

Debate No. 08 of 24.04.2007

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTION

HOSPITALS - AMBULANCES

(No. B/206) **Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to ambulances in our hospitals, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof in each hospital, and
- (b) consider the advisability of increasing their number in view of the increasing number of accidents and requests for assistance of ambulances.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fleet of ambulances of my Ministry comprises 38 vehicles including 5 SAMU ambulances and their postings are as follows –

Region 1	-	Dr. A. G. Jeetoo hospital	-	7
Region 2	-	SSRN hospital	-	9
Region 3	-	Flacq hospital	-	5
Region 4	-	J. Nehru hospital	-	10
Region 5	-	Victoria hospital	-	7

As regards part (b) of the question, my Ministry has ordered three SAMU ambulances which will be delivered in August 2007.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: Furthermore, it is proposed to procure additional ambulances in the course of the next financial year.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: We can't even hear the answer of the hon. Minister.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Minister to mention the number of ambulances for Dr. Jeetoo hospital because we could not hear?

Mr Faugoo: The answer is seven, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are regular complaints from very poor people whose health is in a very bad condition and who need ambulances. Quite often, they are told that there is a limited number of ambulances and others are not in good running conditions. Can I ask the hon. Minister to see to it that the maximum number of ambulances are available?

Mr Faugoo: I will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

BEL AIR ST FELIX - IRS PROJECTS

(No. B/207) **Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the hotel and IRS projects at Bel Air St Félix, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows - following allegations of corruption regarding this case, action has been stayed on the project pending conclusion of an enquiry by ICAC. The outcome of the enquiry is not yet known.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, has the hon. Minister obtained any information from any relevant authority as to when would the outcome be known?

Mr Sithanen: I do not know, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister, at least, tell us whether he intends to do anything in order to find out what the outcome is, and if not, why not?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not sure whether this is allowed in the specific case that the hon. Member has mentioned. But, let me just enlighten the House. I presume I am replying this question because it falls under BOI. BOI cannot do anything until the issue of the 104 acres of land has been determined by Government.

WASTE TO ENERGY PROJECT - PROMOTERS

(No. B/208) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Waste to Energy Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to whether, promoters other than Gamma Energy had shown an interest in the project.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Board of Investment that in addition to the Gamma Energy Ltd project, a project proposal for the setting up of a waste incineration plant was submitted by Water & Energy For Indian Ocean (W.E.F.I.O) Ltd to the BOI on 01 March 2006.

The promoters were Von Roll Inova SA (Technology Partner) and SADEG Promotion which is a French real estate company (Financial Partner).

The project proposal was being examined and on 07 February 2007, the strategic technology partner informed Government that it has pulled out from the project. The Board of Investment is expecting clarifications on the status of the project following the withdrawal of the technology partner.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister be prepared to table that letter informing the Government that this partner has pulled out?

Mr Sithanen: As a matter of principle, I have no objection, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I will look on as to whether it is permissible to do this.

EDC HOUSES – ASBESTOS

(No. B/209) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the EDC Houses containing asbestos, he will state if it is proposed to offer some form of compensation to the persons residing therein and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the majority of the residents of the concerned EDC housing units are already owners of their houses, and have, through different sensitisation campaigns, been informed of preventive and precautionary measures that may need to be taken in respect of health risks.

Furthermore, those wishing to pull down the existing buildings and to reconstruct new houses, may avail themselves of loan facilities obtainable at the MHC on application. The NHDC on the other hand, operates a grant scheme for casting of roof slabs and the residents may obtain such grants subject to eligibility.

May I remind that Government is now selling the land on which stand 19,300 Ex-CHA houses, which include the EDC houses, at a nominal price of Rs2000 only.

The question of compensation has not arisen in the past, and, in the specific circumstances, I have just described, it does not arise. Individual efforts of house owners supplemented by Government assistance under the scheme I have just mentioned will go a long way to alleviate the problem.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of the report which has been prepared by Dr. Sibartie of the Ministry of Health in which he states that he recommends that Government should be responsible for paying and compensating all those people since it was Government that was responsible for the construction of those houses, even though they were sold. Is the hon. Minister aware of that report and does he intend to implement that report?

Mr Dulull: I am aware of the report, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I mentioned, Government is doing its fair share by providing assistance to house owners suffering from asbestos problems.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister consider devising, after consultation with the appropriate Ministries, a specific scheme whereby loans by the Mauritius Housing Corporation are given at such concessionary rate that would reflect the intention of Government and

acknowledge that compensation is required through such specific special loans with really low rates of interest?

Mr Dulull: As a caring Government, we will definitely look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

RIVIERE DES ANGUILLES – MARKET – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/210) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the construction of a new market at Rivière des Anguilles, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, with you permission, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made on 10 April 2007 to Parliamentary Question No. B/132 on this issue.

I would like to inform the House that the procedures for land swapping are being finalised by the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Mr Mohamed: Could the hon. Minister, therefore, confirm that, once the land swapping is done, and matters are activated by the hon. Minister of Lands and Housing, this market will see the day soon?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I replied to that question on 10 April and said that it took up a long time for that land swapping. When the representatives of the constituency and people from that area, and the church as well, requested that there should be land swapping, I took it up and procedures were initiated within a month. Now, the matter rests with the Ministry of Housing and from the nodding made by the Minister, I understand it is going through quickly. It will then go to the NDU. Each Ministry will do its part and I can assure the hon. Member that it will be done.

ALLEE BRILLANT ROAD – DRAIN & FOOTPATH - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/211) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a drain and a footpath along Allée Brillant Road in 2003, he will state –

- (a) the respective length of the drain and the footpath
- (b) the amount paid as consultancy fees, and
- (c) the expenditure incurred on the project.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

On 15 January 2004 a Works Order was issued by the Road Development Authority to Gamma Civic Co. Ltd for the construction of footpath and drain along Floreal Road from Junction with Sivananda Avenue to Junction with Allée Brillant Road and also partly along Allée Brilliant Road. The work was completed by 30 April 2004.

The total length of footpath and drains completed is 1500m of which 260m is along Allée Brillant Road.

Since the project was undertaken by the Road Development Authority, no consultancy fee was paid.

The overall cost of the project was of the order of Rs11m. and it was funded by the National Development Unit of my Ministry.

I would like to inform the House that arrangements were also made by the NDU Division of my Ministry to construct approximately 11m of drain along a lateral lane of Allée Brillant Road at the cost of around Rs154,819. The work was completed by January 2003 and the consultancy fee involved was to the tune of Rs5,223.45.

After consulting the municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix, it is proposed to include in the NDUs Development Programme for financial year 2007/2008, the need for providing for drain over a stretch of 200m between Parmessur

Lane and Balgobin lane as well as putting up approximately 1.5 km of drain from junction with Suroop Shop along Allée Brilliant Road up to St Paul Road to alleviate the problems of flooding in the area.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the answer of the hon. Minister, I just want to point out that it is probably the same person who supervises the job who has given the information. I have had of the length of the drain measured by a colleague who is an engineer and the existing drain with footpath is 917 meters. There is only 204 meters of footpath only whereas there is a distance of 1384 meters where there is no drain at all. May I ask the hon. Minister how can he explain that the drain is being done in six different parts? There is a drain and then there is no drain at all and then there is a beginning of a drain and then there is again no drain at all. I will just ask the hon. Minister how is it that such a job is done and approved by the officials of the Ministry?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two things in that. Firstly, it is most probably, what we call 'French drain', then we have the footpath and then we have the proper drains. But I can assure the hon. Member – I had already spoken to him – that we are going to conduct a site visit with the engineers of my Ministry and we will take the corrective measures.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister, but money has been thrown down the drain, literally speaking, with this construction. Is the hon. Minister aware that after the heavy rains that we had after the cyclone Gamede, sewerage water was getting mixed up with rain water and flooded the houses of residents in that area?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the reason why I have mentioned that, in the forthcoming budget that we are having, I am going to include that region into it.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister being given that the promises has been made, whether he could give us a time-frame so that, at least, I can tell the inhabitants of the region when their problems will be solved?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that, in the forthcoming Budget, we are including it, and I can assure the hon. Member that, once the consultancy work is over, the actual work will start.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – FACULTY OF MEDICINE

(No. B/212) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to whether there is a faculty of medicine thereat.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows -

- (a) There is no Faculty of Medicine at the University of Mauritius (UoM).
- (b) However, there is under the Faculty of Science, a department of Health Sciences and a Department of Medicine under which the following programmes are offered –
 - (i) Department of Health Sciences –
 - Diploma/BSc(Hons) Biomedical Sciences
 - BSc(Hons) Physiotherapy
 - Diploma/BSc(Hons) Occupational Therapy
 - Diploma in Sanitary Sciences
 - (ii) Department of Medicine –
 - BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Since we are talking of world-class education and world-class recognition of degrees and diplomas - the hon. Minister himself is an academic - can he explain to us whether it makes sense that when a University does not have a Faculty of Medicine how can it confer degrees in Medicine to the students who are studying at the SSR Medical College?

Mr. Gokhool: It is true that the University does not have a Faculty of Medicine, but I think it is another question and I'll answer to the question when replying to PQ No. B/214.

HOLLYROOD & QUINZE CANTONS – HOUSES - FLOODING

(No. B/213) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and phoenix) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, following the site visits he effected at Hollyrood and Quinze Cantons, two days after the flooding of houses thereat in February 2007, he will state the measures, if any, that have been taken.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the site visit on 28 February 2007 at Hollyrood and Quinze Cantons in the company of the hon. Member and other Members of the constituency, measures were immediately taken to resort to services of a contractor for the area for remedial action to attend to the problem of water accumulation.

According to the Municipality of Vacoas-Phoenix the problems of flooding in the regions of Quinze Cantons and Hollyrood are due to the following –

- (i) the topography of the land is such that several houses have been constructed below road surface level and water consequently accumulates within the premises of inhabitants;
- (ii) the main drain along La Marie Road gets clogged and the surface water run off could not be canalised, giving rise to flooding. It is necessary to point out that the water capacity of the drain is inadequate;
- (iii) the overflowing of Perrier Bridge situated in the region of Glen Park contributes to flooding at Quinze Cantons and Hollyrood. The Road Development Authority has been approached to look into the possibility for the upgrading of the bridge;

- (iv) a number of natural caves of the region of Quinze Cantons have been apparently obstructed by walls and other forms of construction by the inhabitants with the result that the caves do not serve as outlets for excess water run off.

In view of the complexity of the problem, arrangements will be made for the new drain consultant which would be appointed by the end of July 2007 to look in-depth into the problem of flooding for the regions of Quinze Cantons and Hollyrood.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for the answer which he has been given. But is he aware that since January 2006, at least, seven letters have been sent to the Ministry, requesting that the drains in the region above Quinze Cantons, that is, from La Croisée Glen Park, be cleared and this has not been done in spite of, at least, seven reminders which had been sent to the RDA to this purpose?

And, secondly, is he aware that some of the experts – this is the problem when we have too many experts, Mr Speaker, Sir – have visited the Pont Perrier and they found out that the basic problem is at Pont Perrier where a bridge has been made which is not wide enough and three holes have been made under this bridge which are getting clogged all the time, and it is the surplus of water which is causing the problem at Hollyrood and Quinze Cantons. Could he tell us whether he has received this report from the municipality and from the experts from his Ministry who visited the site?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as Perrier Bridge is concerned, there were two sites visits and a decision has already been taken to upgrade it and, if I am not mistaken, works are going to start in the weeks to come. The RDA has undertaken that responsibility. I agree to what the hon. Member has stated. We have, in fact, received seven letters, but it is not a child's play. I had been to Quinze Cantons along with the Members of Parliament. I am not an expert myself, but I can assure the House that it is a very complex issue and we cannot throw money uselessly. It is going to cost us a huge sum of money and, if I am not mistaken, it must be above Rs25 to Rs30 m. In order to implement such a project, we need consultants and that is the reason why I have mentioned that, by the end of July, we are going to have the drain consultants, and I'll refer the matter to them.

The hon. Member must be satisfied with the amount of work that my Ministry has done following the flood and the cyclone.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I remind the hon. Minister that in November 2005 he had visited Hollyrood? After his visit, he said the following –

“Drain and footpath at Hollyrood will be funded by NDU. Design and implementation are to be carried out by RDA and TMRSU will have to give its views and clearance. NDU has to request the Ministry of Education to provide funds for projects near school.”

Is he aware that this promise was made in November 2005 and we are now in April 2007 and absolutely nothing has been done in this area?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the beginning, the decision was taken to start the work in the vicinity of the school, but when the consultants examined it, they found that it would be a useless exercise. That is the reason why we have decided to look at the whole region. Again, as I have mentioned, we cannot throw money uselessly. The amount to be utilized will be above Rs30 m.

We have decided that, with the support of RDA, we have to do a good work.

(Interruptions)

It is a sort of absorption pit that we are going to dig. The hon. Member has to bear with me, because this is not an ordinary work that is going to be done.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I totally support the hon. Minister. As it has been mentioned, it is a very complex issue.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Soodhun: It is not a matter that we can find a solution in a week's time. The problem is because it is the constituency of the Leader of the Opposition and myself, and also of hon. Mrs Bappoo.

Mr Speaker: What is the question?

Mr Soodhun: There is a short-term and a long-term solution.

(Interruptions)

Even with the normal raining situation, there is a problem of flooding everywhere. What I am suggesting is that the hon. Minister can have a short-term and a long-term solution.

Mr Bachoo: Insofar as the short-term solution is concerned, we had already revised. The hon. Members who are with me, knew that we have opened up the gates....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member had been in Parliament since 1987 and he has been representing the Constituency. It is already 25 years and nothing has been done, because it is a very complex issue.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order, please!

Mr Bachoo: The fact that I have already had two site visits gives an idea that we are really concerned with the problem. That is the reason why I say to let the consultant work on that. I'll then come with a solution.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

**SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE – BOARD OF TRUSTEES –
COMPOSITION, MEETINGS, ETC.**

(No. B/214) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the SSR Medical College, information as to –

- (a) the composition of the present Board of Trustees;
- (b) the number of times the Board has met to date, and
- (c) the date of its last meeting.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the SSR Medical College is affiliated to the UoM.

As regards the question of quality raised by the hon. Member, if you would allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to state that it is true that the University of Mauritius does not have a Faculty of Medicine, but because the SSR Medical College is affiliated, there are mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of education and training.

The first mechanism is that there is an international Advisory Committee of experts and this Advisory Committee is set up by the Senate of the University of Mauritius. It has got terms of reference which basically look at the issue of quality of education and training in the medical field. The Committee has met on three occasions recently. The first meeting was from 19 to 22 January 1998; the second meeting: 05 to 06 May 2000, and the third meeting on 30 June 2005.

Apart from this international Advisory Committee, there is also a quality assurance framework of the TEC which is in force and this requires a panel to visit the institution concerned, at least, once each year to ensure that all the registration and accreditation criteria are adhered to.

And thirdly, as I replied with regard to the courses which are run by the University of Mauritius, for the B.Sc. (Hons.) Medical Science which is a 3-year degree course, if the student obtains at least an upper second class honours upon completion of the degree programme, the graduate is eligible to admission to clinical medical studies of three years' duration variable at

any one of the following universities with which the UoM has established linkages –

- (i) Université Victor Segalen, Bordeaux II;
- (ii) University of Cape Town, South Africa;
- (iii) University of Pretoria, South Africa, and
- (iv) University of Leeds

These are arrangements which are in place in the absence of a Faculty of Medicine.

As regards part (a) with regard to the composition of the present Board of Trustees, the composition is as follows -

1. Mr R. P. N. Singh, Chairman and Managing Trustee
2. Mrs M. Singh
3. Mr Harsh Vardhan Pratap Singh
4. Mr Raj Vardhan Pratap Singh
5. Mr T.V. Sujanandan
6. Mrs T. Sujanandan
7. Mr Harshad D. Gandhi
8. Mr Bijaye Madhou, Director-General, MBC

As regards part (b), this institution is run by a private Trust. It is not possible to look at the internal day-to-day management of the Trust, but from information available, the Trustees are physically based at various locations and, therefore, decisions of the Trust are taken by members through the circulation and adoption of written regulations.

The last resolution has been signed and adopted by all members in February 2007.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I ask him whether he is aware that in 1997, there was the nomination of a chairman of the Indian Ocean Medical Institute Trust for life. That means that, as long as he is going to live, he is going to be the chairman of this institute. Is the Minister aware of this?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot confirm, but I know there is a chairman and this is a private Trust that manages the SSR Medical College.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what actually is happening, we'll come to the solution later on. In a resolution dated 19 May 2004, it is written that the college has received international applause and recognition by agencies like the WHO and the ECFMG of the USA. Is the Minister aware that actually this is far from being true and the SSR Medical College is not recognised because even if you go to India with the qualification from SSR Medical College, one has to sit for an examination first, conducted by the Indian Medical Council, to get recognition and the same thing applies when one goes to South Africa. Is the Minister aware of this?

Mr Gokhool: As regards the first part of the question, I'll have to check the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to the recognition, as I mentioned, the SSR Medical College is affiliated to the University of Mauritius.

As far as recognition by other countries is concerned, this is a matter for the institution to sort out with the other countries and that's why those who complete their studies at SSR Medical College have to sit for exams to have their qualifications recognised by the countries where they want to obtain the qualifications.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister told us about committees and sub committees. I'll lay the resolution on the Table of the Assembly. I'll read from the resolution which comes from the Notary in Mauritius. It is written –

“It is decided that all other Boards proposed in the Bye Laws of the IOMIT's SSR Medical College and Trust Deed need not be invoked and constituted lest it shall create confusion in the proven smooth functioning of the IOMIT and its institutions.”

This was written in year 2004 and I am going to lay it on the Table of the Assembly for the information of the Minister. Being given the situation is a bit confused, wouldn't the Minister think it is reasonable if we ask the Tertiary Education Commission to set up a special committee to look into

the technicalities involved with the SSR Medical College and after listening to the complaints of the students, the lecturers and all the stakeholders concerned, to see in what way they can revisit the rules and regulations and make sure that the standard of this college which is not only of a national interest, but of a regional interest, is not only maintained, but is improved for the betterment of all students who will attend this college in future.

Mr Gokhool: In all fairness to the hon. Member, I must say that there have been representations from time to time from various quarters which have been addressed by the University, but I think the concern for quality is mutual. I think everybody is concerned about maintaining quality and I take good note of the suggestion made by the hon. Member and I will see to it that TEC carries out this exercise.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY – MR P. M. – EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/215) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to whether one Mr P. M. is employed thereat and, if so –

- (a) in what capacity;
- (b) the duties assigned to him, and
- (c) the salary and other benefits to which he is entitled.

(Withdrawn)

WIND ENERGY – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - INDIA

(No. B/216) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will state if

any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Government of India for the production of wind energy and, if so, where matters stand.

Dr Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 21 November 2003 in New Delhi, India, between the Ministry of Non Conventional Energy Sources of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Public Utilities on Co-operation in the field of Non-Conventional Energy Sources. The development of wind energy is one of the fields of cooperation to be pursued between India and Mauritius in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding.

On the premise of the MoU, Suzlon Energy Ltd, an Indian company through a letter dated 28 May 2004 reiterated its interest which it had expressed in May 2003 to develop a wind farm in Mauritius.

On 26 October 2004, a team from Suzlon Energy Ltd led by its Vice President, Mr Toine Van Meger visited Mauritius and had a meeting with CEB staff. Technical information was shared and an overview of the project was presented. Questions related to the turbine capacity and its resistance to cyclonic conditions were evoked. Besides, discussions were also held on the price band bearing in mind that wind technology calls for a relatively high investment to cover the up front costs.

I am informed by the CEB that on 23 December 2005, a Letter of Intent was issued to Suzlon Energy Ltd. However, the latter has never signed nor acknowledged receipt of the letter. In a further letter dated 13 July 2006, a proposal was made by CEB to Suzlon Energy Ltd for carrying out an independent feasibility study for the project and the CEB was prepared to bear the cost of the study. But, again, no response was received.

Despite being prompted on several occasions for a reaction, the company never manifested any interest in pursuing its project proposal.

In view of the fact that there has recently been tremendous or surge of interest in wind energy in Europe, United States and the Indian sub-continent, more players have come into the field of wind energy. The technology has been improved and there is now massive production of wind

turbines, which are more environment friendly in terms of very low noise pollution and their robust design to enable them to resist cyclonic conditions with gusts of some 300 km per hour.

My Ministry is setting up a committee to revisit all potential renewable energy projects focussing on wind and solar sources apart from bagasse.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether that MoU signed with the Ministry of Public Utilities on Co-operation in the field of non-Conventional Energy Sources is time bound.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not so sure. But we will look towards India. There are other sources, but we have got very close relationship with India, and we will certainly tap all the resources in the months to come.

Mr Dowarkasing: Is the hon. Minister aware that, because of that MoU, the BOI is not entertaining any such projects relating to wind energy?

Dr. Kasenally: There is a new mindset at the BOI. The Ministry of Public Utilities will now consider whatever proposal we get. We will go through it and we will see how reliable the promoters are. All this will be done taking into consideration the protection of the consumers' rights.

CITE MALHERBES, CUREPIPE - PLAYGROUND

(No. B/217) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the construction of a playground at Cité Malherbes, Curepipe, he will state –

- (a) if works thereat have stopped and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if provision will be made in the forthcoming Budget for the completion of works.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping had enlisted the services of the DWC as contractor for the construction of a playground at Cité Malherbes, Curepipe. However, works were stopped in December 2006 due to the closure of the DWC.

My Ministry has since requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping to arrange for the remaining works to be carried out at the earliest, and provision has been made in the forthcoming Budget for completion of the works.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his reply to the House on 18 April 2006, the hon. Minister stated that an amount of Rs5.4 m. was voted in the 2005-2006 Budget. May we know whether that total sum has been used or is there still money available?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think there is money available for the remaining works to be completed to the tune of Rs2.3 m.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister why works have stopped and thus a delay in the completion? Massive investment has already been made. More than 75% of the works have been completed.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated, this is due to the closure of the DWC.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to a question in this same House, the hon. Minister said that all precautions were being taken with regard to ongoing projects conducted by the DWC.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I already said that we are in this situation due to the closure of the DWC.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has said that money is available, and then he says that he is waiting for the next Budget. This is dragging on too much.

STC – CHAIRPERSON – TRAVEL TO DUBAI & SAUDI ARABIA

(No. B/218) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the STC information as to whether its Chairperson recently travelled to Dubai and Saudi Arabia and, if so, the purpose of the visit.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Chairperson of the STC has not travelled to Dubai and Saudi Arabia for STC.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the different trips that have been undertaken by the Chairperson, in reply to a question put on 27 March of this year, the hon. Minister said that he was going to table a copy of all the trips. I even raised that matter at adjournment time. The Minister said that he was going to table the information early the next morning. Till now, Mr Speaker, Sir, that reply has not been tabled with regard to PQ No. B/35 concerning the same matter.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is not true. I have made sure that the information has been tabled.

Mr Dowarkasing: No.

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member should go and check.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister is saying that he has laid it. The hon. Member should sort out the problem. Later on, he may come back.

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MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE ARBITRATION COMMITTEE – CASES

(No. B/219) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Motor Vehicle Insurance Claim Tribunal, information as to the number of cases referred to it since July 2005 to date, indicating the number of cases in which a ruling has been given.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, the tribunal referred to by the hon. Member is, in fact, ‘the Motor Vehicle Insurance Arbitration Committee’, which was set up in 2004 to determine disputes arising between two insurers or between a policy holder and an insurer regarding their respective liability or the amount of compensation to be paid.

The committee was reconstituted under the chairmanship of Mr Jacques Panglose in October 2005.

I am informed that the committee started in July 2005 with a backlog and has cleared 3,669 out of 4,111 cases referred to it.

In order to deal in a timely manner with the applications, which have increased from 10 to 150 weekly between 2004 and 2007, the committee sits in divisions and holds three meetings weekly.

I am informed that most of the outstanding cases are new applications and will be processed in due course.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSTITUTIONS - SECURITY SERVICES – CONTRACT

(No. B/220) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Fact Finding Committee set up to investigate into the exercise of allocation of contracts for security services in Government health institutions since 2005, he will state if it has completed its report and, if so –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) the remedial measures taken, if any.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer to the question is yes. The Fact Finding Committee has completed its inquiry and submitted its report to my Ministry on 15 March 2006.

Concerning part (a) of the question, the Fact Finding Committee concluded that there had not been any undue interference at any stage in the tendering process, although the whole procurement system did lend itself to certain doubts of objectivity and rigour in the evaluation exercise. In fact, the committee identified various shortcomings and weaknesses regarding planning, communication and monitoring of the tender exercise.

As regards part (b), the committee has also submitted recommendations relating, *inter alia*, to the need to have a well defined plan with clear deadlines for the procurement process, to proper keeping of minutes and the need to have more transparency in the evaluation exercise. Action has been initiated accordingly.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that, following this Fact Finding Committee, all the contracts for Government health institutions, which had been given to Rapid Security Services, have now been allocated to Capital Security?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, following that particular exercise, we did without security services for nearly a year. I was told that we were saving Rs60 m. a year, and this was the reason behind our decision at that stage. Then, when we found out that we were paying a lot of money in terms of overtime, we decided to contract out again. An exercise was carried out, where we had to abide by all the recommendations of the Fact Finding Committee. There was an exercise done. There are about two or three companies that have been awarded the contract, and what the hon. Member is saying is not true.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister confirm that there is one Mrs Jeetah who is the Director of Capital Security?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I know, the contract and evaluation exercise were done by an independent team at the CTB, comprising members from the Ministry of Finance, the PMO and my Ministry. This is the first time that we had recourse to such an independent evaluation. The contract was awarded to the cheapest bidder, which happens to be GMR, and I don't know who are the members, the shareholders and the Director.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that there is nothing adverse which was found in the Fact Finding Committee. Why then was there need to re-allocate the tender?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already answered this question.

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES,
COMMERCE & CO-OPERATIVES – MR L.H.C.A.F. – ADVISER**

(No. B/221) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will state if one Mr L.H.C.A.F. has been appointed as Adviser in his Ministry, indicating –

- (a) in which category;
- (b) the terms and conditions of his contract;
- (c) if an official parking has been allocated to him at the Medcor Building and, if so, since when;

- (d) if he has participated in any meeting in connection with the importation of cement and iron bars, and
- (e) if he has travelled on mission overseas on behalf of the Ministry and the State Trading Corporation and, if so, the details thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library as soon as it is ready.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister whether he has received any representation concerning the behaviour of this gentleman who is harassing civil servants at the Ministry and, if yes, whether he is agreeable to conduct any inquiry and inform the House accordingly?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Please Order!

DWC – EX-WORKERS – REDEPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, ETC.

(No. B/222) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the closure of the Development Works Corporation, he will state –

- (a) the compensation paid to the ex-workers;
- (b) the number of workers who have been respectively redeployed in the public sector, in parastatal bodies and in the private sector;
- (c) if the assets of the Corporation have been disposed of and, if so, by whom, and
- (d) the projects which were being implemented by the Corporation before its closure.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is as follows –

As regards part (a), the ex-workers of the DWC have benefited from a package comprising of the payment of normal retiring pension and an additional pension under the Pensions Regulations, together an additional compensation equivalent to 1.5 month's salary for each remaining year of service up to a maximum of 10 years.

The payments made are as follows –

Additional compensation	Rs14 m.
Accrued benefits	<u>Rs26 m.</u>
Making a Total of	<u>Rs40 m.</u>

As regards part (b), the number of workers who have been re-deployed is as follows –

(i) Public Service	-	257
(ii) Parastatal Bodies	-	133

Regarding employment in the private sector, a special desk was set up at the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to direct any ex-worker seeking employment in the private sector. However, very few have taken advantage of this desk which is still open. Information so far indicates that 37 have obtained employment through that channel. Many more have also refused employment offered in the private sector.

As regards part (c), a team comprising representatives from my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has carried out a complete survey of all the assets of the DWC with the assistance of the DWC employees. As mentioned previously, priority of consideration for the sale of the moveable assets will be given to ex-workers of the DWC who have been invited to submit a list of the assets which they intend to purchase by 04 May 2007. Thereafter, my Ministry will start disposing the assets. A committee under the chairmanship of my Permanent Secretary and comprising, *inter-alia*, representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Management Audit Bureau and the DWC, is planning and organising the sale and the disposal of the assets.

With regard to part (d), Mr Speaker, Sir, I am laying on the Table of the Assembly the information sought for.

Mr Bodha: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether this technical committee has asked for expressions of interests from private companies to buy the assets?

Dr. Beebeejaun: So far, we will limit ourselves to ex-DWC employees.

Dr. Mungur: There has been a number of contractual workers. In fact, from 9 to 11 years, they have been rendered jobless and now they are in extremely difficult economic situation. Can I ask whether the Deputy Prime Minister will have a sympathetic look towards these contractual workers, who are now jobless?

Dr. Beebeejaun: This problem came up with the closure of the DWC. I want to stress that we have opened a desk for the contractual workers like any other workers in the DWC who want to avail themselves of this opportunity. I repeat, very few have availed themselves of this opportunity, because of work opportunities outside.

Mr Guinness: Concerning the projects which were undertaken by DWC before its closure, can I ask the hon. Minister where we are with these projects, because everywhere we see that the projects have stopped?

Mr Speaker: Although this question is not relevant...

Mr Guinness: It is, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member say where it is mentioned?

Mr Guinness: Part (d) reads – “the projects which were being implemented by the Corporation before its closure”.

Mr Speaker: I’m sorry. Alright!

Mr Guinness: This is why I am asking what is happening now to these projects?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I have circulated a list of the projects. Most of them are ongoing and have been tendered out.

Mr Gunness: I would like the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to check, because I can give a list where all the projects have stopped and I am sure MPs on the Government side are aware of it. The Deputy Prime Minister can check it and he can come back and say what is being done.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will do better than that, I will circulate all the projects and the status of the projects, so far.

QUEEN ELIZABETH COLLEGE – PSYCHOLOGISTS

(No. B/223) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if psychologists have been posted at the Queen Elizabeth College and, if so, the number thereof and since when.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to Educational Psychologists at my Ministry and their posting, I wish to inform the House of the following –

- (i) The School Psychological Service was set up in 1983 as a support service to pre-primary, primary, and secondary sectors to cater for children with special educational needs. Before June 2006, only five Educational Psychologists serviced this unit for the whole of Mauritius. As from June 2006, my Ministry has a pool of 1 Senior Educational Psychologist, 10 Educational Psychologists, and 17 Social Workers (Education). The policy of the Ministry is not to post these officers in schools on a full-time basis, but is to place them in the Zones.
- (ii) The Educational Psychologist visits the schools, as and when requested either by the Rector/Head Teacher or Form/Class Teacher, or parents, to attend to behavioural/psychological and learning problems of any pupil through a referral form which is submitted to the Zone Director.

- (iii) The Educational Psychologist usually holds counselling sessions with and assesses the pupil having the behavioural/psychological and learning problems, subject to the authorisation of the responsible party of the child. A record on the pupil is usually kept at the level of the Zone, in strict confidentiality. The frequency of monitoring made by the Educational Psychologist depends on the seriousness of the case. Counselling sessions are also held with parents in some cases. All cases are treated in strict confidentiality.

It is worth pointing out that since 2006, my Ministry has recruited 17 Social Workers (Education) to assist and support the Educational Psychologists. These Social Workers usually accompany the Educational Psychologists on their visits and establish the link between the school and the home environment. Whenever the Educational Psychologist feels that the problem originates from the home environment or the parents are either hiding information and are not giving the full/true picture of the problem, the social worker is requested to conduct home visits and to come up with a social enquiry on the case which helps in providing a more comprehensive understanding/solution to the case.

As regards the specific issue raised about the posting of Educational Psychologists to QEC, I wish to inform the House of the following: three Educational Psychologists are posted in Zone 2 (Beau Bassin, Rose Hill and the East) where QEC is located. One Educational Psychologist, in particular, services, *inter alia*, QEC. However, in exceptional cases, for instance, suicide cases, she is also accompanied by her other two colleagues and the social workers. Eight cases have been attended in 2006 at the school. The Educational Psychologist has visited the school once during the first term in 2007 and there has been no cases requiring intervention so far, fortunately.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may the hon. Minister confirm that it is the educational psychologists who are taking care of behavioural problems?

Mr Gokhool: This is the answer I have given. If there is a behavioural psychological problem and if the case is referred to the psychological services, then the psychologist steps in.

GLOBAL WARMING – AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

(No. B/224) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to global warming, he will state the steps, if any, that have been taken to sensitise the general public on the effects thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, global warming and climate change is a critical concern for us in view of its impacts on Small Island States such as Mauritius. Global warming is caused by emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane by the burning of fossil fuel and reduced capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. This can have serious impacts that can trigger catastrophic events such as sea level rise, food and water shortages, extreme weather conditions and epidemics. It is therefore vital that the public at large be informed of the causes, effects and actions that can be taken as response measures under the various related sectors. It is to be noted, Mr Speaker, Sir, that public sensitization in the context of global warming and climate change is a cross cutting element which is being implemented concurrently and jointly by a number of national actors. As part of the recommendations made in the Climate Change Action Plan approved by Government in 1998, my Ministry is, in addition to encouraging initiatives towards energy efficiency and coastal zone management, putting much emphasis on environmental education, sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns.

We are fully involved in an ongoing awareness campaign with the MBC radio and television. The public at large is targeted so that they adopt sustainable lifestyle that will help towards energy efficiency and less fuel consumption and better use of natural resources. They are informed that a better management of the resources will ensure its sustainability, especially as the impacts of global warming will continue to be felt for a long period even if emission of greenhouse gases have been completely stopped. Our sensitisation programme is also carried out in the school community where the students are made to realise the seriousness of this problem and how action initiated by them in any of the sectors mentioned above can help to make a change. In this respect, we have already produced and distributed fact sheets on climate change and other environmental issues in schools.

Furthermore, trees having the potential of storing carbon and cleaning the atmosphere provide a means by which people can contribute towards curbing down carbon dioxide emissions. In this context, my Ministry is encouraging tree planting at all levels and has launched a “Plant a Million Tree” campaign since last year.

Global warming being even more critical in respect of low lying and Small Island Developing States, United Nations Environment Programme has decreed World Environment Day 2007, as the year to mark climate change. In this context, my Ministry is organising a number of activities to celebrate this event, including film shows and panel presentations for secondary school students on global warming and climate change and their associated themes and a youth rally.

We hope that the understanding of global warming issues will encourage actions aiming at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to its consequences.

With the assistance of UNEP and UNDP a series of workshops for all stakeholders will be organised during the months of May and June on climate change and how to tap carbon credits from the clean development mechanism.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change has no barriers, neither geographical nor political, it is a matter of concern for every single inhabitant of this planet. In this respect, any suggestion from Members of the House will be welcomed.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister satisfied that the public sensitization programme has reached the public at large in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, I am personally not satisfied and that is the reason why I am making an appeal to all Members of Parliament to come forward and if they have any suggestions to make, these will be most welcomed.

Miss Deerpalsing: Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider viewing the Al Gore's documentary, an Inconvenient Truth, in schools and whether that would help in sensitising the public?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as it is a commercial film, we have already taken the decision and to mark the World Environment Day, we are also requesting the MBC/TV to produce that programme.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, the annual per capita emission of carbon dioxide for the United States is around 21.7 tonne, that of China is around 4 tonne and that of India is around 1.2 tonne. Can the hon. Minister inform us what is the annual per capita emission of carbon dioxide in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Member to check up the figures over again, because they have gone up in the recent years. But, as far as Mauritius is concerned, we do not have any yardstick to measure.

Dr. Mungur: Sir, since the hon. Minister is telling us that he does not have figures, can he give an indication when this will be done?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, we are very much below the target which has been set up by the Kyoto protocol.

Mr Varma: Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether a study has been carried out as to the effect of global warming on the rise of the sea level in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not have any specific study as such, but one thing I can inform the House is that, if steps are not taken, there have been reports of inter-governmental panel on climate change, which reveal that even Mauritius will become one of the victims and towards the end of this century, if things remain the same, at least, 12 kilometres of road will be submerged on the side of Flic-en-Flac and those who are having *pied dans l'eau*, will have to be very careful about it. At the same time, all of our coastal regions also will be badly affected in 20-25 years' time because of the sea level rise and even now, we are experiencing

the danger when we find the soil erosion everywhere. That's why I have made an appeal to my colleague, the Minister of Finance, that we have to come forward to see what can be done in order to prevent further erosion.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that Al Gore has set up a foundation with funds in it where they are training people across the world to sensitise various people across the world about this global warming issue? May I ask whether the hon. Minister could contact the Al Gore foundation for funds to train people here?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have contacted many international organisations and, as far as Al Gore funds are concerned, I do not think we have done something. But as far as adaptation fund and all others are concerned, we are going to tap the resources, but, unfortunately, it is not so easy to obtain funds from those institutions for the time being.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just made mention of a report of the inter-governmental group on climate evolution and a meeting was recently held in Johannesburg. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there was any representative of Government at that meeting?

Mr Bachoo: A high officer of my Ministry participated in that meeting.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, a report concerning climatic change has been tabled at that meeting. Is the hon. Minister prepared to lay a copy of the report on the Table of the National Assembly.

Mr Bachoo: I'll do it, Sir.

MON DESERT/MON TRESOR & UNION VALE HOUSING ESTATES – PHASING OUT

(No. B/225) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the phasing out of the Mon Désert/Mon Trésor and the Union Vale housing estates, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority (MSA) that Mon Trésor Sugar Estate has three sugar camps which have to be phased out. These are –

- (a) Mon Désert estate houses with 133 beneficiaries who are entitled to plots of land at Desplaces.
- (b) Union Vale estate houses with 23 beneficiaries who will be relocated at Union Vale near VRS I site.
- (c) Mon Trésor estate houses with 12 beneficiaries who will be relocated at Mémoire adjacent to VRS I site at Plaine Magnien.

In respect of the site at Desplaces -

- (i) Water works have been completed.
- (ii) Infrastructure works for road and drains are still ongoing. As per contract, the works started on 23 August 2006 and are due to be terminated by end June 2007. About 70% of works have been completed. Once these works are over, the Central Electricity Board will come in for the supply of electricity. Thereafter, the sugar estate will take appropriate action for the handing over of title deeds to the beneficiaries.

As for the sites at Union Vale and Mémoire, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that the Morcellement Board is currently processing the application for morcellement permit. I have been told that this is going to be taken up at the next morcellement board meeting. Once this permit is received, infrastructure works will start.

I must point out that the process is long and can be arduous. I chaired a number of meetings at the level of my Ministry in order to expedite matters.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in reply to a Parliamentary Question in 2005, stated that, as far as the housing estate Mon Désert Mon Trésor is concerned, the work should be completed by May 2006. Could the hon. Minister explain the delay?

Dr. Boolell: The delay is due to the fact that sometimes it is very difficult to get all the relevant permits from the relevant institutions. It is the reason as to why sometimes Ministers have to chair the committee. Since I have been chairing the committee, matters have been expedited and I can assure my hon. Friend that more than 2,300 permits have been issued. Now, the beneficiaries have their title deeds. I can understand the deep-seated concern of my friend. If only we could expedite and see to it that the process moves at a faster rate, certainly, we will do it, but I take on board the concern of my friend.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the Union Vale Housing Estate is concerned, there were some problems concerning the allocation of the land. There were some problems with the inhabitants of the housing estate and a site meeting was scheduled for 20 October 2006. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether this site visit actually took place or not?

Dr Boolell: I don't have the reply to this, but I take it for granted that, since they agreed to the site identified, the site visit was carried on.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, as to the site which has been identified as far as the Union Vale Housing Estate is concerned?

Dr. Boolell: The site will be located at Union Vale near VRS1 & VRS2.

**'TOWARDS A QUALITY CURRICULUM STRATEGY FOR REFORM'
DOCUMENT**

(No. B/226) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the document "Towards a Quality Curriculum Strategy for Reform" he will state when and by whom it was produced.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made at our sitting of 14 November 2006 on the issue of curriculum reforms and I fully explained the rationale behind the quality curriculum. However, once again, I wish to take the opportunity of this Parliamentary Question to inform the House that the curriculum reform is at the heart of Government programme....

Mr Speaker: I will ask the hon. Minister that if he has got a long answer to the question, he should circulate it. He can only reply to the question asked i.e state when and by whom it was produced and then circulate the remainder of his answer, especially when he has himself stated that he has already made a comprehensive statement to the House on the policy of Government.

Mr Gokhool: I will just give some background to come to the answer I want to make. The curriculum document was produced in September 2006 and after that there were two committees which had been set up, namely the National Curriculum Advisory Committee and the National Curriculum Steering Committee.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House of the composition of the National Curriculum Advisory Committee and the National Curriculum Steering Committee?

Mr Gokhool: I will table the information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether these two committees have actually made any recommendations to date?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Curriculum Framework Committee has worked out the curriculum framework for the primary sector and it is now working on the secondary system. As far as the National Curriculum Advisory Committee is concerned, it has been constituted and once the curriculum framework document for the primary school sectors is finalised, then it will start having its meeting.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister inform the House when precisely these two committees were set up?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have the precise date, but the National Curriculum Framework Committee is already operational whereas the National Curriculum Advisory Committee has been set up and will start its operations shortly.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, inform the House about the time-frame for the National Achievement Certificate?

Mr Gokhool: I think I indicated in the information I gave to the House that there is a time-frame of three to four years for the implementation of the recommendations of the two committees. Work has started. We have already produced the Standard I textbook and the subject panels are now working for Standard II and other classes. As far as the assessment is concerned, this will be integrated in the new materials which are being prepared. But the time-frame which has been given is three to four years.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a proposal to include continuous assessment at the CPE level, would the hon. Minister also consider the possibility of including Standard V in that assessment?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, the whole concept of continuous assessment is being integrated as from Standard I. It is a graduated process and it will be part of the assessment as it is being developed in Standard I.

Mr Guinness: The Minister said the Standard I textbook is ready, can I know from the Minister whether it has been put on a pilot basis?

Mr Gokhool: Yes. The textbooks have been designed by a panel of technicians and specialists in curriculum design and it has been pre-tested before being sent to the schools.

Mr Guinness: Can we know whether any school has been selected to be used as a pilot school for that?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, from what I recall, there are some ten schools where the materials were tested before they were released to the schools.

AIR TICKETS - FUEL SURCHARGE

(No. B/227) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the fuel surcharge on air tickets, he will state –

- (a) the amount collected during the last twelve months;
- (b) who are the beneficiaries thereof, and
- (c) how the proceeds from this fund is utilized.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, a fuel surcharge is levied by airlines operating services from and to Mauritius. This is an acceptable practice under IATA and has been adopted by most airlines.

The fuel surcharge is used to mitigate the increase in the price of jet fuel. It enables airlines to cover their costs and to remain competitive by adopting smoother pricing policies.

A surcharge is collected directly by airlines and is not revenue raised by Government. We do not have the amount collected by each and every airline operating from and to Mauritius.

Mr Mardemootoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a disguised tax levied by Air Mauritius on air tickets to compensate an investment made by Shell on the airport premises?

Mr Sithanen: I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Mardemootoo: Can the hon. Minister check it, please?

Mr Sithanen: I'll do my best.

MAURITIUS TURF CLUB –FEES - PAYMENT

(No. B/228) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if any commission, fee or tax is being paid to Government by the Mauritius Turf Club and, if so, will he give details thereof for the period January 2006 to date.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that for the period January 2006 to date, Mauritius Turf Club has made payments to Government in the total amount of Rs10.8 m. This is made up of licence fees, contribution to Prime Minister Relief Fund, payment for Police services, National Pension Scheme and levy, National Savings Fund, road tax and Rs340,000 of corporate tax.

INDIAN IMMIGRATIONS RECORDS – MGI - TRANSFER

(No. B/229) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to documents relating to indentured labour, he will state –

- (a) if a decision has been taken to have them transferred to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if any other institution/organisation has been duly authorised to carry out similar activities and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, following a Joint Indo-Mauritian Scientific and Cultural Agreement signed in 1973, the Indian Immigrations records which were in the custody of the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security were transferred to the National Archives Department in June 1973.

In March 1978, the National Archives Department was requested to have the documents transferred to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in line with the Agreement.

The transfer was effected on 06 March 1978.

According to the Agreement, the documents would have to remain in the custody of the Archives until the MGI could take them over. As such, in line with the policy set by the then MGI Board for restoration, preservation and dissemination of ancestral cultural heritage, the transfer was effected.

The National Archives Act 1999 provides for all archival material which is in the custody of, *inter alia*, the MGI to be transferred to the National Archives Department. Moreover, one of the objects of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, in accordance with the AGTF (Amendment) Act 2006, is to set up a museum and create public awareness of the history of indentured labour.

The proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding to be worked out among the MGI, AGTF and National Archives so as to provide a framework for collaboration among the three institutions was raised at a meeting chaired by the Ministry of Arts and Culture on 13 April 2007. Both my Ministry and the MGI were represented at the meeting, and the proposal is under consideration.

INDIAN IMMIGRATION ARCHIVES - UNESCO MEMORY

(No. B/230) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the computerisation of the Indian Immigration Archives at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the proposal for these archives to be included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, he will state -

- (a) the date on which the project and proposal were forwarded by the Mauritius National Commission for the UNESCO, and
- (b) the details and modalities of the funding

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute embarked on the computerisation of the Indian Immigration Archives in January 1999 with a view to providing access to a complete structural database on Indian Immigration.

The project comprises of the following three phases -

- (i) data capture, that is, feeding of data;
- (ii) digitisation, that is, feeding of photograph; and
- (iii) provision of worldwide access through the Internet.

Due to the human resource and financial constraints, only 15% of the records have been captured so far.

On 01 August 2006, the MGI has submitted a project proposal to my Ministry for UNESCO to finance the project and to include the Indian Immigration Archives in the UNESCO memory of the World Register.

Further to the administrative procedures, the request was transmitted to UNESCO by the Secretary General of the Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO, which is the Chief Technical Officer of my Ministry on 01 September 2006.

A grant of Rs10,726,400 would be required by the MGI for the completion of the project.

Unesco has its own procedures for selection of project for funding purposes.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm to the House if there is a similar project by any other organisation which intends or has requested for the digitization of the immigrants archives?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware whether there is any specific project for digitization apart from the project from MGI. But there are some discussions going on between the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and MGI. I have to check whether there is another project because I don't think it will make sense to have two projects on digitization.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that worldwide family information found in archival records or genealogical data bank are protected by the respective country's legal framework? Therefore, will the

hon. Minister confirm if the Archives Act makes provision for the protection of the sensitive, private, confidential information ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, I won't allow this question. If the question which the hon. Member is asking is in the Archives Act, it is an official document, he can check it himself.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information, there is another organisation which is looking for digitization of this immigrant information. These are very sensitive information and I am given to understand that it will also be on the internet. I don't think anybody in this House would like such family history or genealogical and ancestral information to be made available everywhere for public access.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has a very valid point. I had taken note and I will check the information and see what is the practice and what are the implications. In fact, these information are of a sensitive nature.

NATIONAL PAY COUNCIL – REPRESENTATIVES

(No. B/231) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of the National Pay Council, he will state if it will operate in the absence of the participation of the representatives of the Trade Unions.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ B/181 wherein the substantive Minister emphasised the tripartite nature of the National Pay Council. This implies that workers will be represented on the council.

I am informed that, further to the appeal made to the Trade Unions Federations to reconsider their position, they have maintained their decision not to submit proposals for nomination of their representatives on the council. Consequently, my colleague, the substantive Minister will, on his return, make alternative arrangements for the workers to be duly represented on the council.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us what is the legal status of the National Pay Council?

Mr Bachoo: This National Pay Council is supposed to replace the previous organisation that was responsible to look into the salary increase of the workers.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister have an idea about the alternative proposal that his colleague will make?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that some workers organisations have expressed interest and are willing to form part of the council.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if the major federations of workers have refused to be on that committee, which other alternative form is he proposing?

Mr Bachoo: I have mentioned that there are some workers organisations which have shown interest to form part in that council.

**CARDIAC CENTRE OF THE TRUST FUND FOR SPECIALISED
MEDICAL CARE - PRESIDENT**

(No. B/232) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the situation prevailing at the Cardiac Centre of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, he will consider the advisability of replacing the President of the Trust Fund.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the chairman of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care has been appointed by virtue of the power conferred upon me by section 5 of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care Act, for the period December 2005 to November 2007.

Since his appointment, the chairman has been carrying out his duties and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care Act.

The question of replacing the chairman of the Trust Fund does not arise.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given the sensitive nature of the work of the doctors at that centre, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, although there is a Chief Executive over there, the chairperson intervenes into the day-to-day work of the specialists insofar as going and asking them about their telephone bills, why they have been charged so much for this month and so much for last month?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister, being given that he himself launches this *parcours du coeur*, how can he accept that a chairman of a Board arrogates to himself the power to cancel a meeting which was going to be held with some poor inhabitants?

(Interruptions)

Can't the hon. Minister shut his bloody mouth?

(Interruptions)

I am sorry!

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Let the hon. Member put his question. There should be no comment!

Dr. Jeetah: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. From a standing position, the hon. Member made a remark. I would like to know whether he would like to ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: What is the point of order? Is it unparliamentary what the hon. Member said?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes. From a standing position, the hon. Member said “*pas gagne zaffaire are moi*” or something of that nature. Is he allowed to do that?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, it is not a point of order. I will ask the hon. Member not to make any comment when he is putting his question.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister how can he admit that the chairman of the Board intervenes on his own to cancel a meeting at which the specialists were going to attend, to talk to people suffering from heart diseases. Again, if the Chief Executive had wanted, he could have allowed these things to go ahead. But just to show ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has put the question, let the Minister answer.

Mr Faugoo: I agree on the principle, Mr Speaker, Sir, that maybe the programme which was organised at Eau Coulée on 07 April, the chairman could have allowed it to go ahead with. But there were some misunderstandings because of lack of communication. This programme “*Route du Coeur*” was launched in 2005 with a well-defined strategy, that is, targeting the community. It was meant to sensitise people on NCD and, more especially, on cardiovascular problems. There were 20 programmes

which were scheduled on a particular date and at a particular place. But Eau Coulée where it was being held on 07 April did not appear on the list and this was neither approved by the Board nor by the director. He was not aware of same.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given the very unhealthy situation which is existing now and which everyone knows about at the level of this Trust Fund, and being given also the very sensitive nature of the work which these doctors are doing there, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he cannot revise his decision and send this gentleman to some other places and put a real professional at the head of this Trust Fund?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Does the hon. Minister intend to revise his decision or not?

Mr Faugoo: No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MILK (POWDERED) – LOCAL MARKET

(No. B/233) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to milk, he will state if there is any shortage of any brands thereof on the local market and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

According to a survey carried out by the Consumer Protection Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights & Consumer Protection on Monday 23 April 2007, there was no shortage of powdered milk as all the brands of milk powder were available for sale on the local market.

I am also informed that at importers level, there is presently around 990 tons of milk powder in stock and a further 75 tons at customs and that the monthly consumption of powdered milk is estimated only at 1000 tons.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether she is aware that last week, mainly on Saturday, there was a huge shortage of milk, specially the Red Cow brand, and that there was a fixed quota for every customer in supermarket? Is the hon. Minister aware of that?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is another question. The question asked is about the shortage of milk on the local market and I have answered to that.

Mr Guinness: I have asked a specific question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have asked about shortage of milk on the local market on Saturday and last week.

Mr Speaker: I do not have any control on the answer of the hon. Minister.

Mr Guinness: Can I repeat my question to the Minister? Is the Minister aware that last week there was, in fact, a shortage of milk and there was a quota fixed to customers?

Mrs Bappoo: This is another question.

Mr Guinness: Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that this shortage has been..

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Guinness: The milk has come back!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I will ask the hon. Member to follow the answer which is being given by the Minister. She says it is another question and she is not aware of it.

Mr Guinness: Can I put another question, Mr Speaker, Sir? Can the Minister confirm to the House that the milk has come back in the supermarkets after a rise in the price?

Mrs Bappoo: This is totally another question, Mr Speaker, Sir. My answer is to the shortage of milk and I have given my reply to the question.

NATIONAL PAY COUNCIL – CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/234) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to Mr S. M. R. who has been identified to be the Chairperson of the National Pay Council, he will state –

- (a) his qualifications,
- (b) the terms and conditions of employment to which he will be entitled.

The Minister of Environment and National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am replying to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the curriculum vitae of Mr S. M. R.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is proposed to pay Mr S. M. R. an inclusive monthly allowance, the quantum of which will be determined by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether the gentleman has already taken up the job of Chairperson of the National Pay Council?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the answer with me.

Mr Guinness: If the Chairperson has already taken the job, how can it be that the salary has not been determined?

Mr Speaker: If there is no answer, the hon. Member would not have enough supplementary information. Next question!

MOKA-FLACQ DISTRICT COUNCIL - TRADE FAIR

(No. B/235) **Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka-Flacq District Council, information as to whether the Council organised a trade fair in December 2006 and, if so –

- (a) the number of stands rented;
- (b) the price per stand, and
- (c) the amount of money received as rent.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that no trade fair was organised by it in December 2006.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the Minister whether from 22 to 31 December 2006, the Moka/Flacq District Council issued any occasional licence for trade fairs?

Dr. David: **Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking of trade fair. No trade fair was organised.**

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the Minister whether Triangular trade fair and Easton Mega trade fair applied and obtained a licence to hold the fair opposite NPCB at Flacq?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to the question. The question is: has the District Council organised a trade fair? No, the District Council has not organised a trade fair.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether a certain Mr Samal Katwaroo who is the Constituency Clerk of the Minister of Education is the holder

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order, I said! This is not related to the question. The hon. Member may come with a substantive question.

Dr. David: Can I answer, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. I have ruled it out.

FISH FARMS – OPERATIONAL

(No. B/237) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to fish farms, he will state the number thereof which are operational since July 2005 to date.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, since July 2005, one fish farming complex namely, Val Farms Ltd. situated at La Ferme started to operate. It has imported two consignments of 40,000 barramundi fingerlings from Singapore in November 2006. Barramundi is widely cultured in Australia, Singapore and the Far East. The stock has now grown to about 600 gm. The giant fresh water prawn and the *berri rouge* are also being cultured by the company at the farm.

There is also one integrated fish-farming project at Palmar Livestock Production Unit which is presently undertaking experimental trial polyculture of *tilapia*. In addition, of course, there is backyard culture of *berri rouge*.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from that one only project, has the Ministry received any other proposal for projects in that field?

Dr. Boolell: There is one proposal that has been submitted to the Ministry, but since we held a workshop on the potential of aqua-development in Mauritius, there have been expressions of interests and I know some projects have been submitted to the BOI. But, of course, we have to look at the institutional and legislative framework and we are coming in due time with a legislative framework in respect of aquaculture. In fact, we have to define the title deeds in respect of those who are going to set up those aquaculture farms.

SMEs – NUMBER & LOAN DISBURSED

(No. B/238) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to Small and Medium Enterprises which are operational since July 2006 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the –

- (a) SEHDA, information as to the number thereof, and
- (b) Development Bank of Mauritius (Ltd.), information as to the amount of loan disbursed as at to date.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that for the period July 2005 to 13th April 2007, SEHDA has issued 5,254 SME certificates. The number of new enterprises set up for the same period is 3326. A record number of potential entrepreneurs, that is 20,260 persons, have visited SEHDA during this same period.

Regarding finance, I am informed that the Development Bank of Mauritius has granted more than 500m. rupees of loans to the SME sector between July 2005 to date. And more than 3,477 enterprises have taken advantage of loans granted.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since July 2006 to date, 2,439 new SMEs have registered with the SEHDA. Out of these, 674 are operational.

With regard to part (b), the total disbursement of loans to SMEs since July 2006 to date amounts to Rs227.5 m.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister, out of those 674 SMEs which are operational since July 2006, the different sectors they belong to?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have got a range of activities that are currently being undertaken and I would like to list but a few : automotive workshop, beauty care, computers, IT, consultancy, distribution, furniture making, general retailer, handicraft, jewellery, metal, footwear, tailoring and foodstuff as well as printing and professional services.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question was very clear, that is, out of the 674 SMEs operational, can we have the different sectors they belong to and giving an indication of the numbers of the SMEs with regard to each sector?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a lot of information in terms of money disbursed to these sectors. For the manufacturing sector, there has been a sum of Rs48.046m. I have got a list and I can table it for the hon. Member.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know how many people are employed by those 674 SMEs?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have this information, but I can say for the whole five years that the previous Government was here, they only had 428 registrations, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: My question is relevant to July 2006 and not for the past five years, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should understand, I cannot control answers of Ministers.

(Interruptions)

I call Members to order, especially the Minister of Local Government! Next question!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 4 – ROADS – RESURFACING

(No. B/239) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the new roads and the roads that have been resurfaced in the Constituency No. 4, he will state if studies were undertaken, prior to the carrying out of the works.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the construction and resurfacing of non-classified roads are identified by officers of the NDU in consultation with

Parliamentary Private Secretaries, Members of Parliament, Local Authorities and *Forces Vives*.

The following criteria are considered when undertaking such works –

- Priority needs of the locality
- The Local Authority's commitment to take over and maintain the road
- Future projects of other service providers (CWA, CEB, etc.) to ensure that no damage is caused to newly resurfaced roads
- The need to re-profile existing roads to avoid drainage/water accumulation problems
- Actual road conditions and need for any associated works (drainage, safety), etc.

I would like to inform the House that visits and technical surveys have been carried out to assess the nature of works before proceeding with road resurfacing works in Constituency No. 4.

After the completion of road associated works, for instance drain works, a contractor is required to arrange for road repair works. There are indications that in respect of an ongoing drain project in Constituency No. 4, the drain work has been completed, back-filling and reshaping have also been done and soon road resurfacing works will be completed.

LE CORNU STREET, STE CROIX – ROAD REPAIRS

(No. B/240) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he is aware that Le Cornu Street at Ste Croix is in a bad state, following works carried out thereat and causing inconveniences to the inhabitants of the locality and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the CWA that pipe laying works were carried out by Contractor Sotravic Ltée from

February 2006 to December 2006 to transfer potable water from La Nicolière System to Port Louis.

The pipe laying works right through Allée Père Laval Street and Ste Marie Street in Ste Croix and were substantially completed in October 2006. The road reinstatement works were satisfactorily completed - at least, that is what was reported to me - in December 2006.

In view of the presence of other utility networks, the pipeline along Ste. Marie Road had to be laid close to a covered municipal drain running along the road between Le Cornu Street and Allée Père Laval.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during cyclone Gamede and following the heavy rains that followed, the municipal drain was blocked and water from the sides of the drain seeped into the backfilled trench. Due to the effect of the excessive moisture content of the backfill materials, coupled with the heavy traffic on Ste Marie Road, the reinstated road suffered heaving effect followed by heavy settlement.

A site visit was effected by the Central Water Authority and the Municipality of Port Louis and early action to remove and replace the backfill materials along the affected trench with crusher run was taken by the CWA.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning I visited the site to see exactly what the situation was and this is where it stood: there was the crusher run which had been compacted.

In addition, the Municipality of Port Louis has recently completed the cleaning of the drains. The CWA is presently engaged in discussions with its contractor to remobilize on site and to carry out the permanent reinstatement works as from tomorrow.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I raised the same issue some time back last year and I mentioned the problems regarding the backfilling materials. I believe the contractor has breached the contract several times. With regard to the reinstatement works, may I know if the retention period is over?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not sure whether the retention period is over, but, certainly, the CWA has engaged into meaningful negotiations. I, myself, have doubts and that is why I said: “at least, that is what was reported to me – they were satisfactorily completed.” I am very skeptical about it; that is why I have asked the CWA to be diligent in certifying these works once they have been apparently completed.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister which is the authority responsible for the reinstatement works? Was it the CWA?

Dr. Kasenally: The CWA was supervising. They have engineers, but I think it is the contractor who, either subcontracts it, or does it himself.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir? With regard to completion and reinstatement works, is mention made in the contract for full or part resurfacing of the road with regard to where excavation works took place?

Dr. Kasenally: In this particular instance, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was only that trench which was excavated. The whole road was not resurfaced.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to reinstatement works, will the hon. Minister agree then that, not only the part of the road where works have been carried out is damaged, but the full road now and if reinstatement works have to be done, it will have to be for the full length of the road?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been there and I have seen the situation. Maybe the hon. Member is right, but we have to take into consideration what are the liabilities of the contractor and what exactly was written in the contract. Perhaps, in future, we will have to ensure that whenever a road is damaged irreparably, it has to be resurfaced completely. In these circumstances, perhaps, we will have to have recourse to the Road Development Authority and its engineers to ensure that such things do not happen.

In this particular case, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was the blocked municipal drains that caused all this havoc. We do not have Cyclone Gamede and its heavy rainfalls every day, but I have taken up the points of the hon. Member. I think we have to ensure that the inhabitants do not suffer unduly.

Mr Lesjongard: If the hon. Minister has the answer with him, can he let us know what are the penalties in that contract?

Dr. Kasenally: Well, I have not read the small prints. Certainly, I'll have to look into it and make sure that if there is any penalty and they are guilty, they will have to be penalized and they will pay for it.

REUNION ISLAND – VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS

(No. B/241) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, following the recent volcanic eruptions in Reunion Island, he will state if any study has been initiated to estimate the production of acid rain and the harmful effects caused as a result thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, such a study is not warranted on the basis of information made available from the Agricultural Research Extension Unit, Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute and the Meteorological Services, the National Environment Laboratory and the Central Water Authority.

In fact, acid rain has very rarely been experienced in Mauritius and no visible symptoms of damage suggestive of exposure to acid rain was recorded on sugar cane and vegetable plantations during that period. Moreover, recent monitoring of our surface water bodies including reservoirs has revealed that there is no significant change in the PH and therefore no indication of the presence of acid rain. Furthermore, a regular monitoring of the emission levels of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, the excess emission of which are likely causes of acid rain formation is

undertaken by the National Environment Laboratory. So far, the emission levels have been low and very unlikely to cause acid rain formation.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the volcano in Reunion Island is one of the most active in the world and, only last week, a volcanic eruption in Japan caused a tsunami. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry or anybody else has looked into the possibility of volcanic activity in Reunion Island causing a tsunami in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir, we don't have that much of information in my Ministry, but I can assure the hon. Member that I'll try to consult the National Environment Laboratory and other environmental experts and try to find out what impact the volcanic action can have in Mauritius.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Minister, being given that one expert in volcanic matters has argued that the activity in Reunion Island might cause a small island to emerge between Mauritius and Reunion Island? May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has liaised with the State Law Office to see what would be the legal position in such a case?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have read that in the papers. I would like to take that into account.

RELIGIONS AND SPIRITUALITY – SCHOOLS CURRICULUM

(No. B/242) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the key concepts of all religions and of spirituality, he will state if it is proposed to design a basic schools curriculum as obtained in the other subjects and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, at present, religious education does not exist as a subject *per se* neither at primary nor at secondary levels and it is not proposed to consider introducing same.

In fact, in the context of the ongoing curriculum reforms, particularly, at the stage of the national debate held in December 2005, the issue of introducing religious education as a subject did not come up.

However, one has to make a distinction between the formal curriculum and the informal curriculum. The formal curriculum at primary and at secondary does not provide for religious education. However, there is an informal curriculum which provides for life skills and, *inter alia*, for openness towards religion and major religious practices in Mauritius. Students are exposed to those topics through the wider issue of Mauritian culture in an integrated manner cutting across other subjects like English, French, and Oriental Languages.

My Ministry's policy will be to ensure that students continue to informally benefit from exposure to religions and religious practices by focusing on values and moral precepts in an integrated manner both at primary and secondary levels.

PLAINE VERTE – MEDICLINIC - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/243) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware that the space and the facilities existing at the Goomany Area Health Centre at Plaine Verte are inadequate and, if so, will

he state if it is proposed to construct a mediclinic at Plaine Verte, indicating

—

- (a) if land has been identified for the project, and
- (b) when construction works are likely to start.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Dr. Idriss Goomany Area Health Centre is currently accommodated in a very limited space in a building belonging to the Municipality of Port Louis. Due to space constraint, it is difficult to provide adequate health services to a population of about 25,000 inhabitants.

In my reply to PQ B/280 made in September 2005, I stated that the Ministry of Housing & Lands was requested to look for an appropriate site for the construction of a new medi-clinic at Plaine Verte. That Ministry has, in October 2006, vested a building commonly known as “*Maison Blanche*” located on a portion of land of 2743 m² at Nyon Street, Port Louis for the setting up of a medi-clinic to replace the existing Area Health Centre.

I am informed that comprehensive tests have been carried out by the laboratory of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping and these were completed last month. Final tests for comprehensive strength will be carried out by the Mauritius Standard Bureau shortly.

I am further informed that after obtaining the reports of the tests, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping will carry out a full feasibility study in order to assess whether the building will be pulled down or renovated. In case the building will be renovated, works will start in the next financial year.

SMALL PLANTERS - DEROCKING AND LAND PREPARATION PROJECTS

(No. B/244) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the projects for the derocking and land

preparation for the benefit of small planters, he will state, since July 2005 to date –

- (a) the regions where such projects have been undertaken, indicating the extent of land involved /and the cost in each case;
- (b) the total amount of funds disbursed;
- (c) the cost accruing to the small planters for the projects per acre, and
- (d) the plans and the time frame for future derocking and land preparation projects, indicating the estimated cost per region.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member since the two questions PQ B/244 and PQ B/245 relate to the same matter. So, all the information will be given.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that in certain regions of the north, planters having cane fields with yield of 45 tons per arpent, have had their one-year old field uprooted and derocked and land being prepared for planting, whereas other planters are still on the waiting list with yields as low as 10 tons per acre and these people have not been taken on board in this derocking project? May I know what criteria have been utilised to select planters and cane fields for this land preparation?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, the project is being implemented by the Project Implementation Committee comprising of Farmers Service Corporation, MSIRI, Irrigation Authority, Sugar Authority, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, my Ministry in consultation with the Sugar Producers Association and the farmers.

As to the specific question asked by the hon. Member, there is no coercion; they have voluntarily agreed to have their cane uprooted. There is no coercive method, it has to be voluntarily agreed to. The Committee decides as to the site identified, where land preparation will take place. And, of course, it can only take place with the consent of the planters concerned.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is obviously with the consent of the planters. My question is put with a view to try to find out why land which is already good and which has been recently planted has

been selected for uprooting and preparation of land, whereas other planters who are really in need of such help from Government have not been taken on board.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am rather surprised. The Project Implementation Committee would not dare to prepare land which has already been prepared. In fact, they should go to areas where the land needs preparation and it can only be done with the consent of the planter. I am rather surprised. If the hon. Member can provide me with the relevant information, I'll have the information cross-checked.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I'll do so, Sir.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether any sugar estate is involved in the management of this project and, if so, which are the sugar estates? Secondly, I would like to know what charge is being paid to these sugar estates?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no management fee charged. In fact, they provide the services free of charge and in respect of each factory area where the site has been identified for preparation, the sugar estate in that area is responsible for the management of land preparation because they already have logistic support.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform us whether land which has already been prepared will be allocated to any SMEs? I would also like to know whether the rocks that have been extracted are being sold and, if so, at what price and where does the revenue go?

Dr. Boolell: The sugar estate contracts out the work to subcontractors. They have the list of the names of subcontractors. All of them are small and medium entrepreneurs. If they don't have the equipment, then, of course, the work is entrusted to the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation.

The rocks are sold to the stone crushers plants and the revenue is credited to the Sugar Authority. Of course, the price varies.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since the Minister is mentioning that the sugar industry has been given the management of these areas, can I know

from him whether any tender procedure was carried out to decide upon allocating this contract to the sugar industry?

Dr. Boolell: There was no need for any tender procedure. Of course, everything would be cross-checked by the Director of Audit.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since the sugar industry has subcontracted this project to other contractors, may I know whether this particular opportunity was provided to the small planters of the areas?

Dr. Boolell: I think this is a very relevant question. All potential bidders were invited provided the rates were competitive. The Project Implementation Committee would take them on board and, in fact, we are creating opportunities especially for SMEs.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can confirm to the House whether there has been a contract signed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association to provide this land preparation and how much - the hon. Minister has said that there is no fee payable – the Mauritius Sugar Authority is paying the MSPA per hectare for this project?

Dr. Boolell: As I stated, there is no management fee paid to any other sugar estate for the execution of the contract. I will lay on the Table of the Assembly the total amount disbursed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority and as to the amount paid to the SMEs, I can supply the relevant information in due time.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I get the information from the hon. Minister as to the amount being asked per planter for these services per acre?

Dr. Boolell: It varies between 7% to 38% of the total cost, depending on the topography of the land.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I know in absolute amount how much this comes to?

Dr. Boolell: From Rs500 to Rs4,500.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: My information, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that planters in the northern region are being asked to pay a sum of about Rs7,000 per acre.

Dr. Boolell: Then, the facts and figures will speak for themselves. I will lay the documents on the Table of the Assembly. Even contracts entered between MSA and the respective sugar estate can also be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Does this land preparation and derocking involve also the offer of fertilizers and cuttings to the planters?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, I have stated so in previous replies.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May we know from which region these cane cuttings have been taken from and whether they are being supplied by the MSIRI?

Dr. Boolell: I don't have the specific reply to that specific question, but, of course, the cane cuttings can come from the MSIRI or from planters themselves or from the sugar estate concerned.

SMALL PLANTERS - DEROCKING AND LAND PREPARATION PROJECTS

(No. B/245) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the projects for the derocking and land preparation for the benefit of small planters, he will state if any contract has been allocated and, if so, to whom.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/244)

IRS & INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS – LAND CONVERSION TAX

(No. B/246) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the IRS and industrial projects requiring conversion of agricultural land which have been approved since July 2005 to date, he will state the number thereof, indicating, in each case, if the land conversion tax has been paid.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that, since July 2005 to date, four IRS and five industrial projects requiring conversion of agricultural land have been approved. I am further informed that in the case of IRS projects, land conversion tax has been paid for all of them.

As regards the industrial projects, they have been exempted from payment of land conversion tax as per Section 29 of the SIE Act 2001.

BEL OMBRE – HOTEL DEVELOPMENT – COMPENSATION TO PLANTERS

(No. N. B/247) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the hotel development projects at Bel Ombre, he will state if the small planters of the region were relocated and a compensation was paid to other small planters whose leases were terminated.

The Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that Salt Lake Resort Ltd was granted an industrial lease in February 2004 for hotel development at Bel Ombre on an aggregate extent of 88,749.49 m², which include land forming part of Bel Ombre Small Scale Irrigation Project occupied by five planters. Those planters were relocated to a nearby site acquired by Government under the land exchange mechanism with Bel Ombre S.E, and no compensation was paid to them.

In December 2004, SOREP\ACCOR, a French holding, made a request to the Ministry through the Board of Investment for three hectares of land at Bel Ombre for a hotel project. Eight planters were concerned, and they have voluntarily relinquished their rights on some 8A83 against a total compensation of Rs3,973,500 on the basis of Rs450,000 per *arpent*, paid by the promoter.

LE HOCHET & MORCELLEMENT RAFFRAY – STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/248) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that street lighting in the region of Le Hochet and Morcellement Raffray is not in good working conditions and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that a survey carried out after the passage of cyclone Gamede had revealed that over 100 street lanterns and 20 solar switches were damaged in the regions of le Hochet and Morcellement Raffray.

I am further informed that 74 lanterns have already been repaired, and works are in progress in respect of the remaining 26 lanterns.

I am also informed by the CEB that the solar switches have been repaired.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there is a complete blackout at Le Hochet, Riche Terre, namely St. Michel Road, Bootshah Lane, Aba Kousna Lane and St. George Street?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will check.

LE HOCHET & TERRE ROUGE – SCAVENGING SERVICES

(No. B/249) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that the scavenging services in the region of Le Hochet and Terre Rouge are irregular and, if so, will he state the reasons therefor.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that the scavenging services in the northern region of the country, including Le Hochet, is irregular.

In fact, my Ministry had, last year, received numerous complaints from members of the public regarding the poor service delivery by Advance Cleaning Ltd, which has been allocated the tender for scavenging services in this region.

Accordingly, a meeting was held, where the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council was advised to approach the CTB with a view to terminating the contract of Advance Cleaning Ltd.

However, at a later stage, the Pamplémousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council informed that Advance Cleaning Ltd had considerably improved its quality of service and did not wish to proceed further regarding the termination of its contract.

With regard to the village of Terre Rouge, I am informed that the contract of SOS Nettoyages has been terminated since January last for poor performance. The scavenging service in that region is now provided by the in-house labour of the Council, which is considered generally satisfactory, except for a few isolated complaints, which are immediately attended to.

R. S. DENIM FACTORY – WORK PERMITS

(No. B/250) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the spinning unit of R. S. Denim at Pointe aux Sables, he will state the number of work permits which have been granted to expatriates.

The Minister of Environment & NDU (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at 20 April 2007, 60 work permits have been issued in respect of the spinning unit of R. S. Denim at Pointe aux Sables.

I wish to inform the House that R. S. Denim, as an enterprise, has been authorised to recruit 180 expatriates in all, of whom 119 for the spinning unit.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many local workers are working in the factory concerned?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Denim unit is not yet operational till now.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister mean to say that foreign workers have already been recruited whereas no Mauritian workers are working?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not say that no workers have been recruited. I have only stated that the unit is not yet operational. 60 work permits have already been issued, and the workers have not arrived till now.

Mr Speaker: May I inform the House that Parliamentary Questions B/252, B/253 & B/254 have been withdrawn.

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL – CT SCAN

(No. B/251) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will state if it is proposed to equip the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital with a CT Scan and, if so, when.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the policy of my Ministry to equip all the five regional hospitals with CT Scans. Presently, there are three CT Scans available in our public health institutions, namely at SSRN Hospital, Victoria Hospital and the Jawaharlall Nehru Hospital.

As far as Dr. Jeetoo and Flacq Hospitals are concerned, such services are not available for the time being due to lack of appropriate infrastructure to accommodate same.

With the construction of the new Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, these services will be extended to that hospital.

In the meantime, CT Scan services are being provided for patients of that region at SSRN and Victoria Hospitals. Furthermore, some patients are being referred to private clinics.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MINISTRY OF AGRO INDUSTRY – VETERINARY OFFICERS

(No. B/252) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to foreign veterinary officers employed by his Ministry, he will state the number thereof –

- (a) employed on a contractual basis, indicating in each case–
 - (i) the terms and conditions and since when they have been working in Mauritius;
 - (ii) those who have ended their contract and left the country since July 2005 to date;
 - (iii) who have been recruited by Government since July 2005 to date
- (b) who are working in slaughter houses, indicating their working hours.

(Withdrawn)

VETERINARY OFFICERS (FOREIGN) – SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/253) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether he will state if it is Government policy to offer scholarships to foreign veterinary officers employed on a contractual basis by his Ministry and, if so, the number of beneficiaries thereof since July 2005 to date.

(Withdrawn)

VETERINARY OFFICERS - SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/254) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to veterinary officers, he will state –

- (a) the number employed in the public service, and
- (b) if scholarships have been offered to anyone of them since July 2005 to date.

(Withdrawn)