police, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is the bottom line!

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Is the hon. Prime Minister prepared to give at least to the Leader of the Opposition a copy of the Report?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Stupid!

*(Interruptions)*

The law of the land does not allow me, as Prime Minister, to see the Report and he wants me to give it to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** This is the biggest cover up this country has seen! The Prime Minister is covering up. This is the biggest cover up this country has seen!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Beebeejaun, your question, please! Order!  
Order!

## MBC – PURCHASE OF CARS

**(No. B/143) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MBC information as to whether it has recently purchased two cars for outside broadcast and, if in the affirmative, will he state –

- (a) the costs thereof;
- (b) the name of the supplier;
- (c) whether the cars are new, secondhand or converted vehicles, and
- (d) whether both cars have been found suitable for the purpose for which they were bought and, if not, will he say if the cars or the technical equipment on board have been modified and, if so, at what cost.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that in the context of the Indian Ocean Islands Games, the Corporation, with the approval of the Central Tender Board, had acquired two outside broadcasting vehicles in July 2003 as the existing vehicles were not in running condition.

The reply to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, is as follows -

- (a) Rs68,844,724;
- (b) Sony South Africa, and
- (c) they were new cars.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (d) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that the outside broadcasting vehicles are suitable for the purpose for which they were purchased.

However, during the games it was noticed that one of the two vehicles had some coach build and air conditioning problems. Sony South Africa was informed accordingly. The representative of the company, who was delegated to make an assessment of the faults identified, confirmed the existence of the problems. Upon his recommendation, the vehicle was sent

to Sony South Africa for repairs. As the vehicle was still under warranty, the costs of shipment and repairs were borne by Sony South Africa.

I am advised that the MBC received the vehicle back on 24 February 2005.

I am also advised that modification was brought to the model of the video tape recorder to bring it in harmony with MBC recording formats at no cost to the Corporation.

### **SALE BY LEVY PROCEDURE – SOLD PROPERTIES - ASSISTANCE**

**(No. B/144) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if Government will consider the creation of a Special Relief Fund to provide assistance to persons whose property has been sold before the Master's Court through the procedure of Sale by Levy.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that the National Solidarity Fund created by the National Solidarity Fund Act of 1991 already provides assistance directly to individuals who have undergone severe personal hardship. Therefore, the creation of another special Fund is not envisaged.

However, Government is prepared to consider providing, on a case-to-case basis, additional assistance to persons whose property has been sold through the procedure of Sale by Levy.

### **PROPERTIES – SOLD BY SALE BY LEVY PROCEDURE**

**(No. B/145) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain for the last three years, a list of cases where properties sold by the procedure of Sale by Levy before the Master's Court have been acquired by banking institutions.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker Sir, the information requested is being tabled.

## **MBC CHANNEL - PRIVATISATION**

**(No. B/146) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas and Floréal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if it is proposed to privatise one of the channels of the MBC and, if so, when.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ B/444 on 25 May 2004.

Government does not intend to privatise one of the channels of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. In fact, in line with our commitment to introduce private operators in the audiovisual landscape, I am advised that Multi Carrier (Mauritius) Limited has already installed a digital terrestrial television broadcasting system which is operational since 2003. The digital system is currently broadcasting five television channels on test and covers 70% of the island.

Multi Carrier (Mauritius) Limited is ready to broadcast up to six television channels on the existing digital platform as soon as the Independent Broadcasting Authority issues the necessary licences to applicants.

I am further advised that the digital platform can be expanded to eventually broadcast more than 30 television channels.

## **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA/MAURITIUS – FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

**(No. B/147) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if, during his recent official visit to the People's Republic of China, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the People's Republic of China for a line of credit of Rs150 m, stating -

- (a) the rate of interest applicable, and
- (b) the projects to be financed from that line of credit.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, during my recent visit to the People's Republic of China, a Framework Agreement for an interest-free loan of around Rs150 m was signed with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

The Agreement is valid for a period of five years starting from February 2005 and ending February 2010. The loan is repayable in 10-yearly instalments, as from February 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the loan will be utilised for the construction of a new building of around 10,000 square metres on a plot of land of 8 acres at Moka adjacent to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute to accommodate the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Headquarters and the installation of a new microwave relay link system.

**GOVERNMENT ADVISERS  
– EXPENDITURE INCURRED – JANUARY 2005**

**(No. B/148) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Advisers recruited by Government, he will give the expenditure incurred on their remuneration for the month of January 2005.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to PQ No. B/102 last week.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware...

*(Interruptions)*

...of the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development that, 'for fairness in raising revenue for making sure that every rupee...'

**Mr Speaker:** This is not relevant.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Jeetah:** To make sure that every rupee...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dooloo, your question!

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, I have not finished.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I have said this question is not relevant.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I just want to ask the hon. Prime Minister...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Jeetah, you have put a question about the remuneration of Government Advisers, this question is specific. You cannot now ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware of what the Deputy Prime Minister said or another Minister said on that matter. We are not going to lose the time of the House. Hon. Dulloo!

*(Interruptions)*

I am not allowing.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Jeetah:** It is another question.

**Mr Speaker:** I have the discretion to allow supplementaries. Yes, hon. Dulloo.

### **MCB CASE – SUSPECTS – LA TOUR KOENIG POLICE STATION**

**(No. B/149) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d’Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police the following information in regard to the two suspects detained at La Tour Koenig Police Station in connection with the alleged MCB hold up on 11 February 2005 –

- (a) the name of suspects;
- (b) the duration and conditions of their detention;
- (c) whether any complaint has been registered against any Police officer who had requested that the detainees be kept in different cells and, if yes, action, if any, taken against the Police officer, and
- (d) whether he will table copies of all entries in relation thereto made in the Occurrence Book and the Diary Book.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that only one suspect in the MCB case, namely,

Poovelden Soobaroyen, is detained at La Tour Koenig Police Station since 11 February 2005.

As regards the conditions of his detention, no complaint has been received so far.

Concerning part (c), I am informed that on 18 February 2005 at 21 10 hours, the suspect was transferred to Line Barracks Detention Centre by order of an Assistant Superintendent of Police who was on night duty at La Tour Koenig Police Station, as a female detainee was detained there.

At the Line Barracks Detention Centre, the Police Officer escorting the suspect was informed that another detainee involved in the MCB case was being held there. Thereupon, the suspect was sent to Pope Hennessy Police Station. The following morning, he was sent back to La Tour Koenig Police Station.

I am advised, Mr Speaker, Sir, that no complaint has been recorded against the Police Officers of La Tour Koenig Police Station. However, the Assistant Superintendent of Police responsible for La Tour Koenig Police Station was transferred elsewhere as the Commissioner of Police considered that the suspect should not have been moved from La Tour Koenig Police Station where there were three operational cells available.

As regards part (d), I am apprised that no entry was made in the Occurrence Book but entries in respect of the movement of the detainee were inserted in the Diary Book of La Tour Koenig Police Station. I am tabling the relevant extract of the Diary Book.

**Mr Dulloo:** Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, to where the Police Officer concerned, who is a superintendent, has been transferred from La Tour Koenig?

**The Prime Minister:** 'Elsewhere' I am told.

**Mr Dulloo:** To where?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't think it is required as information to where he is transferred. The Commissioner of Police acts in his discretion. He has found it fit to transfer that officer because he is not satisfied - and I agree with him - that this action should not have been taken at that time of the night. So, he has transferred the Police Officer elsewhere.

**Mr Dullo:** Will the hon. Prime Minister say whether he has been transferred to the Special Mobile Force as a punitive transfer?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, whether you call it punitive or not, again the hon. Member is playing on words. The Commissioner of Police was dissatisfied with the behaviour of that Police Officer, who is an assistant superintendent, if I am not mistaken. The Commissioner of Police has taken action to correct.

**Mr Dullo:** Was not that Superintendent concerned acting specifically in order to avoid the contact between two suspects in that particular case?

**Mr Speaker:** It is a matter of opinion.

**The Prime Minister:** It is the contrary, Mr Speaker, the hon. Member does not listen. Supposedly that Police Officer transferred the prisoner because there was a lady around. He sent that prisoner to another place where there was a detainee linked to the case. This is the information that I have given to the House. The said prisoner was transferred back to La Tour Koenig Police Station, first thing the next morning.

**Mr Speaker:** I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister is prepared to give all those information. I don't think this House is concerned with the exercise of powers in day-to-day matters by the Commissioner of Police or a Police Officer for this matter. We are not here to judge what is right or what is wrong. If the hon. Prime Minister is prepared to reply, it is OK, but I don't think questions would be relevant to those matters.

**The Prime Minister:** I gave all the information on what basis the Commissioner of Police acted.

**Mr Dullo:** We appreciate that the information was provided to the Prime Minister; we have another version, we will check and will come back again.

## **ROSE BELLE – GAMING HOUSE & COIN OPERATED GAMING MACHINES**

**(No. B/150) Mr M. Dullo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home

Affairs whether he will state if a licence to operate a casino at Rose Belle has been granted and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the date of the application and the date it was granted;
- (b) whether Police clearance was obtained;
- (c) whether representatives of the inhabitants of the region have been consulted;
- (d) whether the social and security aspects have been taken into consideration;
- (e) the name of the applicant, the promoters and the licensee, and
- (f) the terms and conditions of the said licence.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Local Government and Solid Waste Management that no licence has been issued to operate a Casino at Rose Belle. However, two applications for licences to operate gaming houses and coin operated gaming machines at Rose Belle have been received. One application has been approved but the gaming house is not yet operational. The other application is still under consideration.

**Mr Dulloo:** I have asked the particulars of the applicants and the promoters. It is in the main question.

**The Prime Minister:** In the first case the application was made on 28 October by Rose Belle House Limited. I am informed that there is one shareholder only and it is Mr Pradeep Sharma Doorgakant. The applicant published a notice in the press on two days informing the public of the proposed operation of the gaming house and invited the public to send any objections to the Gaming Control Board.

I am informed that no objection was received from the public. Police clearance was obtained. The licences to operate the gaming house were issued on 02 April 2004. In the second case, I am informed that the application was made by Jacpot Limited on 10 October 2004. Again, I am informed that there is only one shareholder, Mr Mahen Jeetun. The applicant published a notice in the press...

*(Interruptions)*

I think it is very shameful when I refer to the name of one family to have all sorts of remarks like that. It is very shameful.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** The applicant published a notice in the press on four days informing the public of the proposed operation of the gaming house and invited the public to send any objection to the Gaming Control Board. I am advised that objections have been received and have been referred to the Police for further inquiry.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Prime Minister whether Mr Doorgakant is one and the same Human Resources Manager of Rose Belle Sugar Estate?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know. I will find out.

**Dr. Boolell:** Can I ask the Prime Minister whether Mr Jootun is a well-known agent of the MSM in the constituency No. 11?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not aware...

*(Interruptions)*

Please, sit down and listen to the answer. I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, but even if that was true...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** In the days of Labour Party only their agents were entitled to apply for this and that. In our days everybody can apply including, of course, if that is the case, an agent from the MSM. So what?

**Dr. Boolell:** Will the Prime Minister find out whether these are fraud names for Mr Pahladi?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** If the hon. Member has any such information, he can take whatever action he feels should be taken, towards the Gaming Control Board, the Police or both. I repeat if you have information, do not cover up! Either ...

*(Interruptions)*

Go either to the Police or to the Gaming Control Board!

**Dr. Boolell:** Since the Prime Minister does not want to have any cover up, can I ask him whether he is aware that there is a public outcry in the constituency because of the opening of casino?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** I have no such information and I am sure if there was such an outcry the Deputy Prime Minister would have informed me of the situation.

**Mr Dulloo:** Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, it all centres round Rose Belle Sugar Estate, Mr Pahladi is the main *démarcheur* in that particular case. But may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the second application by Jacpot Ltd has been made in respect of premises which is close to the office of the Ministry of Education and the SSS Bissoondoyal College?

**The Prime Minister:** According to the information I have, the applicant has had a notice published in the press on four days and that there have been objections and, therefore, the Police is further inquiring into the objections.

**Mr Dulloo:** May I know whether one of the objectors was the Ministry of Education or the responsible officer of the Bissoondoyal College?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think so, but I'll find out. If the Minister of Education could make a short statement later on. I am further informed that when conducting an inquiry on such applications the principle is that the close inhabitants of the proposed place of business are consulted. Moreover, publication is made in two dailies, as I said earlier, notifying the public of the intended business and inviting them for complaint or objection if any. This is done by the Secretary, Gaming Control Board. So, I will request the Minister of Education to see whether there is any objection from the school premises concerned.

#### **JUDGES (FORMER) - MINISTRIES/PARASTATAL BODIES - FEES PAID AS FROM JANUARY 2001 TO FEBRUARY 2005**

**(No B/151) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state the amount paid by way of fees, as from January 2001 to date, to former judges for services provided to Ministries and Parastatal Bodies.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, an amount of Rs13,586,819 has been paid by way of fees, as from January 2001 to date, to former judges for services provided to Ministries and Parastatal Bodies.

The eight former judges are -

- (i) Louis Robert Ahnee;
- (ii) Sir Victor Glover;
- (iii) Joycelyn Forget;
- (iv) Rampersad Proag;
- (v) Y. K. J. Yueng Sik Yuen;
- (vi) Rajsoomer Lallah;
- (vii) Vinod Boolell, and
- (viii) Abdool Mohamed Goolam Ahmed.

**Dr. Boolell:** Can we have a breakdown in respect of the fees paid to the former Judges, please?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think it is proper to do so. I am not circulating that.

*(Interruptions)*

As Prime Minister...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I need the services of these honourable gentlemen, former Chief Justices, former judges. I am not going to behave in a way that will lead them to say next time "thank you, I do not want my name and so on spread across newspapers ", Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Ramgoolam:** Mr Speaker, when people are paid for work done, there is no need to hide the money they get; and since the Prime Minister has mentioned the names and the amount, it is fair not to assume that everybody has been paid equally.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not think it would be in order for me as Prime Minister to go and give all the details of the different

pieces of work that these very honourable former Chief Justices and Judges of the Supreme Court have performed.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the name of transparency there should be no cover up. We are talking of funds from the public, which have been paid to those former judges. We are simply asking that Government give us the breakdown as to the amount paid. I think the public has the right to know. Can I ask the Prime Minister whether a code of ethics has been established to ensure that there is no conflict of interest when the services of these former Judges are required?

**Mr Speaker:** But this question concerns the fees paid to the former Judges.

**Dr. Boolell:** Precisely, because fees are paid; we have to make sure that there is no conflict of interest. I think this is the *sine qua non*, the bottom line.

**Mr Speaker:** In their terms and conditions of contract?

**Dr. Boolell:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member can come with another question next time.

**Mr Michel:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since we are dealing with public money could the hon. Prime Minister give the amount?

**Mr Speaker:** Questions to other Ministers. Hon. Beebeejaun?

### **MORCELLEMENT NANA, UPPER BANGLADESH, PORT LOUIS - WATER SUPPLY**

**(No. B/152) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the CWA the following information in regard to the water supply to Morcellement Nana, Upper Bangladesh, Port Louis -

- (a) the number of families supplied;
- (b) the number of taps;
- (c) the hours of supply, and

(d) the monthly average volume of water supplied.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the CWA that there are about 200 families living at Morcellement Nana in Tranquebar. They are squatters. They are provided with water from two standpipes between 4.00 a.m to 10.00 a.m and 3.00 p.m to 9.00 p.m everyday. These standpipes are fed from the Upper Monneron Reservoir. The monthly average volume supplied is about 400m<sup>3</sup>. It is to be pointed out that the supply is metered in the name of two inhabitants. Furthermore, I am informed that for the other regions of Tranquebar, the hours of water supply are the same. However, for these families of morcellement Nana which is at a higher elevation by virtue of the topography of the land, the hours of supply are at times disturbed.

I must also inform the House that with a view to enhancing the conditions of living of the inhabitants of morcellement Nana, the CWA has embarked on a project for improving the water supply there. A new water supply network is being installed at the cost of Rs2.2m. Works have already started and are expected to be completed in July this year. Once the works are completed, the CWA will entertain applications for individual water supply against the applicants fulfilling the necessary conditions in terms of payment of connection fees and liability.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** I thank the Minister. May I draw his attention that these two points of water supply were installed in year 2000 and since then nothing has happened. I will for the benefit of the House lay on the Table of the Assembly the conditions under which these children are carrying water long distances; and I must also thank him that following this question on Friday last new pipes appeared on site.

**Mr Speaker:** Your question, please.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** So, I would like to ask the Minister to make sure that the pressure supplied would be adequate to give water to these families. For information, I lay it on the Table of the Assembly. The water supply is only 64...

**Mr Speaker:** Your question, please.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Can I show him the water bills, 64 and 100m<sup>3</sup> monthly for so many families. It means that the water is not flowing in spite of having the pipes.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, what I can reply to the hon. Member is that these people have been...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please! Hon. Beebeejaun, order! Where do you think your are! I allowed you to make your case and to lay pictures and photographs on the Table. Now you are turning around and speak to other Members. Where do you think your are!

*(Interruptions)*

Take your seat!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Dulloo:** On a point of order, Sir. *Quelqu'un a lancé un projectile, M. le président.*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** It is not proper at all to behave like this in the House.

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Hon. Barbier! I think hon. Members should start behaving.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, to answer the question of the hon. Member, may I remind him that these squatters have been here for ages, even during the period when he was Minister of Public Utilities. As I have just informed the House, the CWA is investing Rs2.2 m. for the necessary network and the reticulation system to provide water to these squatters in that region. True it is, as I have mentioned in my answer, that, in view of the higher elevation of the land, the hours of supply are disturbed at times. This explains also the small consumption of the inhabitants of *Morcellement Nana*. But I will see to it, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the works in progress are completed as soon as possible so that the inhabitants of this area might receive the relief that they are entitled to.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** May I ask the Minister what improvement has been made in regard to the water supply since 2000? These squatters have been there since 1998.

**Mr Ganoo:** The CWA lorries, Mr Speaker, Sir, have been regularly supplying water to the inhabitants of the region. As I said, the CWA has taken the decision to invest Rs2.2 to complete the works.

## DOCTORS (FOREIGN) - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/153) **Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to foreign doctors employed by his Ministry during the past 3 years, he will state -

- (a) the method of recruitment, and
- (b) if it has been ascertained from their applications whether they were entitled to practise in their country of origin at the time of recruitment.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to inform the House that my Ministry resorted to the recruitment of foreign doctors as it was not possible to fill existing vacancies due to a lack of qualified candidates on the local market. Such recruitment exercises have been made after obtaining necessary clearances from the Public Service Commission, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms.

In August and September 2002, applications were invited from qualified Indian candidates who wished to be considered for employment as (i) Specialist/Senior Specialist in the fields of General Medicine, Cardiology and Radiology and (ii) as Medical & Health Officer/Senior Medical & Health Officer on contract basis in the Ministry.

The qualifications required for the post were as follows -

- (a) candidates should be registrable as medical practitioners/specialists, as appropriate, with the Medical Council of the Republic of Mauritius under the Medical Council Act;
- (b) candidates should produce evidence of good standing record with their respective Medical Councils, and
- (c) candidates should produce a testimonial from their last employer where applicable.

The vacancies were advertised through our High Commission in New Delhi. The applications received were scrutinised at the level of the Ministry and a short list of candidates was drawn up for interview.

A Selection Committee, comprising the Chief Medical Officer and a Principal Assistant Secretary, interviewed the short-listed candidates at our High Commission in New Delhi and a merit list was drawn up. Offers were made to the candidates in order of merit, that is, 122 for Medical & Health Officers/Senior Medical & Health Officers and 23 for Specialists/Senior Specialists. In respect of Specialist/Senior Specialist, the prior approval of the Public Service Commission was obtained whilst for Medical & Health Officer/Senior Medical & Health Officer, the covering approval of the Commission was obtained.

In November 2004, nine foreign doctors were recruited as Medical & Health Officer/Senior Medical & Health Officer locally after an advertisement in the local press. These doctors are mainly spouses of other foreign doctors already working in Mauritius or foreign citizens presently staying in Mauritius with a residence permit. The approval of the Public Service Commission was obtained.

As regards the second part of the question, I am informed that at the time of the interview, all the foreign doctors who were selected, had produced evidence that they were registered with their respective Medical Councils. However, one of the doctors who graduated in Ukraine and duly registered with the Medical Council of Mauritius, could not produce evidence of having been registered with the Medical Council of her country of origin. I am informed by the Registrar of the Medical Council that Ukraine does not have a Medical Council to register its graduates.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Apart from the Medical Council, does the Ministry entertain any correspondence with the Medical Council of India?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, recently we advertised through our High Commission in New Delhi, and we have recruited a number of doctors. But a few of them sent their applications directly to the Ministry. As and when we need doctors, we seek the approval of the Public Service Commission and other relevant bodies and interviews are carried out. A few times doctors have been recruited on this basis.

**Mr Michel:** Concerning languages, may I know what measures are being taken to improve the relation between patients and doctors?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as languages are concerned, there is no problem. We cannot have a barrier in medicine because of languages. The hon. Member should know by now that there is no barrier. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a number of decisions that we have taken at the Ministry to make these doctors feel comfortable as far as languages are concerned.

**Mr Michel:** I am asking the hon. Minister whether any measure has been taken. I can tell him that I have been to the hospital and that these doctors have problems to communicate with people.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

## UNEMPLOYED - TRAINING PROGRAMMES

**(No. B/154) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications whether, in regard to the training programmes intended for the unemployed -

- (a) who have not passed the CPE, and
- (b) who have studied up to Form V, he will state –
  - (i) when these were advertised
  - (ii) the number of applications received in each category and
  - (iii) the number of trainees who have successfully completed their courses.

**Mr Fowdar:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the training programmes intended for the unemployed who have not passed CPE and for those who have studied up to Form V, but have not passed the School Certificate examination were advertised from 03 to 06 September 2004.

1,051 applications were received, out of which, 475 were in respect of those who had not passed the CPE and 576 in respect of those who had studied up to Form V.

Training courses for a first batch of 378 trainees comprising 147 who did not pass the CPE and 231 who have studied up to Form V started as

from November 2004. The training programme covered a number of areas, *inter alia*, floriculture, livestock, masonry, plumbing and pipe fitting, embroidery, basketry, air-conditioning and refrigeration, jewellery and printing. The duration of these courses ranges from 45 to 300 hours. Courses are conducted, on a part-time basis, after normal working hours on weekdays and on Saturdays.

To date, 110 trainees (76 CPE failed and 34 who have studied up to School Certificate) have successfully completed their respective training.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the training programmes were intended for some 3,000 unemployed for the current financial year. However, being given that only 1,051 applications were received, the registered unemployed in these two categories were invited individually to enrol themselves for any course under the training programme. In fact, a circular letter together with details of courses being offered and application forms were addressed to some 9,500 registered unemployed whose names were submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. Out of 9,500 unemployed, only 1,738 responded to the invitation. Training courses for these unemployed are being held in several batches. A first one has started on 22 February 2005.

The unemployed of Rodrigues have not been left behind. In fact, the training programmes have also been extended to them. 374 applications (166 CPE failed and 208 who have studied up to School Certificate) have been received following press advertisement. Courses in domestic electric installations; plumbing and pipe fitting; and servicing of petrol and diesel engines for a first batch of 71 trainees have started last month.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether he has inquired about this fairly low interest in these courses? Only 10% turned up. Can he explain how this can be improved?

**Mr Fowdar:** As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have tried to motivate the unemployed to have training, and that is why we have sent individual letters to some 9,500 registered unemployed.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** I appreciate the effort the Minister is making. I am asking whether there has been a further inquiry to find out why this low interest.

**Mr Fowdar:** There has been no inquiry up to now, Mr Speaker, Sir. Maybe, we can envisage this possibility.

## CANE BURNING – KYOTO PROTOCOL

**(No. B/155) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if the practice of burning sugar cane fields is in violation of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and, if so, will he consider imposing a ban thereon.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, cane burning in Mauritius is not in violation of the Kyoto Protocol.

## BALACLAVA – NEW HOTEL PROJECTS – MASTER PLAN

**(No. B/156) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Tourism & Leisure whether he will table a list of the new hotel projects in the region of Balaclava, indicating –

- (a) whether the views of the relevant authorities have been sought and obtained, and
- (b) the names of the promoters.

**Mr Gayan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a Master Plan for the region of Balaclava is under preparation. Any new hotel project proposal can only be considered after finalisation and approval of same by the Government.

## MOUSSA LANE, SEEYAN LANE, ROUTE MARTINET, PONT SAINT LOUIS NO. 1, PAILLES - DRAINS

**(No. B/157) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if it is proposed to construct drains at Moussa Lane, Seeyan Lane, Route Martinet and its vicinity at Pont Saint Louis No. 1, Pailles.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, following representations made at the Village Council of Pailles by the “*forces vives*” of that region on flooding problems in the region of Pont St. Louis, the assistance of the NDU was sought. Subsequently, a drain network project, including Route Martinet and

Mosaheb Road has been included in the list for implementation during financial year 2005/2006. Our consultant Gibb (Mtius) Ltd has already been instructed to prepare the design and scope of work for the early implementation of the project.

As regards Moussa Lane, no such complaint has been received. However, it is proposed to incorporate this drain as well within the proposed drain network.

As regards Seeyan Lane, which is also known as Ramen Lane, I am informed that the RDA will soon proceed with the construction of drains along that lane.

### **MADAGASCAR – MAURITIAN COMPANIES - ACTIVITIES**

**(No. B/158) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Regional Co-operation whether he will consider the advisability of tabling a list of Mauritian investors including companies and individuals operating in the Republic of Madagascar, indicating the nature of their activities and the number of Mauritian workers employed by each of them.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am laying on the Table of the National Assembly a list of companies of Mauritian origin in Madagascar. I must say that this list may not be complete, but I am laying what I have got there. If I have further information, I'll complete the list.

### **PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND - CONVERSION**

**(No. B/159) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Agriculture Food Technology & Natural Resources whether he will table a list of prime agricultural land which has, since January 2001, been converted for use for –

- (a) non-sugar sector agricultural diversification, and
- (b) residential purposes.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as a matter of policy, the Land Conversion Unit which processes applications according to a set criteria does not authorise the conversion of first class agricultural land except in very rare cases. These exceptional cases comprise applications under the VRS (sites to be allocated to employees for residential purpose) and 2,800

Arpents Scheme and are governed by very strict pre approved criteria specified in the SIE Act, which has been duly approved by Parliament.

The Land Conversion Unit keeps statistics only in respect of area of agricultural land converted to other uses in accordance with the provisions of the SIE Act. Such figures do not contain breakdown of type of land converted.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am sure that the hon. Member is well aware that for agricultural diversification to the non-sugar sector, there is no need for authority for land conversion.

However, statistics kept by the SIFB indicate that the area under sugar cane has gradually decreased over the years from approximately 77,306 hectares in 2001 to 74,869 hectares in 2004.

As regards part (b) of the question, according to statistics kept at the Land Conversion Unit of my Ministry, I am informed that the total extent of land converted for residential purposes from January 2001 to date is 6,379.69 arpents.

### **ROSE BELLE MILLING PLANT – EQUIPMENT - DISMANTLING**

**(No. B/160) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Agriculture Food Technology & Natural Resources whether he will state if the equipment at the Rose Belle Milling Plant is being dismantled and, if so, will he state –

- (a) if a tender exercise was carried out and, if so, the name of the successful tenderer;
- (b) the composition of the Tender Evaluation Committee, if any, and
- (c) the contract value thereof.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the General Manager of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board that the equipment of the Rose Belle Sugar Milling Plant is being dismantled and dismantling works are still in progress.

As regards part (a) of the question, the information that has been provided to me is that an international tender exercise was launched in March 2002 for the sale of whole assets of the Rose Belle Sugar Milling Co.

Ltd, which closed down on 31 December 2001. Mr Speaker, Sir, there was no response for this international tender exercise by the closing date. Therefore, parts (b) and (c) of the question do not arise.

However, given the difficulties to find potential buyers for the whole plant, the Board of the Rose Belle Sugar Milling Co. gave its approval to Management in June 2002 to sell the assets by tender of scrap metals, stand-alone tools and odd equipment. Tender was launched in June 2002 and 15 bids were received. The bids were assessed by a Tender Committee, comprising staff of Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board, namely Messrs –

- (i) R. Mahabirsingh - Agricultural Manager
- (ii) S. Doorgakant - Personnel Manager
- (iii) D. Appadoo - Payroll Co-ordinator
- (iv) G. Dabeedeen - Internal Auditor.

The assets were sold to the highest bidders for the sum of Rs20.9 m.

In July 2003, Rose Belle Sugar Estate decided to sell the remaining assets to Matangi Iron & Steel Co. Ltd of India as scrap metal on an AS IS WHERE IS BASIS for the sum of Rs6.5 m. This is the dismantling that is going on today and is expected to be completed by the end of April 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the objective is to recuperate as much as possible for the company from the sale of assets which are deteriorating day by day.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister as to the number of bidders? He mentioned 15 bidders.

**Mr Bodha:** Yes.

**Dr. Boolell:** Can we have the names of the bidders and will he say whether, amongst the bidders, there were those who offered more than what Matangi offered? Who was the highest bidder?

**Mr Bodha:** There were two exercises. The first one brought Rs20.9 m. and in the second exercise, Matangi bought the scrap metal for Rs6,5 m.

**Dr. Boolell:** Surely, there were people who were keen to buy functional equipment and spare parts. Can we know those who submitted their intention to buy functional equipment? Can we know the name of the bidders?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, for example, when we contacted 25 international firms, there was no response. When we came to local bidders, some bid about Rs8 m. for the whole plant and machinery. So, efforts were made to see to it that the assets could be sold for the highest sum. Some were sold to the highest bidders for Rs20.9 m. - among the 15 bidders - and then the scrap metal, that is, what was left was sold for Rs6.5 m.

**Dr. Boolell:** Can we have the list of those who bought those functional equipment and spare parts?

**Mr Bodha:** I don't have the information with me right now, Sir.

**Dr. Boolell:** When it comes to scrap metal, can we have the names of those Mauritian firms which expressed their intention to buy those equipment far higher than the amount offered by Matangi?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Samlo offered Rs6.8 m. and Matangi offered Rs6.5 m.

**Dr. Boolell:** What about Mr Pillay who offered Rs8 m. and somebody else who offered Rs7.5 m? The Minister should have this information in his notes. So, if he could please check.

**Mr Bodha:** From what I understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was an offer from Tiroumala International for Rs8 m., but I think there were problems on letters of credit.

**Dr. Boolell:** There was no problem. In fact, can I ask the hon. Minister who was mandated to enter into negotiations? Was it the Board or somebody in particular?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we know where the hon. Member is trying to drive us to.

*(Interruptions)*

All the decisions were taken by the Board with all the members present. We know exactly what the hon. Member is trying to point out.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Boolell:** Can I ask the hon. Member whether the Chairman had been mandated and whether he has the power to enter into negotiations with any firm?

**Mr Bodha:** This is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Boolell:** This is the case.

**Mr Bodha:** Let me also say *que tout n'était pas rose quand il était à Rose Belle!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Boolell:** He is running away, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know what is going on at Rose Belle Sugar Estate, disposing of land; now they are selling scrap metals, Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

...because they have entered into negotiations with parties they have chosen and there is a lot of cover up, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Bodha:** Puisque l'honorable membre m'a provoqué je vais donner deux informations.

**Dr. Boolell:** Answer the questions that I have put to you!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bodha:** Because he is talking about malpractices. Mr Speaker, Sir, in September 2000, all the workers were paid Rs4,000 as a bribe for the elections.

*(Interruptions)*

The second thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Bodha:** In May 2001 the Sugar Estate went bankrupt and Government had to guarantee a loan to pay the wages of the workers.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Let's break for lunch. You can come back later on.

*At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Dr. Boolell:** I thought you said I could put supplementary questions.

**Mr Speaker:** Not unlimited numbers.

**Dr. Boolell:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the Minister whether an evaluation exercise was carried out before dismantling part of the factory?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, from the information I have been given there has been...

*(Interruptions)*

...an exercise to evaluate all the assets and in fact, the bids were assessed taking into account the evaluation exercise.

**Dr. Boolell:** Would the Minister be able to inform the House as to whom this exercise was assigned, who carried out this exercise and whether he would be able to tell us the book value of the milling and the ex-milling?

**Mr Bodha:** I'll have to seek the information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Boolell:** I would have expected the Minister to have this off the cuff because this is very relevant. We are talking of the book value of the factory which has been estimated at hundred million rupees, and then, of course, there is the sliding crane and the way bridge which have been valued at more than Rs25 m.

**Mr Speaker:** Did the Minister give you these figures?

**Dr. Boolell:** No, I know because I have it. Can I ask the Minister why is it that there was not a committee set up to look into the whole issue before the Chairman, who is a part-time Chairman, was mandated by the supposedly Rose Sugar Estate Managing Committee to discuss this very sensitive issue with a firm which was selectively and arbitrarily chosen...

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information I have been given is that there has been an evaluation exercise of the different assets, then there was the decision by the Board to go on international tenders. There was no international offer. There was a second tender exercise which was done. They had 15 bidders and a committee was set up to see to it that the best price could be obtained with all the assets which could be sold and that committee sold a certain number of assets for the sum of Rs20 m. What was left was sold as scrap. Now, we can have an evaluation exercise saying that the assets are worth a certain sum, but over the years, because there were no international bidders and the exercise was going on, the material was getting obsolete and at the end of the day they were sold as scrap metals.

**Dr. Boolell:** Now, the whole exercise appears to be very hazy and shady, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the Minister the reason as to why Matangi was chosen when this company offered Rs6.5 m and other bidders offered a much higher price, Mr Speaker, Sir?

**Mr Bodha:** No, it was not much higher; it was R6.5 m and Rs8 m and there was a problem about the letters of credit.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not saying that he is misleading the House but this is sheer arrogance. Either he does not want to understand or he refuses to understand. We are talking of discrepancy, of almost Rs2 m. and I hope the Minister will look seriously into the matter. This is a very grave issue.

**Mr Bodha:** More grave than that is what happened before, Mr Speaker, Sir!

### **CAMP LA BOUE/CREVE COEUR - BUS TERMINUS**

**(No. B/161) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands and Minister of Fisheries whether he will state if procedures have been initiated for the compulsory acquisition of land for the construction of a bus terminus at Camp La Boue, Long Mountain and at Crève Coeur and, if so, will he state -

- (a) since when, and
- (b) when the land will be handed over to the appropriate authorities for works to start.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the bus terminus at Camp La Boue, five plots of land of an extent of 6874m<sup>2</sup>, that is, 1A 63P have been identified for the construction of a bus terminus. An offer for the purchase of the land by private agreement was made to the owners on 10 September 2004. As negotiation failed, Government had on 23 October 2004, and 30 October 2004, published Notices under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act. In pursuance with the said Act, on 15 January 2005 and 29 January 2005, Notices under Section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act were published in the Government Gazette.

The legality of the acquisition having not been challenged by the owners within the legal delay of 21 days, the said Notice under Section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act was sent to the Registrar General Office on 24 February 2005 for transcription.

It is expected that Government will obtain the title to the land by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March 2005, and thereafter it will be vested in the NDU for the implementation of the project.

With regard to the bus terminus at Crève Coeur, three portions of land of an extent of 418m<sup>2</sup> (OA99P) have been identified.

An offer for the purchase of the three plots of land by private agreement was made to the owners on 11 January 2005. Negotiation for the acquisition of the said plots of land under private agreement failed.

Notices under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act were published in the Government Gazette and two daily newspapers on 26 February 2005. The second publication of the said Notice will be made on 11 March 2005. Thereafter necessary action will be taken for publication of Notices under Section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act.

It is expected that the land acquisition will be completed by May 2005.

**CHITRAKOOT GOVT. SCHOOL, VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES -  
RENOVATION**

**(No. B/162) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure & Land Transport whether he will state if there is any project for the renovation of the Chitrakoot Government School at Vallée des Prêtres.

**Mr Gunness:** I would like to inform the House that Chitrakoot Government School consisting of three one-storeyed classroom blocks (Blocks A, B and C) adjacent to one another, is located on hilly land in the vicinity of Vallée des Prêtres mountainous region.

Three survey reports have been prepared on the state of the school building on 18 April 2003, 16 July 2003 and lately on 09 June 2004.

According to the survey reports, the school building is, in general, structurally sound. At certain places, however, cracks in the blockwall have appeared implying ongoing relative settlement between foundations. The external blockwall of a classroom in the pre-primary block needs immediate repairs to prevent spalling of blockwall, which may constitute a hazard to school children. I have been informed that in October 2004, the Maintenance Unit of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, in the light of the finding of the survey report, undertook minor work such as removal of spalling in one classroom and repair of a 12-metre stretch of boundary blockwall. It is necessary to carry out major repairs to prevent further degradation of the school blocks and reinforce them. The repair work will consolidate the school building and extend its lifespan. The renovation work will last approximately four months. Arrangements are being made to complete formalities for the renovation work of the school.

## **GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS ACT - ENACTMENT**

**(No. B/163) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Regional Co-operation whether following the enactment of the Genetically Modified Organisms Act, he will state –

- (a) what steps have been taken so far to label genetically modified products for human consumption on the local market;
- (b) whether his Ministry has so far received any request for the production in Mauritius of genetically modified crops, and
- (c) whether any specialised laboratory has been set up in this respect.

**The Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology & Natural Resources (Mr N. Bodha):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

The Genetically Modified Organisms Act was passed in the National Assembly in April 2004. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (1) (a) to 6 (1) (c) and 24 have been proclaimed to come into effect on 01 January 2005.

The proclamation of the above sections allows the initiation of procedures for the regulation and control of genetically modified organisms in Mauritius. The composition of the National Biosafety Committee as provided under the Act is being finalised. I have identified Professor Fagoonee of the University of Mauritius to be the Chairperson and the whole composition will shortly be brought before Cabinet before being publicly announced. The National Biosafety Committee will as a priority have to advise on the measures to operationalise the provisions of the Act.

As regards part (a), Section 21, which deals with labelling and identification of genetically modified organisms, has not been proclaimed yet.

Draft regulation which will address all relevant technical issues, relating to labelling and identification of GMOs have almost been finalised and will need to be examined by the National Biosafety Committee before being sent to the Attorney-General's Office for vetting. The Food Technology Laboratory of my Ministry which is nearing completion, will provide for appropriate infrastructure. Some officers have already been trained for enforcement of labelling requirements in anticipation of the Food Technology Laboratory coming into operation.

Regarding part (b), so far no request has been received for the production of genetically modified crops in Mauritius.

Regarding part (c), no specialised laboratory has been set up in this respect. Any application for a permit to set up a genetically modified organisms laboratory will have to be processed and approved by the National Biosafety Committee and the necessary permit obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources. I am informed that facilities for producing genetically modified sugar cane varieties are available at the MSIRI, but are not utilised presently. However, the MSIRI like any other institution will have to apply for and obtain the necessary permits before it can start production of any genetically modified crops.

**Mr Michel:** Sir, in short, I think nothing concrete has been done. May I ask the Minister what was the urgency of bringing such a Bill and nothing being done?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have enumerated many measures which have already been taken. The Act came into effect on 01 January. We are nominating the Chairman of the National Biosafety Committee which is going to overview the implementation of the Act.

**Mr Armance:** May I ask the Minister whether he envisages to set up an Advisory Committee with all stakeholders on the release of GMO foods onto the environment?

**Mr Bodha:** The Act provides for the Advisory Committee.

### **CREOLE LANGUAGE - TEACHING MEDIUM - PILOT SCHEME**

**(No. B/164) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the 'kreol' language, he will state -

- (a) if a pilot scheme to introduce 'kreol' as a medium of teaching has been initiated at the beginning of this year;
- (b) the content and duration of the scheme, and
- (c) the schools, if any, where the scheme is being implemented.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will recall that on 26 October 2004 in reply to a Parliamentary Question, I mentioned that it was envisaged to launch a pilot project for the use of Mauritian Creole as teaching medium in the early years of primary school, as from this year sponsored by UNESCO. In this connexion, a project document has been proposed by the Project Manager which defines a road map for the use of Mauritian Creole as a medium in the teaching and learning process at lower primary level. Further, three major activities to implement the pilot project are, I am told, presently being carried out -

- (i) training programmes for primary school teachers and facilitators;
- (ii) an information campaign to sensitise parents and key stakeholders on the pilot project, and
- (iii) the preparation of paedagogical material for teachers concerned.

I am further informed that these activities would be completed by the end of the first term of schooling this year.

Parental agreement and teachers commitment are being sought for the successful implementation of the pilot project. According to information obtained, a series of meetings have been held with all stakeholders, that is, parents, headteachers, teachers, NGO representatives with a view to building a shared understanding of this pilot project and to obtaining their collaboration and support.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the project has three key functions establishing a link between the school and the home environment, "*libérer la parole de l'enfant*", and then reconciling the child with the school environment.

The content of the pedagogical programme addresses the following –

- (i) sensitisation of teachers on the effectiveness of using the mother tongue in the learning process of children;
- (ii) the development of a methodology and activities for oral transmission in Mauritian creole, and
- (iii) the use of Mauritian creole as a pedagogical support in the teaching of Mathematics.

The pilot project will last for a period of 11 months.

As regards part (c) of the question, two schools have been identified for the implementation of the pilot scheme, one of which is in Rodrigues. Consultations are presently being held with parents for the successful implementation of the project in those two schools.

### **POINTE AUX SABLES - MARKET FAIR**

**(No. B/165) Mr J.C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if there is any project for the setting up of a market fair at Pointe aux Sables and, if so, will he give details thereof.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Yes Sir, the NDU has embarked on the construction of a market fair at Pointe aux Sables in response to the needs of the inhabitants for a bigger and better equipped market fair.

Following CTB's approval obtained on 16 November 2004, the contract for the project was awarded to IREKO Design & Construction Ltd. on 24 January

2005 for the sum of Rs12,991,014.50 inclusive of VAT. The project is scheduled to be completed around August this year.

The market fair will occupy an area of 1600 m<sup>2</sup> and will comprise the following -

- a vegetable market with 92 stalls
- a meat market
- office facilities for the staff
- a food court
- a parking area
- a toilet block

The market will be managed by the Municipality of Port Louis.

**Mr Barbier:** Can the Minister inform the House when the work will start on the site?

**Mr Bhagwan:** The work is scheduled to start by next week.

### **RESERVOIRS - WATER SITUATION**

**(No. B/166) Mr J. C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether following the recent heavy rainfalls, he will give information on the present water situation in each of the reservoirs.

**Mr Ganoo:** Sir, I have been informed that the present water situation in each of the reservoirs is as follows -

As at yesterday, La Nicolière, Piton du Milieu and Midlands reservoirs are 100% filled. The present level at La Ferme reservoir is 50% compared to the long-term average of 37%.

At Mare aux Vacoas the present level is 60% as compared to the long-term average of 68%. This is mainly due to deficient rainfall witnessed during the month of January and to the draw off from the reservoir.

As regards Mare Longue reservoir, I am informed that the sluice gate arrangement was under repairs. Works were completed on 20 February and impounding started on the same day.

Sir, following the heavy rainfalls during the last weeks, the water supply has improved considerably and less frequent water cuts are being resorted to.

The Water Resources Unit of my Ministry is monitoring the situation closely with a view to ensuring that water is available to all sectors of the economy.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform us what is the situation concerning groundwater?

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as groundwater is concerned, generally all the aquifers have been recharged during the recent heavy rainfalls. In the upper Plaine Wilhems and the southern and eastern regions the aquifers have reached the normal capacity for the season. But for Plaine Wilhems and the northern regions, the aquifers have, unfortunately, not reached the normal capacity yet. I understand that they are still being replenished, but generally I can say that the production of groundwater is normal.

**Mr Michel:** Can I ask a question to the Minister? Where I am living in Rose Hill, there are serious cuts. Can the Minister look into the matter?

**Mr Ganoo:** I take note of that.

**Mr Armance:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister whether there has been a programme set up to remove mud out of reservoirs? Each time, we may say that the reservoir is 100% or 60% filled, but every year there is what we call soil erosion which brings mud in the reservoirs? Has there been a programme to remove mud from all the reservoirs?

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said recently - and the hon. Member knows - that the CWA and Government are investing massively in this sector. There is the question of the stockage and availability of water resources, but there is also the question of distribution and treatment. Indeed, some of our treatment plants, Mr Speaker, Sir, have to be modernised and this is where the problem crops up.

#### **CITE JOACHIM, CUREPIPE - LEISURE PARK PROJECT**

**(No. B/167) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources whether he will state if he has received a request for the vesting

of a portion of land at Cité Joachim, Curepipe presently vested in his Ministry, in the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit for a leisure park project and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a request was made to my Ministry in August 2004 for the release of a plot of land of an extent of 8 hectares at La Brasserie for the creation of a leisure park cum sports complex near the community centre under construction at Cité Joachim, Curepipe.

The land in question forms part of the Experimental Station of La Brasserie and the station is the only vegetable seed production unit in the super humid region. The site is being used for seed production, production of propagating materials and experiments on organic farming.

The land identified for the project is currently being cultivated for the following purposes -

- a banana plantation under production;
- a cinnamon observation plot;
- ornamental mother plants;
- pumpkin and cucumber plantations meant for seed production, and
- organic farming experiments.

I am sure that the hon. Members will agree that in the given circumstances, such an extensive area as has been requested cannot be released. But I am prepared to pay a site visit with my colleagues to see whether something can be done.

## **DRUGS - IMPORTATION AND QUALITY CONTROL**

**(No. B/168) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if any control is exercised on the importation and sale of generic drugs, indicating if quality testing is carried out and, if so, where and how and, if not, will he say if it is proposed to set up a laboratory for quality control.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are well-established procedures for controlling the quality and sale of all drugs, including generic drugs. The importation of all drugs, including generic ones, is submitted to the control of the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer

Protection which grants import permits to licensed pharmacies. At the level of my Ministry all new drugs, including generic ones, need to be registered with the Pharmacy Board before they can be imported and marketed in Mauritius. In fact, the invoices of pharmaceutical products have to be vetted by the Registrar of the Pharmacy Board, in accordance with Section 44(1) of the Pharmacy Act.

As regards quality aspects, registration is granted after examination of a full product dossier, including information on the quality assurance facilities, analysis sheets and a WHO-recommended Certificate of Pharmaceutical Products (COPP) moving into international commerce. The COPP indicates that the manufacturing plant is subjected to regular inspections by the regulatory authorities of the country of origin and that the products under examination are approved for sale in that country.

Most of the drugs used in the private sector, are imported directly from the manufacturers themselves and as such, reduces the risks of counterfeiting, whereas for the public sector they are either purchased directly from the manufacturers or from officially appointed agents.

The sale of drugs, including generic drugs, in Mauritius is regulated under section 17 of the Pharmacy Act 1983 which restricts the sale of medicines to registered retail pharmacies only. The Ministry also carries out regular inspections of pharmacies and clinics to see that the provisions of the law are being complied with.

Whenever there is a need for the testing of generic drugs, the drugs may be sent to the Regional WHO Drug Testing Laboratories or to private laboratories, including those run by local pharmaceutical plants for investigation. However, facilities exist for testing of simple substances at the Health Laboratory in Réduit.

I wish to inform that the Ministry is proposing to set up a Quality Control Laboratory at the existing Health Laboratory in Réduit. The laboratory will be headed by a Quality Control Officer with the relevant background who would be responsible for the commissioning of the laboratory.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether there is any difference between the quality of drugs dispensed by private pharmacies and those dispensed by hospitals? Is there any difference between these two types of drugs?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Do you mean dispensing? The drugs are dispensed by the pharmacists.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether there is any difference between the quality of drugs dispensed by private pharmacies and those dispensed at hospitals?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** As I have said, there are well-established regulations and all the importers have to follow the law as set out in the various sections that I have quoted. There should not be any difference.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned whenever the need arises samples are sent abroad. How does he establish when the need arises?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** The need arises when the need arises! It is for the responsible people to decide when the need arises. There are certain drugs for testing. I see the need arose in the case of sofradex eye drops which have been tested by Messrs Sanofi as a result of complaints received from Moka Eye Hospital. That's one example.

Secondly, a sample of glibenclamide (the generic equivalent of the antidiabetic drug Daonil) was sent to Messrs Ajanta on 24 February 2005 for analysis following a request from the consultant general of Dr. A. G. Jeetoo hospital. And there are certain drugs which are constantly sent for testing. The following two products have been systematically tested at the Health Laboratory in Réduit both for absence of a toxic adulterant known as diethylene glycol: (i) glycerine and (ii) propylene glycol.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** The question was: is there a drug monitoring system that exists whereby people, patients and doctors can send in information of side effects of drugs which are collected, analysed and then action taken?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't think that we have such a sophisticated system as exists in big countries, but we are doing the best that we can with available resources that we have.

## **VEGETABLE GROWERS (SMALL) – INSURANCE SCHEME**

**(No. B/169) Mr S. Sakaram (Second Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources whether he will give details of the insurance scheme set up for

small vegetable growers, indicating the number of planters who have so far enlisted themselves therewith.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, a Crop Insurance Scheme for Carrot was officially launched in August 2004 by the Small Planters' Welfare Fund. The scheme provides insurance coverage against payment of a premium to small planters for crop losses due to natural calamities, namely cyclones, drought, flood and excessive rainfall. It is contributory and optional to planters and has been initiated on a pilot basis to cover a period of at least 2 years during which time the intricacies of the insurance scheme will be studied. Under this scheme, the Small Planters' Welfare Fund registers, sets up a database for each planter, collects the premium and credits same to the SICOM which is the insurer.

AREU is responsible for field inspection and crop loss assessment during the pilot phase of the project. The premium is 5.5% of insurance cover sought and a Small Planters' Welfare Fund is subsidising the Crop Insurance Scheme for Carrot to the tune of Rs200 per arpent.

There are about 800 carrot growers in the country of whom about 75 are active at any one point in time. And as this is a new scheme, planters are being sensitised on the need to insure their commercial risks. As planters start becoming confident on the operation of crop insurance scheme, the Small Planters' Welfare Fund proposes to extend the scheme to other crops such as onions, tobacco and tomatoes. I am informed that as at date, 20 planters have shown interest in the scheme. I wish also to inform the House that a Crop Insurance Scheme for Potato is under consideration and will provide cover for natural calamities as well as one disease that we call the 'Late Blight'.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, discussions are being held with the Development Bank of Mauritius and with the Mauritius Post and Co-operative Bank to finalise the possibility of automatically linking the loan given to insurance schemes so that you buy the scheme when you get the loan and you repay the scheme when you repay the loan, so that in the event of calamities planters obtain some relief in regard to the terms of repayment of the loans.

#### **MINISTER OF HEALTH - MISSIONS OVERSEAS**

**(No. B/170) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will table a list of all the overseas missions he has undertaken since his

assumption of office, indicating the duration of each mission and the amount of *per diem* paid out to him.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since my assumption of office as Minister of Health and Quality of Life in September 2000, I have attended 31 official missions, that is, an average of 6 missions yearly. The duration of the missions varies from 1 to 11 days. I am informed that formerly, the World Health Organisation Meetings lasted for nearly two weeks. However, the duration was initially brought down to 10 days and now to 6 days.

Of these 31 missions, 13 were World Health Organisation and Commonwealth Meetings, 6 SADC Health Ministers' and Sectoral Meetings, and 5 HIV/AIDS Meetings, including 2 Head of States Summits on HIV/AIDS, where I represented the Prime Minister. The remaining ones were official visits as well as meetings on research and pharmaceuticals.

I wish to point out that the WHO Meetings in Geneva are attended by Ministers of Health all over the world whilst the WHO Afro meetings, held in Brazzaville or South Africa, are attended by Ministers of Health of the African continent. The World Health Assembly is an important meeting for Health Ministers as it provides a forum for discussions on the orientation of health matters and policy decisions of the World Health Organisation, which are subsequently adopted by Member States. At the meetings, discussions are also held regarding the allocation of funds to each country for Biennium Programmes as well as the monitoring of approved programmes. My presence at each of these meetings has enabled the country to benefit significantly both financially and in terms of technical assistance.

In addition, following my request, non-communicable diseases have been included as one of the main areas of concern for WHO and is considered high on the agenda of the organisation. Besides, I have participated actively in two sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control as well as in the round table discussions held thereon. It is recognised today, that Mauritius has played an important role in the adoption of the Convention. In fact, we signed the Convention on 17 June 2003, and ratified it on 17 June 2004. We are known to be amongst the first countries that have signed and ratified the Convention, which came into force only a couple of days ago.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, Mauritius is benefiting from the expert services of specialists in different disciplines. In fact, this has been made possible through negotiations, which I had at each of my visits abroad, with the Director of WHO (Geneva), the Regional Director

WHO (Afro), the Heads of Health Institutions and also Ministers of Health of other countries.

Just to give one example, following discussions I had with Dr. Kalangos, eminent Swiss cardiac surgeon, during my official mission to Geneva in 2002...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** *Bé to ène bourrique à cause sa to pas pou croire!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** *To péna lizié pou trouvé, zoreil pou écouté? To coma dire ène bidon vide! Tou dimoune pé trouvé, to tout seul couma ène bourrique pa pé trouvé! Enfin!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Dr. Jeetah:** On a point of order. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister made unwarranted comments on a Member. I would like to have your ruling on that.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Who started it? *Bourrique* started it!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! The hon. Minister had the floor when he uttered the word '*bourrique*'. I don't know to whom it was addressed. But, if it was addressed to a Member, the hon. Minister will have to withdraw the word.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** It was addressed to hon. Dr. David. I withdraw it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Just to give one example, following discussions I had with Dr. Kalangos, an eminent Swiss cardiac surgeon, during my official mission to Geneva in 2002...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. David, please!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** The latter is coming regularly to Mauritius - *au su et au vue de tout le monde, excepté de l'honorable membre* - as from the same year to operate on our paediatric cardiac cases and to train our medical and paramedical staff. Training opportunities overseas have also been made available. I wish to inform Members of the House that till recently, there was no paediatric cardiologist in Mauritius. My negotiations with Dr. Kalangos were outside the officially approved agenda for my mission. Now at the Cardiac Centre, we have one cardiologist who has received training in paediatric cardiology...

*(Interruptions)*

*To banne collègues fine sapé là-bas!*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, please!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Nurses and perfusionists also were trained in Geneva. Moreover, Dr. Kalangos and his team have operated upon 87 cases, which would have cost the country the sum of Rs26.1 m., if sent overseas. Other renowned specialists such as Professor Dewan, Urologist from Australia and Professor Terhost, a German Urologist, have visited Mauritius following my personal intervention. In fact, 479 difficult cases have been operated in Mauritius by some 14 doctors and professors from renowned health institutions who visited Mauritius from September 2002 to date. In the event these cases were sent overseas, it would have cost Government about Rs66.4 m., Mr Speaker, Sir.

Similarly, after discussions with the Director-General of WHO in Geneva in 2001, experts were deputed to Mauritius to advise us on the mental health policy. Additionally, following a request made to the Director-General WHO (Afro) in 2004, the services of two experts have been made available to my Ministry to assist in the NCD Survey.

Furthermore, during my visits, I seized the opportunity to discuss facilities for training of our professionals in medical institutions abroad and also for the treatment of Mauritians who cannot be operated locally. In fact, during my visit to India at the beginning of 2001, after negotiations, I signed

a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manipal Heart Foundation in Bangalore...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister, may I? Although I am not entitled to tell you how you are going to answer your question, I notice that you are volunteering information, which has not been asked by the hon. Member.

If you think that the information is necessary, you can as well circulate it.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** It's the last paragraph; I am nearly finished.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** In fact, during my visit to India at the beginning of 2001, after negotiations, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manipal Heart Foundation in Bangalore, Apollo Hospitals in Chennai and Delhi, Vimhans Hospitals in New Delhi and the Sankara Nethralaya Institute in Chennai, whereby we can send our patients inoperable in Mauritius for treatment at discounted rates in these hospitals. After I signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Sankara Nethralaya in the year 2001 for the extension of its specialised medical care to Mauritian patients, some 650 patients have received top class treatment to date.

During my recent visit last week to the abovementioned specialised medical institution, the Directors have proposed to set up a similar specialised eye hospital with teaching facility in Mauritius, which would necessitate direct investment to the tune of 50 million Indian rupees.

A provisional Project Report has been submitted to us, which will now be studied by Government. I believe such an institution in Mauritius will indeed be a pride for Mauritius, providing services to Mauritians and nearby African countries, similar to our cardiac centre, which is becoming a '*centre de référence*'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, the list of all the official missions together with the outcome of each mission and duration are being tabled.

I am also tabling a document giving the rates of *per diem* paid as approved by Government for such missions.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it appears that on average, the hon. Minister has spent about 200 days overseas where he has worked very hard. *Comment se fait-il qu'il y ait "la galère au quotidien à l'hôpital du nord"*, which makes the headlines today in the press? I would like to table the paper.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** I don't go by newspapers.

#### **HI-TECH MEDICINE – FACILITIES – JAN 1995 - FEB 2005**

**(No. B/171) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state the facilities in terms of hi-tech medicine provided to patients in our hospitals for each of the periods January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past four years, massive investment has been made to extend the range of services available in our hospitals. The projects involved investment in the expansion of existing services and the introduction of new ones. To keep pace with modern medicine, new diagnostic and high tech treatment facilities have also been introduced over the past few years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some hi-tech medicine facilities already existed prior to 1995. During the period January 1995 to September 2000, a few high tech services, which can be counted on the fingers, were introduced in the hospitals. These include neonatal intensive care, laparoscopic surgery, total knee replacement, angioplasty and micro-surgical cataract surgery. Since I took office in September 2000, my Ministry has invested more than Rs300 m in high tech medical equipment. We should acknowledge that if we want improvement in the quality of health care delivery, we should invest heavily in the health sector. This is what Government has been doing since September 2000.

There have been major developments and investments in hi-tech medicine, like extension of facilities in neonatal intensive care, paediatric cardiac surgery, paediatric interventional cardiology, extension of haemodialysis services, renal transplant surgery, lithotripsy, cobalt therapy for cancer, endoscopy and colposcopy in surgical treatment, laparoscopic surgeries, nuclear medicine, hand surgery and the use of more up-to-date biomedical equipment.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me quote what you said, in June 2004, from Erskine May, page 305. “I think the hon. Minister should take heed of this”.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, can I remind the House that the Standing Orders provide that when a Member stands up to take a point of order, he must refer to the section. He must refer to the section that he is using, Mr Speaker. You know very well that this is so.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! It is true that when an hon. Member takes points of order in the House, he has to refer to the particular Order of the Standing Orders or make reference to the relevant chapter & verse of Erskine May. However, at the same time, we have developed a practice whereby we have not been abiding strictly to those requirements. We will listen to the point of order if it is relevant. What point of order hon. Dr. Jeetah would like to take?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker has suggested that “lengthy answers should be circulated with official report instead of being given orally”.

**Mr Speaker:** I admit that I had given this ruling. When the hon. Ministers have long replies, they can have them circulated. But as of now I cannot make out whether the reply is long enough because the hon. Minister has just started replying.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** To help accurate diagnosis, new imaging techniques were introduced, namely three CT Scan units, one at SSRN, one at Victoria and one at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospitals. One Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) has also been installed at SSRN Hospital. A remarkable achievement in the field of high tech medicine has been the setting up of a Nuclear Medicine Department at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in May 2001, with the collaboration of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Furthermore, high tech services have also been expanded for dialysis patients in all the regional hospitals. 72 dialysis machines and 5 water treatment plants have been purchased for period September 2000 to date. In fact, more than 500 patients are currently undergoing dialysis in our regional hospitals, as compared to 125 in September 2000.

Among the other major achievements in high tech medicine, I have to mention the introduction of arthroscopy services in the field of orthopaedics at SSRN Hospital. A Hand surgery Unit has also been set up at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. Moreover, neurosurgery services are now available at Victoria Hospital and spinal surgery is an integral part of the orthopaedic section at this same hospital. On the other hand, hyperbaric medicine has been recently introduced at Victoria Hospital to cater not only for patients of diving accidents but also for treatment of gangrene, carbon monoxide poisoning and non healing wounds.

Prior to 2000, angiography services were available only at the Cardiac Centre at Pamplémousses. The angiography machine at the Cardiac Centre has now been replaced by a new sophisticated one, thus upgrading substantially the quality of angiography services there. Furthermore, angiography services are also available at the Cardiac Unit of Victoria Hospital since March 2004, as a new angiography machine has been installed there. The latter is being extensively used for acute cardiac patients.

My Ministry has also procured three sets of high tech equipment, namely combined Vitrectomy-Phacoemulsification machines. These high tech equipment will be used, with the assistance of foreign teams, to perform vitrectomy operations at Moka Eye Hospital.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, as the list of facilities is so long, I am tabling it comparing January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that Ward H3 of the Orthopaedic section of Victoria Hospital leaks profusely during rainy days?

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Yes, I am aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are looking after it, because it was since your friends' time, and we are doing all we can.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** If I may, Mr Speaker, the Minister has come with a long list, which is mainly a continuation of what has been done before. May I ask about two problems? Firstly, is there a cardiac medicine unit at the Nehru Hospital? And, secondly, when will there be a Neonatal Unit in Port Louis? These are major gaps in the service.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to make optimum use of our resources...

*(Interruptions)*

Listen, you just put a question and he does not listen. I am tempted to say the word again, Mr Speaker, Sir. He must keep quiet.

We must make optimum use of our resources, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have got a big problem as far as cardiologists are concerned. We have advertised locally, in India and elsewhere. We do not get cardiologists. What is the use of keeping a cardiac unit in each of the region of hospital when you have got only nine or ten Cardiologists? What we did is that we have concentrated these services in two or three big hospitals and then we send one Cardiologist to look after the outpatients in those hospitals and then these patients are sent to the big hospitals.

As far as the Neonatal is concerned, during their time, 1995-2000, a report came out saying that one is enough for the whole island. We have extended it in spite of that report to two...

*(Interruptions)*

We extended this service to SSRN Hospital and then we have introduced in each of the other hospitals two cots with the necessary equipment.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** This is a very serious problem. May I ask the Minister if the public is aware that there is no emergency cardiac service at Nehru Hospital? Yesterday morning, a friend of mine died thinking that there was a service there. He went there and he died.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the services that we have in each of the hospitals are well-known to the people who are going to those hospitals.

### **HOSPITALS & HEALTH CENTRES - CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION - JANUARY 1995/FEBRUARY 2005**

**(No. B/172) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will table a list of –

- (a) hospitals and health centres constructed, and
- (b) projects for renovation works for each of the periods January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, prior to September 2000, the lack of maintenance and the absence of a proper replacement policy for public health infrastructure have led to a deplorable state of most of those infrastructures. This has been indeed a very serious impediment to proper health care delivery and has contributed to a poor image of the health services through years of neglect.

Since I took office in September 2000, my Ministry has had to respond to the aspirations of the population for better health services in more healthy and conducive environments. Massive investments have therefore been made for the replacement of old hospital buildings, extension of existing infrastructures, renovation works and upgrading of health centres. During the last three financial years, an amount of Rs530 m. has been spent on infrastructural development in the five health regions.

The projects implemented for period January 1995 to September 2000 are but a few compared to the long list of projects implemented from September 2000 to date. Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall mention a few of the projects implemented, since I assumed office:

- (i) the construction of the new Souillac Hospital with 150 beds started in May 2001 at the cost of Rs255 m. and it is nearing completion;
- (ii) the new Psychiatric Hospital with 250 beds started in July 2002 to the tune of Rs233 m. It will be completed in a month's time.

However, several renovation, upgrading and extension works have been carried out at the present Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre to make it more welcoming, user-friendly and patient-friendly. Moreover, Ward 13 has been converted into a Detoxication Centre which will become operational soon. Prior to September 2000, I understand that visits were carried out at the B. Sequard Hospital by very important personalities who only took cognizance of the deplorable situation at B. Sequard Hospital. Nothing concrete was done. There were only tarpaulins covering the roofs of various wards;

- (iii) an Eye Bank has been set up at the Virology Department of Victoria Hospital to the tune of Rs1.5 m. New buildings have been erected at the same hospital to accommodate the CT Scan and Hyperbaric equipment at the cost of Rs8 m. and Rs6.6 m. respectively. The Cardiac Unit of Victoria Hospital is being extended at the cost of Rs24.5 m. and works are nearing completion;
- (iv) as regards the new Central Outpatient Department at Victoria Hospital, which supposedly started in 1995, I wish to point out that I have caused the plans to be modified to accommodate a neurosurgery and spinal block in lieu of the administrative block in view of the high rate of road traffic accidents. The Neurosurgery and Spinal Block to the tune of Rs35.2 m. will be constructed on the first floor of the Central Outpatient Department around June this year, and it will be completed by March 2006;
- (v) a covered passage at the cost of Rs3.2 m. and a lift at the cost of Rs1 m. are being provided at ENT Centre for the comfort of the patients and staff;
- (vi) the Outpatient Department of Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital has been extended to accommodate a new pharmacy complex and a larger waiting hall at the cost of Rs5.8 m. The female ward of Long Mountain Hospital has been completely renovated to the tune of Rs6 m.;
- (vii) regarding health centres, 25 of them have been renovated in the district of Pamplémousses and Rivière du Rempart at the cost of Rs7.7 m. whereas 23 in the region of Flacq have been renovated at the cost of Rs8 m.;

(viii) furthermore, buildings are being rented to accommodate primary health care facilities at Bambous, l'Esperance, Providence and Pointe aux Sables.

My Ministry is still clearing a backlog of decaying facilities to keep the whole estate in decent working order. Repairs of leakages which hon. Jeetah referred to, to existing infrastructures are being undertaken. All the wards and units of the different hospitals are being upgraded and renovated for the welfare and comfort of the patients and staff. The sewerage networks of Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre and SSRN Hospital are being rehabilitated. The water reticulations of SSRN, Flacq, Victoria Hospitals, ENT Centre and Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre are being rehabilitated to the tune of Rs51.2 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tired of stating the amounts of achievements. So, with your permission, I am now tabling the list of hospitals and health centres constructed and projects of renovation works for period January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in this long list of self-congratulatory achievements, I would like to ask the Minister about the latest state of the Civil Hospital, including tarpaulin covers and leakages after four and half years.

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** The hon. Member refers to self-congratulatory achievements. The hon. Member congratulated me outside for the works that I am doing, just as the whole public. I must set the record right. He did not do it here in Parliament.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr A. Jugnauth:** I must be sincere, he has done it! Even hon. Boolell has done it!

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem with Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. We are going ahead with the construction of the new Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, but there are certain preliminary works which have taken more time than they should have because we are borrowing money from BAD and certain things have to be cleared between the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the Ministry of Health. I do concede that it is taking longer than it should have.

### **WORLD HERITAGE - UNESCO RULES (NEW)**

**(No. B/173) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether she will now state when a copy of the new UNESCO rules governing the submission of nomination dossier for consideration as World Heritage sites will be tabled.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have caused a copy of the new UNESCO rules to be tabled in the Library of the National Assembly on 28 February 2005.

### **HOTEL INDUSTRY - EXPATRIATES - WORK PERMIT**

**(No. B/174) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state the number of expatriates presently working in the hotel industry, indicating if there is any limit on the duration of their stay in Mauritius.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 96 foreigners employed at middle and senior management levels in the hotel industry.

The duration on their stay ranges from 6 months to 4 years.

For the information of the House, according to the CSO, the workforce in the hotel and tourism sector was 22,613 as at March 2004 in enterprises with more than 10 employees.

**Dr. Jeetah:** May I ask the hon. Minister of the steps that he has taken to transfer the knowledge and skills of these expatriates to local citizens?

**Mr Soodhun:** Sir, conditions are attached to the work permit to train their counterparts.

**RIVIERE DU REMPART - AMPHITHEATRE PROMENADE  
PROJECT**

(No. B/175) **Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will provide the following information regarding the '*Amphitheatre Promenade*' project at Rivière du Rempart -

- (a) the name of the contractor;
- (b) the cost of the project, and
- (c) whether the works have been discontinued and, if so, the reasons thereof.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, following the approval of the Central Tender Board a contract for infrastructural and landscaping works at Rivière du Rempart was awarded for the sum of Rs33.6 m. to Messrs Alphamix Ltd on 04 September 2003. The scope of works of the projet included, *inter alia*, the construction of an amphitheatre and a promenade.

The contractor showed slow progress of work and several shortcomings in the performance of the contract. Despite several warnings, no improvement was observed in the progress of works. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the Central Tender Board were subsequently informed of problems encountered with the contractor. As advised by the CTB, the State Law Office was consulted regarding the termination of the contract. Following the recommendations of the State Law Office the contract was terminated and works discontinued as from the 14 December 2004.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has now decided to allocate the contract to the DWC and work is scheduled to start in April.

**Mr Michel:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is the same contractor to whom was awarded the contract for the market fair at Rose Hill?

**Mr Bhagwan:** No, Sir. The fair at the Rivière du Rempart was awarded by the District Council.

**PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - COST &  
DISPARITY**

**(No. B/176) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the cost *per capita* of students in the public and private secondary schools to the State, he will state -

- (a) the actual cost, and
- (b) if there is any disparity and, if so, the reasons thereof.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said in reply to PQ No B/542 at our sitting on 29 July 2003, it is the belief of this Government that all children should be entitled to equal educational opportunities irrespective of their places of residence or educational institution attended, and my Ministry is committed to the promotion of 'parity of esteem' for all publicly funded secondary schools, whether State or private.

In this respect, my Ministry has had long and protracted discussions with the Federation of Union of Managers of private secondary schools on the issue, but it has not been possible to reach a consensus as to the method of calculating the *per capita* expenditure.

In the light thereof, it was unanimously agreed that the issue of *per capita* cost be referred to the Management Audit Bureau for consideration. The latter has accordingly been requested to -

- (i) determine the appropriate method of computation of the total and *per capita* public expenditure on students in State and Grant Aided Private Secondary Schools respectively; and
- (ii) to determine, in the light of the recommended method of computation, the actual total and *per capita* expenditure by the State in respect of students of State and Grand Aided Private Secondary Schools respectively.

The report of the MAB is still awaited.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in June 2003, a question was asked by hon. Duval and the Minister's reply was: "The information is being compiled." Is it not taking a bit too long?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** As I stated in my answer, it was not in June, but in 29 July 2003 that hon. Duval did raise the question. After the question was raised here, we pursued discussion with the federations of managers. Unfortunately, we could not reach agreement. But we agree to refer the

matter to the MAB. I do not have the exact date when that was done. It could be at the end of 2003 or at the beginning of 2004. We have not had any response from the MAB as yet. My Ministry has issued reminders and I do hope that very soon we will have the results of the inquiry.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is quite worrying that last week we heard the number of schools that was built by this Government, which is a good thing. But on what basis do they do all this? How can they work without the proper figures?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Construction of schools has nothing whatsoever to do with this issue of computing for purposes of comparison per capita expenditure in the public and private secondary schools.

### **PRIMARY SCHOOLS - HYGIENIC CONDITIONS**

**(No. B/177) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state the measures taken to maintain proper hygienic conditions in the primary schools.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the term hygienic conditions is undefined in the question, I propose to address the issue from three perspectives -

- (i) general cleaning of school premises and toilets;
- (ii) proper maintenance of apparatus such as water tanks, and
- (iii) food sale in school canteens and by vendors.

To be very short, as regards general cleaning of school premises, this is entrusted to labourers under the supervision of head teachers.

As regards apparatus and water tanks, these are cleaned twice yearly. The last circular on cleaning and maintenance of water tanks was issued to all Heads of primary schools in July 2004 and Head Teachers are regularly reminded to ensure strict compliance with guidelines for the cleaning and maintenance of water tanks issued by the Environmental Health Unit of the Ministry of Health.

As regards sanitary conditions in school canteens, again by way of circulars, Head Teachers have been informed that canteen keepers and all vendors or hawkers who operate within and outside school premises need to

have a valid trade licence issued by the respective local authority and a food hawkers certificate issued by the Ministry of Health.

Canteen keepers and food vendors/hawkers are made to comply with the list of food stocks or price for sale in school canteens by the Ministry of Health and proper control is exerted on these school vendors operating outside school premises.

Canteen keepers who do not comply with sanitary norms as well as food vendors in such a situation are reported routinely to health officers and to the Police.

At the level of ZEP schools, a School Development Unit has been set up at the level of each school to ensure amongst other things the efficient and proper distribution of the three meals provided in good hygienic condition according to the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health.

As regards the Food Supplementary Programme in primary schools generally, my Ministry is presently preparing guidelines for the handling and distribution of bread to pupils.

In addition to those measures, the Maintenance Unit of the Zonal Directorates of my Ministry attend regularly to identify minor and maintenance works in the primary schools.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, because of privatisation of some of the cleaning services, much of the schools go unclean, and the headmasters are unable to do anything?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** This is an interesting point, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, we have been, in a recent past, reviewing this whole privatisation policy, which was meant to ensure greater efficiency but which, in certain schools, has not been properly managed. We will be filling a number of positions in a substantive capacity, so as to address the problem.

**Mr Michel:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is satisfied with the sanitary conditions in the primary schools?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** One can never be totally satisfied, Sir. There are nearly 300 publicly funded primary schools and we have to be on the look out, closely monitoring the situation in all schools. We depend a lot upon the performance of our head teachers, of our inspectors. Generally, I believe

the conditions are satisfactory, but from time to time there is mismanagement in certain exceptional cases.

## **NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & DISTRICT OUTLINE SCHEME – PREPARATION – CONTRACTS**

**(No. B/178) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands and Minister of Fisheries whether he will state the procedure followed for the allocation of the contract for the preparation of the National Development Strategy and the District Outline Scheme to Halcrow Group Ltd, indicating –

- (a) the total amount disbursed for each assignment;
- (b) the name of the team leader and the composition of the team which worked on each assignment;
- (c) whether any member of the aforesaid teams has taken up employment with Government, stating in which capacity and the terms and conditions of employment.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Development Strategy and the District Council Outline Scheme are two different projects, the contracts of which were awarded at two different dates. I, therefore, propose to address the two contracts separately.

With regard to the preparation of the NDS, selective tenders were invited internationally by the Ministry of Environment on 20 September 2001 from the following firms approved by the CTB –

- Halcrow Group Ltd (UK)
- WS Atkins (UK)
- Entech Consultants (South Africa)
- Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région d'Ile de France
- RPS Chapman Warren (UK)
- Fisher Steward International Ltd (Australia)
- V.G. Feros Town Planning Consultants (Australia)

On 21 November 2001, that is, closing date of submissions of tenders, the CTB received the technical proposal for evaluation purpose from the following tenderers –

- Entech Consultants (South Africa)
- V.G. Feros Town Planning Consultants (Australia)

- WS Atkins (UK)
- Halcrow Group Ltd (UK)

An Evaluation Committee, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Housing & Lands, the Ministry of Environment and a Principal Economist from the Transport Sector of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, was set up to evaluate the bids.

The Technical Evaluation Committee submitted its report to the CTB on 26 December 2001. Thereafter, the CTB forwarded to the Ministry of Environment the financial bids of Halcrow Group Ltd and WS Atkins, the only two technically sound tenderers, for assessment and recommendation.

On 06 February 2002, the Ministry of Environment submitted the Financial Evaluation Report and recommendation of the two proposals received to the CTB. Thereafter on 13 February 2002, the CTB approved the award of the tender to Halcrow Group Ltd. The contract was awarded on 08 March 2002 for the sum of £457,717.12 + Rs5, 474,160.16 (inclusive of VAT of 12%). The total amount disbursed at the end of the contract was £463,935.53 and Rs5,548,321 (inclusive of VAT of 12%) and the project was funded under Environment Investment Programme II.

The contract document was signed on 15 April 2002 and the study started on 15 April 2002 and was completed on 15 February 2003.

The team leader for the preparation of the NDS was Mr John Smith, Policy Planner.

The composition of his team was –

Mr Louis Porteus	-	Environmental Planner
Mr Alan Jones	-	Traffic & Transport Officer
Mr Jonathan Wood	-	Social Planner
Mr Stephen Pharoah	-	Social Planner

With regard to the review of the District Council Outline Schemes, which is funded under Environment Investment Programme II, that is, EIP II, projects for the year 2002/2003, international tenders were invited by the Ministry of Environment on 17 October 2003 from a shortlist of seven consulting firms which was approved by the CTB. They are as follows –

- Planning Partners (South Africa)
- TV3 Architects & Planners (South Africa)

- Halcrow Group Ltd (UK)
- WS Atkins (UK)
- Brisbane City Enterprises
- Dickson Rothchild (Australia)
- Burchill Partners (Australia)

On the closing date for the submission of tenders on 10 December 2003, three bids were received at the CTB as follows –

- Planning Partners (South Africa)
- Halcrow Group Ltd (UK)
- Brisbane City Enterprises

The Tender Evaluation Committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Environment with members from the Ministry of Housing & Lands, Ministry of Local Government & Solid Waste Management and the evaluation of the bids started in November 2003 and was completed in February 2004. On 20 February 2004, the CTB approved the award of the contract to Halcrow Group Ltd. The foreign cost component of the contract amounted to £455,880.70 (inclusive of VAT at 15%) and the local cost component amounted to Rs2,812,037.50 (inclusive of VAT at 15%). On 25 May 2004, following the recommendations of the Ministry of Environment, the approval of the CTB was obtained for additional services to be entrusted to Halcrow Group Ltd for the sum of £34,774.50 plus MURRs67,500 plus VAT as a variation to the original contract. The contract is ongoing and expected to be completed by June this year.

The amount disbursed for the project to date is as follows –

MURRs2,579,134 (inclusive of VAT at 15%)  
£441,703 (inclusive of VAT at 15%)

The team leader for the review of the District Outline Schemes is Mr John Smith.

The composition of the team –

- Mr Louis Porteus - Local Plan & Development Control  
Policy Planner
- Mr Rod Stickland - Infrastructure Planner/  
Environmental Engineer
- Mr Stephen Pharoah - Urban Designer/Landscape Planning

With regard to part (c) of the question, no member of the above team is in employment at the Ministry.

### **JOB FAIRS – CONDITIONS, COST, WORKERS, ETC**

**(No. B/179) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether he will table a list of job fairs held to date, indicating –

- (a) the date and place;
- (b) the procedure followed;
- (c) the conditions for holding such fairs, indicating whether -
  - (i) invitation to attend;
  - (ii) the running of employers stalls;
  - (iii) the presentation to workers;
  - (iv) the selection of workers form part of these conditions
- (d) the cost for each fair; and
- (e) the number of workers recruited thereat.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information.

### **ROCHE BOIS - PIG BREEDERS**

**(No. B/180) Mr X.L. Duval (Fourth Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology & Natural Resources whether he will inform the House of the situation of the pig breeders in Roche Bois and say if it is proposed to move such activities to St Martin.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may be aware that Government has set up in June 2001 a High Powered Committee chaired by Professor Baguant of the University of Mauritius to carry out an indepth study on all the issues pertaining to pig farming activities in Mauritius and Rodrigues, including the introduction of an Integrated Farming System.

The report of the High Powered Committee was made public in July 2002. One of the major recommendations of the Committee was to study the possibility of relocating the pig breeders from Roche Bois and also for

my Ministry to undertake a pilot project on Integrated Farming System for pig breeding.

It may be noted that in the region of Roche Bois, pig breeding is carried out as a backyard activity and has gradually evolved to a semi-industrial scale, thus causing environmental problems which have direct bearing on the health of the inhabitants of that region and its vicinity.

To further study the implications with the view to giving effect to the recommendations of High Powered Committee, which had itself carried out a general survey both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, a specific survey targeting the Roche Bois region was undertaken by the Agricultural Research & Extension Unit (AREU) of my Ministry. This survey was designed to devise the appropriate strategies to be adopted for resolving these problems.

Subsequently, the report of that specific survey has been the subject of study at a ministerial level, which, in principle, is agreeable, among others, to the relocation of those pig breeder who are still interested in pig breeding activities at an alternative site where such activity can be undertaken but in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

As the House may be aware, there have been underground water contamination problems at St. Martin which have direct impact on the aquifers. In order to ensure the safety of that area, Government had recourse to the services of consultants from the Commonwealth Fund for the Technical Cooperation to study the pollution problems and to make recommendations accordingly. The consultants, as remedial measures, have amongst others, recommended in their report:

- (i) that the existing waste water treatment plant which is not being properly operated should be made a 100% operational in an effective way in compliance with all the guidelines, and
- (ii) that additional breeders could be accommodated subject to good husbandry practices and separate waste water treatment plant being put in place.

As there are many environmental problems from pig breeding activities, a long lasting and sustainable solution has to be devised, taking into consideration the concerns of all stakeholders, Government is now going ahead with the proposal to carry out a feasibility study on the Pilot Integrated Pig Farming project based on locally produced feeds, raising pigs on litter (compost) and recycling of soil litter for compost making, with

specific terms of reference. Meanwhile, officers of AREU are continuing to assist the farmers through monthly field visits and are monitoring the herd status and tendering advice on housing, feeding and waste management aspects. However, the breeders are still continuing with their traditional husbandry practices, particularly the poor waste management with poor drainage system and the use of swill feeds as main component of daily ration of pigs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of relocating pig breeders from Roche Bois to St. Martin could only be considered in light of the report of the feasibility study on the Pilot Integrated Pig Farming Project.

**Mr Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole thing seems to have taken about four years. Can I ask the hon. Minister when was this extension unit survey of AREU carried out?

**Mr Bodha:** In 2003.

**Mr Duval:** I would like to ask the Minister whether he has taken cognizance of pig breeding activities in Reunion island nearby which is done in a very non polluting way. Has he taken this into account?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I visited personally the pilot project in Reunion island. But, we have to consider the hundreds of thousands of euros which this involves. We have to see to it that a Mauritian solution is found. Reunion Island being an outermost region in the European community can have access to a certain number of specific funds for that sort of activity.

**Mr Michel:** Can I ask the hon. Minister why then in Rodrigues things are different? Rodrigues is a part of Mauritius and pig breeding is going on there.

**Mr Bodha:** The situation in Roche Bois and Rodrigues cannot be compared.

**Mr Duval:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has visited the pig breeding in St Pierre, in Reunion island? This is definitely not a very expensive project.

**Mr Bodha:** I had a visit in St Pierre, but I have not visited that one.

## MOTION

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

**The Prime Minister:** 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.

**Mr Lesjongard rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*