

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**TOWN/VILLAGE CENTRES –  
FESTIVE SEASONS - POLICE PATROLS**

**(No. B/1174) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the upcoming festive seasons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the additional measures that are being envisaged to reinforce security of the public and OF the tourists, indicating if more Police patrols, will be effected in the town/village centres on a 24-hour basis.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to a recent PQ on 06 November of this year. I replied to a similar question and I mentioned that the measures taken by the Police to fight crime would be reinforced to ensure the security of the public in general as well as the tourists in view of the forthcoming end-of-the-year festivities.

In this respect, I have had discussions with the Commissioner of Police and he has informed me that, as in previous years, concerted action is being taken to ensure the maintenance of law and order during this festive period.

All Police resources from different units of the Force will be deployed to cover major roads, places of public amusement and other places frequented by the public in order to prevent the perpetration of crime. These include, amongst others, restaurants, banks, industrial zones, hotels, commercial areas, shopping centres, bus terminals, public beaches and so on.

The Police will also pay particular attention to traffic control, targeting speeding, drunken driving, road accidents, cases of fire and emergencies and cases of domestic violence. Spot checks on vehicles and road blocks will be stepped up.

I am further informed that in view of the fact that during the festive seasons, large sums of money are normally injected in the monetary circuit, which may unfortunately motivate wrongdoers to attack defenceless victims, the Crime Prevention Unit has already started to implement a sensitization programme for operators of the business sector, taking into account the most vulnerable ones such as salespersons, post office workers, banks, petrol stations amongst others. Two workshops on crime prevention issues, safety of life and property have been scheduled for the employees and owners of petrol stations.

With regard to the security of the tourists, I am informed that special patrols teams comprising the ERS, SSU, SMF, *Police du Transport*, *Police du Tourisme*, Regular Police, CID and NCG have been set up with a view to ensuring a permanent Police presence near hotels, restaurants, commercial areas, view points and other places of interest for tourists.

As I indicated to the House on the 06 November, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the reply to PQ B/1033, since 01 November 2007, a pilot project has been implemented at Trou d'Eau Douce to provide better policing for tourists visiting the region. The project includes an intensive coordinated Police operation in view of the forthcoming peak tourist season. Actions taken by the Police include checks on pleasure crafts, speeding, canvassers and beach hawkers, alcotests on skippers, stop and search on vehicles and road blocks.

In the light of the feedback of this pilot scheme, the project will be extended to other regions.

And I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that, in fact, this project is working very well and we should extend it to other regions.

I am also given to understand that the operational plan of the Police is regularly reviewed and reassessed, and in the light thereof, additional measures are taken to meet the operational exigencies of each region.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the hon. Prime Minister referred to what the Commissioner of Police said, that is, the same measures are being taken as the previous years. But, in the previous years, we had situations which we could consider as normal and everybody will agree that there has been such deterioration as regards law and order. That is

why, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking the hon. Prime Minister whether he could give the assurance that strict measures of security would be taken.

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, I must correct the hon. Member, it not true for tourists. I have got the figures. As I have always said, Mr Speaker, Sir, one crime is too many. We should not take satisfaction that it is going down and it could mean, therefore, that it is alright – in certain areas, not everywhere. Mr Speaker, Sir I don't want to give the details of what is actually happening - I am sure the hon. Member understands - but I can tell him that the Commissioner of Police is taking all the measures that he possibly can.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I raised the same question last year. One of the main problems is quick response from the Police whenever there are problems in the open places. We all know the problems of transport, of Police vehicles and so. Can the hon. Prime Minister give an undertaking to the House that this system of ERS – quick response – would be further reinforced? There are only two Police officers in the vehicle; one is the driver and whenever there are problems, one officer cannot attend to emergencies at a particular point. Can the hon. Prime Minister, at least, see with the Commissioner of Police that personnel of the ERS be increased?

**The Prime Minister:** It is a valid point, Mr Speaker, Sir, and, as I mentioned last time, in fact, in the Budget we have provided now for even more vehicles and we are looking at ways to cut the cost also. We had put a similar system in place in the past, but this was dismantled. I am not going to go into that, but this is being done. As you know, more and more Police officers have been recruited recently.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether consideration is being given to increasing the number of Police officers involving the *police de proximité*, especially those operating on bicycles and bikes in areas like Grand' Baie and so on and improving their training also?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, we are looking at both, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am looking at courses also that they are being set. Actually, some are being set, but not the one that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is specifically mentioning, but we are going to look into that, Mr Speaker, Sir. I mentioned the pilot project that we had at Trou d'Eau Douce for tourists.

In fact, we are quite happy with the way it is going. We are going to extend it - it is imminent now - at Trou aux Biches and Grand' Baie.

**MBC - *DES CHIFFRES ET DES LETTRES/QUESTIONS POUR UN CHAMPION* - BROADCAST**

**(No. B/1175) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether in regard to the entertainment programmes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to whether the broadcast of *Des Chiffres et des Lettres* and *Questions pour un Champion* have been discontinued and, if so –

- (a) the respective dates thereof, and
- (b) the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the MBC that the programmes “*Des Chiffres et des Lettres*” and “*Questions pour un Champion*” are no longer broadcast on MBC 1 since 05 November 2007, but are available live on MBC Digital Channel 8 through TV5 Monde, since 18 September 2007 because - I will explain later the details - this is a subject of litigation.

In fact, these programmes are now being offered to the Mauritian public at the same time as they are put on air in Paris, that is, they are broadcast live everyday at 1630 hours and 2130 hours respectively.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that there is a long-standing litigation between countries receiving French television contents and the owners of these programmes. In the case of the MBC, this litigation goes back to 1991 at the time an agreement was signed between Mauritius and France for the provision by the French Television authorities of French television contents to MBC. It appears that, at the time the Agreement, when it came into effect, this is what, I think, appears - the French Television authorities did not specify to MBC, that is what they say, as to the types of programmes it could broadcast free of charge and without any restriction. There have been some changes at the level of French television stations recently and the

owners of these programmes such as “*Des Chiffres et des Lettres*” and “*Questions pour un Champion*” have argued that Mauritius as well as other countries – not just Mauritius - were allegedly broadcasting these programmes illegally; a sort of *piratage*, that’s the allegation they are saying. These claims were forwarded to the MBC and they have asked for payment of huge sums for these programmes by the MBC for the French television content which they say was broadcast without proper authorisation having been secured. The case is now the subject of court proceedings and, therefore, it is *sub-judice*. I am not causing any prejudice by saying what I have said.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the MBC that television contents of TV5 Monde received by MBC cannot be altered. It has to be a 24-hour programme which is received from TV5 Monde, should be broadcast by the MBC as it is. They cannot do it, as they have done, in the past - because of the time it is broadcast, I think they have taped it and shown it to Mauritians later. Now, they have been told that they cannot record any program from TV5 Monde to be re-broadcasted at a later time on any of its analogue channels. That is why this has happened, but, as I say, it is available - of course, you have to pay - on MBC Digital Channel 8.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister – I didn’t catch it clearly - which organisations, exactly by name, are claiming what the hon. Prime Minister called huge sums and what is the sum involved?

**The Prime Minister:** I have told that the sum goes into millions, Mr Speaker, Sir. They claim to be the owners of the right to broadcast ‘*Questions pour un Champion*’ and ‘*Des Chiffres et des Lettres*’. Fremantle Media Operations and Côte Ouest have been both suing the MBC for alleged illegal rebroadcast and the cases have been lodged against the MBC. In fact, the MBC did, in 1999, pay a sum. As I said, the litigation is going on before 1991. They paid a sum of FF426,000 for broadcast of ‘*Questions pour un Champion*’ and in 2000, the MBC again paid a sum of FF213,000 representing a first instalment of a claim of FF426,000 for broadcast. But there are subsequent claims by Pearson Television and Fremantle Media Operations are, at this date, not happy with that and they have issued the Court proceedings.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House how many households possess a TNT decoder?

**The Prime Minister:** I would give the hon. Member a straight answer. In fact, I have looked into it because people have to pay for that. We are looking at other possibilities. I don't want to give details because I haven't finalised anything, but we are looking into that because we want to make it as wide as possible.

**(1) ABERCROMBIE POLICE STATION – POLICE OFFICERS, VEHICLES, ETC.**

**(2) VALLÉE DES PRETRES – POLICE STATION – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/1176) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Abercrombie Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police information as to –

(a) the number of Police Officers –

- (i) on the establishment thereat, and
- (ii) posted thereat, indicating their respective grades;

(b) the number of vehicles attached thereto;

(c) the regions and size of population it covers, and

(d) if he will consider the setting up of another Police Post within the region, particularly in Vallée des Prêtres, in view of the fast expansion of the regions.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the staffing of any Police Station is determined according to its operational needs. Based on this, Police Stations are classified as 'A' class 'B' class and 'C' class.

As regards part (a) of the question, Abercrombie Police Station is classified as 'A' Class and as such its strength varies between 50 and 72. Fifty-two Police Officers of different ranks are posted thereat.

I am tabling a list of Police Officers and their respective grades on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to the normal policing of the area by Abercrombie personnel, other units also help that station. The Emergency Response Service, Bike Patrol, *Brigade des Mineurs*, Divisional Supporting Unit, Port Louis North Traffic Branch, *Police du Transport*, Central Investigation Division, Anti Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU) and the newly set-up Crime Intelligence Unit are all helping that station and other stations as well so that there is adequate policing.

As regards part (b) of the question, Abercrombie Police Station has two vehicles at the moment. One of the vehicles had an accident, but it has already been replaced. The other units also have their own vehicles which add on to give support to that station whenever required, of course.

Consequently, the Commissioner of Police feels that the area of Abercrombie has sufficient human and material resources to ensure proper policing. However, he has told me that with the forthcoming recruitment of Police Officers, the personnel of Abercrombie will be reinforced. As I mentioned to hon. Bhagwan, we are also looking that additional vehicles be put at different stations. I am not saying particularly Abercrombie, but at different stations. This is being looked at as well.

As regards part (c) of the question, the Abercrombie Police covers an area of 22 Km<sup>2</sup> with a population of about 35,000 inhabitants. These areas include -

- Ste Croix
- Cité La Cure
- Vallée des Prêtres
- Karo Kalyptis
- Cité Batterie Cassée
- Cité Briquetterie

As regards part (d) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has already identified a portion of land for the construction of a new Police Station in the region of Vallée des Prêtres. I must say this has been a long-standing demand much before, but I understand that during the term of the last Government, they looked at land to build a Police Station there. As usual, everything is done and then they found that the land is inappropriate and could not be taken for technical reasons. I am not giving the details here. They have looked for another piece of land. This has been found and, therefore, action has already been initiated.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware of the frequent interventions of a Member of Parliament at the level of that Police Station thereby causing a disruption of work at the Police Station?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member is imputing motive on a Member of Parliament.

**Mr Lesjongard:** She has confirmed herself.

**Mr Speaker:** Insofar as the Standing Order is concerned, no imputation of motive can be made against an hon. Member. This is the Standing Order. What she has confirmed, I don't know!

**Mr Jhugroo:** M. le président, est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous dire quand les travaux de construction de la station à Vallée des Prêtres vont commencer et si on a déjà lancé les appel d'offres ?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, the previous plot of land that was identified was then found to be not acceptable; they have started action for the vesting of the land in the Police.

**Mr Lauthan:** From the reply of the hon. Prime Minister, he agrees that Abercrombie is situated in a very hot spot and there was a question from hon. Mrs Juggoo on 30 May 2006, that is, more than one and a half years ago, where she said, I quote –

“15 cases are reported per day regarding violence, larceny, attempt of larceny and many other violent cases.”

And in his reply, the Prime Minister said –

“I will tell the Commissioner of Police to do the needful and see that the staff and the logistics be reinforced immediately.”

It is more than one and a half years. Pending the construction of the new Police Station, can I request the hon. Prime Minister to ask the Commissioner of Police to beef up the staff in the meantime because we can't wait any longer?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must thank the hon. Member for having taken the time to go there to see what is happening, and look at the complaints of people of the constituency. That's what I expect hon. Members to do. The Commissioner of Police told me that he has made some rotation in that area. He has also increased the personnel, but he is going to further increase it.

### **MBC – DIGITALISATION PROJECT**

**(No. B/1177) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the purchase of digital equipment by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for its digitalisation project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the amount paid;
- (b) the name of the supplier;
- (c) if tenders were launched and, if so, who evaluated the bids, indicating if any consultants were involved and the details thereof;
- (d) if the equipment has been delivered and commissioned, and
- (e) if the investment is in line with the relocation project of the Corporation.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the field of broadcasting, major technological development has taken place over the past years, resulting in the shift from analogue to digital system. I think, we all agree, this is an inevitable process which has resulted in the gradual phasing out of the analogue system. The MBC cannot lag behind and not keep pace with these technological changes that are happening. In any case, I am told analogue television is going to be phased out practically by the year 2010 or 2011.

I am informed by the Director-General of the MBC that, as at 23 November 2007, a total amount of Rs42.3 m. was paid to two suppliers, namely Decibel SA of Switzerland and Sony Professional Solutions Middle East of Dubai.

International tenders were launched and bids were evaluated by a Technical Committee of the Corporation. Following a decision of the MBC Board, a Consultant from the All India Radio/Doordarshan Staff Training Institute (Technical) was appointed to vet the recommendations of the MBC Technical Committee to retain the offers of Decibel SA for radio equipment and Sony Professional Solutions Middle East for TV equipment. The consultant had long discussions and looked at all the decisions, and I think he made some recommendations, but finally endorsed the final recommendations of the MBC Technical Committee.

I am further informed that 95% of the radio equipment has been supplied and installation is in progress. As far as TV equipment is concerned, 98% thereof has been supplied, and installation started already two weeks ago.

As regards part (e) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the relocation project, the MBC cannot lag behind as the world is witnessing a digital revolution, as I mentioned, and the analogue system is being gradually phased out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the MBC that all procurement procedures have been followed, and CTB's approval has been obtained.

**Mr Bhagwan:** M. le président, puis-je savoir du Premier ministre si la MBC a déjà pris la décision de rebaptiser les chaînes ?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker, Sir. Does the hon. Member mean that they will change it from MBC 1, 2, 3?

**Mr Bhagwan:** I don't know. That's why I am asking. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister what progress we have achieved as far as the Ebène project is concerned? The Prime Minister has just stated that, whatever happens, we will have to invest into the Ebène project. Can we know whether a study has been made as far as further investment is concerned in case the Ebène project is implemented?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say, in all frankness, there are so many criticisms that I have asked the MBC to look at upgrading the *formation* of journalists, and not just look at constructing buildings.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the MBC or his office has figures as to the number of *décodeurs* there are in the country for receiving digital television? What is the broad plan to bring down the price of such *décodeurs*?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, as I mentioned earlier, I don't have the exact number with me. I have not asked for the details. But, we are looking at ways of making it more sensibly available.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, heavy investment is being made at the MBC/TV, which is a public company. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that people have stopped looking at the MBC/TV? With the coming into operation of private radios, as per the surveys made, there is a decrease in the number of people listening to the radio. Is the hon. Prime Minister agreeable to ask the MBC/TV to carry out a professional survey, to see why people have stopped watching the MBC/TV? Is it because of too many politics, too many new actors on the MBC/TV? We are paying Rs100. Can the hon. Prime Minister look into it?

**Mr Speaker:** I will request the hon. Member to curtail his question.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am putting questions, because we are paying Rs100, Sir! In view of the coming into operation of this new equipment, we will stop seeing everyday Ministers on TV for hours.

**Mr Speaker:** I rule this question out of order. It does not have any connection with the main question.

## **SUGAR SECTOR REFORM - GOVERNMENT/MSPA - NEGOTIATIONS**

**(No. B/1178) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the sugar sector reforms, he will state if any negotiation is ongoing between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, discussions between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association on the sugar sector reforms are ongoing.

Several meetings have been held with the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association and their representatives.

Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, I do not propose to make any further comments at this stage. But, I will make a comprehensive statement to the House in due course.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has set himself a time-frame for the completion of the discussion?

**The Prime Minister:** Not a particular time-frame, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, we all know that there is a deadline.

## **SEBASTOPOL & LESUR VILLAGES – CASES OF THEFTS**

**(No. B/1179) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the reported alleged cases of thefts at the Sebastopol and Lesur Villages over the last three months, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof and the outcome of the inquiry in each case.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 12 cases of theft have been reported to the Police during the past three months. In one case, an accused has been arrested and charged accordingly. The other cases are still under investigation by the local CID.

I am also informed that the local CID is closely monitoring the movements of habitual criminals while the support of the Crime Prevention Unit has been enlisted to conduct a crime prevention sensitisation campaign in the area.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the Prime Minister will agree that 12 cases in a period of three months are quite on the high side. According to the inhabitants, regular patrols are not done, even after 12 thefts have been reported.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would have thought it is good if the number is on the high side. It means that there are actually cases prosecuted. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, there are cases reported, but there are not enough cases prosecuted. For example, in 2004, there were 116 cases reported, but there were only five cases prosecuted. Now, we are having an increase in the number of prosecutions.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the people there are traumatised. Some of them told me that when they go to the Police Station after a theft, they do not get the collaboration of the Police Officers. At least, they do not come on the site immediately. They ask the people to go home, and then, as in the Indian movies, they come after 30 minutes or one hour.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would not have made these comments on Indian movies. I don't think it is appropriate for the hon. Member to criticise Indian movies. I am sure that he watches Indian movies!

*(Interruptions)*

It is a pity the hon. Member chose Indian movies! He could have chosen something else! It is exactly the same type of problem that hon. Mrs Juggoo had in her constituency. It is not different. This is why I said that we have to look into the training of the Police Officers.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sebastopol and Lesur villages are being served by the Montagne Blanche Police Station. Probably, that explains why there is some delay. Can I request the hon. Prime Minister to impress upon the Commissioner of Police to ensure that there are additional vehicles at the Montagne Blanche Police Station, so as to enable them to be on call to the surrounding villages whenever there is an emergency.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, I should say that the Police station of Montagne Blanche, which includes also Sebastopol, covers an area which is 62.2 square kilometres and has a population of roughly 36,000; the other one was 35,000, but I will ask the Commissioner of Police whether that is possible.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the villages of Sebastopol, Lesur, Pellegrin and Clavet are in the same village council area. Can the Prime Minister check? According to the information brought to me, Clavet which is a small village - where the Prime Minister has been - is covered by Bel Air Police station. If this is the case, it must be covered by Montagne Blanche Police Station.

**The Prime Minister:** I don't have the name of Clavet here. Probably, it is right what the hon. Member is saying. I say 'probably' because I don't know. But I will look into that matter. I think that is a valid point, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## TROMELIN - FISHING LICENCES

(No. B/1180) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the economic zone of the Island of Tromelin, he will state if fishing vessels operating thereat are still being issued with fishing licences.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, both local and foreign fishing vessels are granted licences by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries to operate in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius.

According to our Constitution, Tromelin forms an integral part of the State of Mauritius and as such, licences granted by the Mauritian authorities allow fishing vessels to operate, *inter alia*, in the waters including surrounding the areas of waters of Tromelin. However, the attention of licensees is drawn to the fact that there exists a dispute between Mauritius and France concerning sovereignty over Tromelin and its surrounding waters.

**Mr Bérenger:** May I ask the Prime Minister whether he is sure that all the vessels that take a fishing licence for our economic zone generally are, indeed, warned that the waters around Tromelin are under our sovereignty but, because there is a dispute they could then be in trouble with the French authorities as has happened some months back?

**The Prime Minister:** I am told, in fact, that they are warned that this is possible. This is the information that I have.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether it is true to say that since 2004 no licences have been issued to any fishing vessel to fish around Tromelin? I have learnt that since 2004 no particular fishing licences have been issued after the incident that happened with two Japanese fishing vessels.

**The Prime Minister:** I am not aware of that. In fact, I have checked with the Ministry of Agro Industry; this does not seem to be our information, but we can look into the matter again. When the incident happened in 2004,

quite understandably, we have to re-look at things and make sure that we don't have further incidents.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the dispute that is occurring around those fishing issues, would the hon. Prime Minister intend to review the Protocol that we are having with the European Union regarding the fishing licences issued to fishing vessels from European countries in our waters?

**The Prime Minister:** This is something which is part of the negotiations that are going on.

## **DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS - SECURITY MEASURES**

**(No. B/1181) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to diplomats and diplomatic premises, he will state if he has received representations from the foreign missions for the provision to them of special security measures.

**The Prime Minister:** I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/1032 on 06 November 2007. I am informed that complaints on the issue of safety and security have been received recently at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation, from some diplomatic missions in Mauritius.

All complaints are closely examined and remedial action is taken accordingly. In this connection, a committee has been set up under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation to look, *inter alia*, into the safety and security arrangements in the foreign missions in Mauritius. These include –

- (i) the appointment of a contact person in all foreign diplomatic missions to act as liaison officer with the Police;
- (ii) the setting up of a mechanism for the provision of progress reports to the diplomatic missions following reports of thefts and intrusion, and

- (iii) the provisions to all the diplomatic missions based in Mauritius of a list of contact details of all Divisional Commanders of the Police Department.

In addition, sentry services are also provided to the Embassies by the Police on request.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact - in the written answer given by the hon. Prime Minister - there have been five cases against members of staff of diplomatic missions and two cases of theft and attempt in larceny, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there was a circular note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the missions telling them to take special measures in view of the situation prevailing in Mauritius?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, it is logical; we say that generally to the public as well that we should take some basic precautions.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether at a Chinese Embassy - in the answer given to me two weeks back - there was a meeting held on this issue at the Police headquarters and there was a site visit carried out at the Embassy? May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether special measures have been taken to reinforce the security on those premises? May I ask him to confirm this information?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a complaint and I don't want to go into the details, because an inquiry is going on. There have been meetings with them to upgrade security there. They had security there; they had a sentinel there, but in spite of that, this happened and we have tried to upgrade the security there.

**CUREPIPE POLICE STATION – HIGH-RANKING POLICE  
OFFICER - LOCKER**

**(No. B/1182) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether a certain sum of money was recently discovered in a locker which belonged to a high-ranking Police Officer who was posted at the Curepipe Police Station.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that this information which has appeared in Week-End newspaper on 18 November 2007 and taken up by Radio Plus on 19 November 2007 - he maintains - is totally false, but I don't want to prejudice the issue because at present there is a police inquiry on the matter. I understand that Week-End has republished the article and the police are inquiring.

I think it would be inappropriate for me to make any further comment on that.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister when did the Commissioner of Police inform him of this matter?

**The Prime Minister:** I doubt that's the job of the Commissioner of Police to inform me what is written in the newspapers.

**Mr Bodha:** When exactly he was informed that there was this article?

**The Prime Minister:** The article was published, I believe, on a Sunday and it was probably on a Monday. I don't expect the Commissioner of Police to come and tell me what is reported in the papers, because so many false news are reported that they will use all the time.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer last time, he said that “I was informed by the Commissioner of Police, he called me”. So, that was what the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he was aware that this piece of news, whether proven or not, had been in circulation in editing rooms since the beginning of November? Is he aware of this?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say to the hon. Member, with all due respect, that so many false news are printed not only on Government side, but also on Opposition side when they were in Government, then circulated as if it is the truth, and this is the problem. That is why I want to make sure that this does not happen. We have to give evidence and we have to go by evidence. Unfortunately, Mauritians believe what they read in the newspapers unless we can do something about it.

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the journalist from Radio Plus, Josian Valère, has specified that he has checked and counter-checked his information before putting it on air?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister has said that the matter is *sub judice*. The question which the hon. Member is putting might prejudice the inquiry which is going on. So, I will ask the hon. Member not to put questions which might prejudice the case.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact the hon. Prime Minister said that he has been informed by the Commissioner of Police and the fact that the journalist has said that he has confirmed the news from a Member of Government, may I ask him whether any Member of his Government has raised this matter with him?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must tell the hon. Member that the Police are inquiring and I hope all the truth will come out, if it is true or if it is not true. There has been an allegation; the Commissioner of Police says it is totally false, but there is an inquiry. I suppose once the inquiry is terminated it will be sent to the DPP. I have all respect for journalists who do their job, I must say, in spite of what some people think. If the journalist has confirmed and is sure of the matter, he has nothing to fear; all this will come out, and I hope it will come out.

**Mr Speaker:** May I remind the hon. Member that questions shall not be asked whether statements in the press or from private individuals are true or not true?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bodha:** I will go by your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

I say order! The hon. Member can put his question.

**Mr Bodha:** To come back to the issue of the locker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm that at the Central CID of Curepipe, there is a room for exhibits of value, that is, valuables, jewellery, bank notes, whose key is in the custody of the Superintendent in charge of that Division? Can he confirm that?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't know who keeps what key, Mr Speaker, Sir, but it has to be somebody's control; I think it is with a high level Police officer.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he does not agree with me that the thing to do is not to arrest journalists and so on after more than a week, but to have a *mise au point* sent immediately. The Commissioner of Police has press officers; he has officers whose job it is to read the press, to follow up and so on. Can I ask whether he does not agree with me that as from now, when something is considered false news and appears, it is the duty of the press officers in the Police to send a *mise au point*?

**Mr Speaker:** Order now!

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, there was a case recently - I cannot remember the details - where I told the Commissioner of Police why he does not put a communiqué. His answer was that: 'if we have to put communiqué, we would have to do it everyday'. But I will take up the matter again with him.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! The Table has been informed that Parliamentary Question No. B/1185 has been withdrawn.

### **CITÉ LA CURE HEALTH CENTRE – EXTENSION WORKS**

**(No. B/1188) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if there is any project for the extension of the *Cité La Cure* Health Centre and, if so, when works are likely to start.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, which is responsible for the implementation of infrastructural projects that designs and tender documents for the extension of *Cité La Cure* Community Health Centre has been finalised. That Ministry is now in the process of launching tenders for construction which is expected to start around mid May 2008 and will be completed within nine months.

In the meantime, my Ministry has initiated procedures for the renting of a building to relocate the Community Health Centre during the construction works. The closing date for submission of tenders is 12 December 2007.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Can the Minister confirm that in reply to PQ No. B/279, the tender was expected to come out in October 2007 and work was supposed to start in November 2007 and not 2008?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I asked the same question to MPI and I was told that the consultant, who is in charge of preparing drawings and the tender documents, has been late in the submission of the documents.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether his Ministry has had any meeting with the inhabitants of *Cité la Cure* with regard to that Community Health Centre and have they been informed of the delay regarding the construction?

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

### **LE CORNU – SPORTS COMPLEX - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/1189) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a sport complex at Le Cornu, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to P.Q. No. B/476 on 22 May 2007, I indicated to the House that an alternative site would be identified by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the setting up of a sports complex in the region.

Following a site visit effected by officials of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and my Ministry together with the *forces vives* of the region, the identified site at *Cité la Cure* was not found appropriate.

Accordingly, my Ministry is liaising with the Ministry of Housing and Lands with a view to identify a suitable site which would be acceptable to all parties concerned, especially the *forces vives* of the region.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Can the Minister confirm when that appropriate time will be? Because as regards reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/476, it was said that an alternative site....

**Mr Speaker:** I think the hon. Member will have to rephrase her question because she is not allowed to put the same question in the same current session. The hon. Member should rephrase her question.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm when it is expected to start the construction of the sports complex?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** As I said, once the site will be identified, we are going to process.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member can ask why there has been delay, for example.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House why there has been a delay?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** The site, which had been identified, was not an appropriate one.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Since the Minister acknowledges that there has been a delay, has the Minister found it fit to inform the *forces vives* of that region of the reason therefor?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I can assure the hon. Member that this has been done.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I know from the Minister when and where this was done?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** It was on Sunday.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Suite à ma question posée en mai 2006...

**Mr Speaker:** Encore une fois, je demanderais à l'honorable membre de ne pas se référer aux questions qui ont déjà été posées *in the current session*.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le ministre pourrait dire à la Chambre, si autant de temps est pris pour trouver un terrain adéquat, combien de temps cela va-t-il prendre pour faire construire le *sports complex*?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Je peux assurer à l'honorable membre que cette situation ne date pas d'aujourd'hui, mais le nécessaire sera fait pour qu'il y ait ce *sports complex*?

## MONTAGNE LONGUE – HOSPITAL

**(No. B/1190) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a hospital at Montagne Longue, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/277 in May 2007 wherein the House was informed that – ‘due to financial and economic constraints, the project has been rescheduled to be implemented at a later stage’. Being given the limited funds available and the urgent projects which need to be implemented such as the construction of the new Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital and the extension of the Accident and Emergency Department at SSRN Hospital, the construction of a new hospital at Long Mountain will be considered at a later stage.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm if the building has been demolished and if so, what part?

**Mr Faugoo:** As I said in my last reply, Mr Speaker, Sir, the building has been demolished, but I cannot recall which part exactly.

**Mrs Juggoo:** The hon. Minister is saying that there are other hospitals that are more important than the Long Mountain hospital right now. When will the construction works be carried out?

**Mr Faugoo:** I cannot answer at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le ministre a effectué un *site visit* à Montagne Longue?

**Mr Faugoo:** I made a site visit last year, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## NOTRE DAME – ROAD SAFETY

(No. B/1191) **Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he has received complaints from the inhabitants of Notre Dame regarding insecurity of the pedestrians in the vicinity of the mosque and the bakery of Notre Dame and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** Sir, following a road accident which occurred on 20 September 2007 at Notre Dame, my Ministry received requests for enhancing road safety in the locality. These requests were about installation of road humps along the main road as well as other road safety measures thereon.

As Montagne Longue/Crève Coeur road (B19) is a classified road, it is not the policy to install humps on such roads, except near schools, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has proposed the following road safety measures at Notre Dame –

- (i) painting of single and double yellow lines at Notre Dame Bridge;
- (ii) construction of 28 metres footpath/footbridge to link the existing footpath, and
- (iii) painting of 1.4 kilometres of edge marking on both sides of the road from NHDC complex to Kaylash *Quincaillerie*.

The painting of yellow lines have already been completed.

As regards the painting of the 1.4 kilometres of edge marking, it is proposed to carry out the works in the course of next month.

Concerning the construction of footpath and a footbridge to link the existing footpath, same will be executed by the Road Development Unit Authority in the next financial year.

**Mr Speaker:** The Table has been informed that PQ Nos. B/1192, B/1208, B/1209, B/1210, B/1219, B/1222 and B/1223 have been withdrawn.

## **SORÈZE – JURISDICTION – BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

(No. B/1192) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) **asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if he will consider placing the region of Sorèze under the jurisdiction of the Black River District Council, in view of its proximity thereto and, if so, when.**

*(Withdrawn)*

## **SOLITUDE – SPORTS COMPLEX – LAND ACQUISITION**

**(No. B/1193) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the project for the construction of an omni sport complex in Solitude, he will state if land was compulsorily acquired therefor and, if so, state –

- (a) the name of the former owner, indicating -
  - (i) the extent thereof and
  - (ii) if it was agricultural or otherwise
- (b) if the land was valued by a Government Valuer and, if so, indicate -
  - (i) the assessed value and
  - (ii) the actual value proposed by Government and
- (c) if the complex has been constructed and, if not, the reasons therefor.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the said land of an extent of 4.22A was compulsorily acquired from Harel Frères Ltd at Solitude on 22 December 1999. At the time of acquisition, the said plot of land was under sugar cane cultivation.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that the land was assessed on 15 March 2000 by the Chief Government Valuer at Rs4.5 m. and an offer of the same amount was made to the owner on 17 August 2000. The owner protested against the amount on 12 September 2000. The matter was subsequently referred to a Board of Assessment on 17 April 2002 and the Board of Assessment awarded a sum of Rs8.5 m. for the land.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am further informed that the land was vested in the Ministry of Youth & Sports on 14 January 2000, but it did not develop it. On 04 June 2004, the Ministry of Youth & Sports returned the land in question to my Ministry.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut informer la Chambre si le ministère des terres et du logement a reçu une demande de la part d'un groupe privé pour l'utilisation de ce terrain?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have received a request from a private investment holding company on 17 March for the setting up of a *village des entrepreneurs*.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether this company's name is Padkam?

**Mr Dulull:** The request is from Padkam Investment Holding Ltd.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether it would be in order to acquire land from taxpayers' money and to give it to private bodies?

**Mr Dulull:** The land was initially acquired for the development of a sports complex. In June 2004, the Ministry of Youth and Sports returned the land to my Ministry and up to now, the land is still remaining idle until the request was made, and it is being considered.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that there has been a famous case in the past by the Supreme Court that land, compulsorily acquired in the public interest, cannot go to any private company or individual, can I know whether Government has any other public project for that piece of land?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I need notice of this question. But when land is acquired for a particular purpose and there is a change thereof we have to go back to the original owner. In this case, we have consulted the original owner before considering the new request.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any letter of reservation has been given to Padkam Investment Holding Ltd?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have written to the company to inform them that their request is being considered.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister be agreeable to lay a copy of that letter on the Table of the Assembly? Is the hon. Minister aware that this company, *qui est proche du pouvoir*, is negotiating with people to sell this State land?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is making mere allegation. Should he be able to substantiate his case, I will invite him to come forward.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, what I heard, I can hardly believe my ears! The hon. Minister says that his Ministry has sent a letter to a private entrepreneur, telling him that his request is being considered. It's *élémentaire*, that it is unconstitutional, even that letter. Can I appeal that this letter be withdrawn forthwith?

**Mr Dulull:** I will look into the matter. At this stage, we are at the level of considering and we have followed all the procedures.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order now!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, just to get things clear, I would like to know if the hon. Minister is ready to table all the documents concerning this plot of land?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we will table the request from the company. We have followed all the procedures. Should there need to table the documents, we will do so!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order now! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have asked that a copy of the letter issued to that company be tabled. Is the hon. Minister agreeable?

**Mr Dulull:** We will consider and the acknowledgement letter ...  
(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that he contacted the original owner. Can we know whether he wanted to get back the land or he allowed the Ministry to use the land for other purposes?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the original owner had no objection that the land be used for any other purpose.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table the letter where the original owner has stated that he is not willing to take back the land?

**Mr Dulull:** I will table the letter.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as a taxpayer, I am asking the hon. Minister if he is prepared to table all the documents concerning this transaction?

**Mr Dulull:** I'll look into it.  
(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister said he would look into it.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Au nom de la transparence, je demande au ministre de déposer tous les documents.

**Mr Speaker:** *Le ministre a répondu.* He said he would look into the matter. Last question!

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he sought the advice of the State Law Office before issuing the letter?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we followed all the necessary procedures.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL - INTRODUCTION

**(No. B/1194) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to the proposition for the introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill to provide citizens with a right of access to personal information held by State agencies and to information relating to Government business, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members will recall that at a previous sitting I did inform the House that my office is working on this project. I did also inform hon. Members of the complexities of this project and draw attention to the fact that fundamental issues and detailed implications of such a legislation are being considered and that, in due course I shall come up with a document which shall be circulated to all stakeholders for their views and suggestions and, hopefully, that will be done before March 2008.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in my previous Parliamentary Question, the hon. Minister answered: “This matter is under active consideration.” I would like to know what he meant by “active consideration”?

**Mr Speaker:** As I just said, the hon. Member should not refer to questions which have been put in the current session. He should rephrase his question.

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

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

## SSS, TRIOLET — LAND ACQUISITION

**(No. B/1195) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the compulsory acquisition of the four plots of land in Triolet for the construction of a State Secondary School, he will consider laying on the Table copy of –

- (a) the minutes of proceedings of the meetings held in relation hereto;
- (b) the award of the Board of Assessment, and
- (c) the report of the Government Valuer.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both PQ B/1195 and PQ B/1203 which relate to the same subject of compulsory acquisition of four plots of land for the extension of the State Secondary School Triolet.

I refer the two hon. Members to my replies to PQ B/1008 on 07 August 2007 and to PQ B/1053 on 06 November 2007, as well as to the Statement I made on Tuesday 13 November 2007, when I tabled two location plans of the four plots of land compulsorily acquired. I am now tabling copy of a letter dated 06 November 2002 from the Chief Government Valuer wherein he himself advised that the three plots of land in question may be referred to a Board of Assessment for determination.

I have nothing to add to my referred two replies and statement.

However, in regard to the specifics of PQ B/1195, I am advised that it would not be proper for me to table the papers referred to in parts (a), (b) and (c) thereof as they concern the Board of Assessment which is independent and which makes its award in its own deliberate judgment after taking into accounts all the facts of the case, including the documents submitted to it and which thus became its property, for example minutes of proceedings of the Board of Assessment itself.

In regard to the specifics of Parliamentary Question B/1203, I also refer the hon. Member to the two location plans I have already tabled.

Finally, Sir, all the four plots of land in question fall within the boundaries of irrigation area classified as primary agricultural land in accordance with the M.S.I.R.I classification map 2002, and, despite this fact, the Outline Scheme North 1995 failed to take this geographical and topographical reality into consideration, by discriminating between one specific plot and three other plots of land that all fall within the boundaries of the same irrigation area and on this specific plot of land described as “residential” can still be seen, and visibly so, irrigation pipes and manhole.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the price originally requested by the four former land owners through their Attorney-at-law?

**Mr Dulull:** This question has already been canvassed both in parliamentary questions and only statement.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information, they agreed for a sum of Rs4 m. and Government paid Rs5m. I would like to know from the Minister if he considers this to be proper?

**Mr Dulull:** As I stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, award was made by the Board of Assessment in its own deliberate judgement.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that a settlement was reached between parties at the level of the Board of Assessment? Is that correct?

**Mr Dulull:** The award was decided by the Board of Assessment.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can I ask the Minister whether, when the settlement was made, it was the Chief Government Valuer who went to the Board of Assessment to say that he has no objection that the award be at the rate of Rs5 m. per arpent?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said so many times that the final decision was from the Board of Assessment because the matter was referred to it.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can I know from the Minister, when the settlement was reached, who was the officer who told the Board of Assessment that there was no objection that Rs5 m. per arpent be granted to the land owners?

**Mr Dulull:** I need to refer to the file, but as far as I am concerned, it was the Board of Assessment that gave the award.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guinness:** Can I refer the Minister to his own statement --

“On 06 February 2007, the then Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, following consultation with the State Law Office and advising on the stand of my Ministry, informed the SLO that there would be no objection to compensation being paid to the three owners at the rate of Rs5 m .”

So, this is a settlement.

**Mr Dulull:** Like I said, we sent a letter of “no objection” to the SLO to mention the stand of the Ministry, but we never interfered with the award at the level of the Board of Assessment.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the Minister whether he gave his approval to the Permanent Secretary to make that statement at the Board of Assessment?

**Mr Dulull:** At the level of the Board of Assessment, we are represented by the State Law Counsel.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister whether it was the Government Valuer or the Chief Government Valuer who advised the Minister or the Permanent Secretary that a sum of Rs5 m be granted to the land owners per arpent?

**Mr Dulull:** The hon. Member seems to suggest that the Chief Government Valuer is now substituting himself to the Chairman of the Board of Assessment.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Lesjongard:** When we refer to the Land Acquisition Act with regard to part III - Compensation, Apportionment of Rent and Rescission of Leases, at section 16 – an authorised officer, in the case of an assessment, has to submit a report and the reasons for his opinion on the nature of the land, the value of the land, the amount of any compensation to be paid, the description of the land and any apportionment of the compensation. Can the Minister inform the House who was the authorised officer who submitted that report?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Let the Minister answer!

**Mr Dulull:** I have already explained the mechanism behind the award.

*(Interruptions)*

It is not the Ministry which awarded the sum; it is the Board of Assessment which acts independently.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker Sir, the Minister said, in his statement, that there was no objection to compensation being paid to the three owners at the rate of Rs5 m. per *arpent* based on the initial assessment of the Chief Government Valuer, when he himself in his reply said that the Chief Government Valuer gave the value of Rs450, 000 per *arpent*.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker Sir, the hon. Member got my statement wrong.

*(Interruptions)*

The initial assessment on the plot belonging to Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar was Rs5 m. per *arpent*. I am going to table the letter which is from the Chief Government Valuer.

As regards the three other plots, they may be referred to the Board of Assessment for determination. That letter dates back to November 2002. For three years nothing was done; and when I took office, I wanted to do justice to the aggrieved owners. That was what we did, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker Sir, I come back to the question again. I made reference to the Land Acquisition Act with regard to compensation. My question is very clear. I refer to section 16; I want to know who was the authorised officer who submitted the report to the Board of Assessment.

**Mr Dulull:** Like I mentioned, we don't interfere. I have explained how the award was given. We only issue a letter to our counsel but the Board of Assessment, in its own deliberate judgment, gave the award.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Guimbeau, last question!

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, tout ceci est un scandale. Un scandale énorme ! Au nom de la transparence, M. le président, en tant qu'un citoyen Mauricien, si le Ministre n'a rien à cacher, ce que la Chambre lui demande, c'est de déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée tous les documents dont j'ai fait mention dans ma question.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker Sir, I cannot table documents which are outside my control. I can table documents that are within my ambit; and I am going to table what has been written by the Chief Government Valuer.

### **LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECTS JULY 2005 TO NOVEMBER 2007**

**(No. B/1196) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the new low cost housing projects initiated by Government since July 2005 to date, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof, constituency-wise;
- (b) the sites identified, and
- (c) the amount earmarked and spent in each case.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker Sir, in regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am advised that the NHDC is presently implementing a low cost housing project (Firinga) for the construction of 533 housing units over 6 sites in 6 constituencies as follows:-

(i)	Rose Belle	-	84 units
(ii)	Ville Noire	-	70 units
(iii)	Rivière des Anguilles	-	91 units
(iv)	Bambous	-	78 units
(v)	Henrietta	-	156 units

(vi) Chebel	-	<u>54 units</u>
TOTAL		<u><b>533 units</b></u>

The total contract sum for the 533 units is MUR 242,289,474.40.

I am further informed that the contract price includes the infrastructure cost and building cost. The infrastructure cost for this project amounts to some Rs123 m. out of which Rs28 m. have already been disbursed. The building cost is met by the NHDC through guaranteed loan taken by the Company. I am additionally advised that 70% of the building works have already been completed.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the projects concerning Constituency No. 17?

**Mr Dulull:** The housing policy is not constituency-wise; it is nation-wide. We are addressing housing problems nation-wide.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Do I to understand by this, Mr Speaker Sir, that there is not one single house being built in Curepipe/Midlands?

**Mr Dulull:** More than 30 years no single house has been built in my constituency!

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Bodha

### **MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS - BUG DETECTOR**

(No. B/1197) **Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether he will state if his Ministry is alleged to have caused to be imported a bug detector without obtaining the relevant clearances.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a number of reports and comments which have appeared in the media, both written and spoken have falsely...

**Mr Speaker:** Can I remind the hon. Minister that he cannot bring into his answers whatever the media has published.

**Mr Sinatambou:** I am informed that a number of reports and comments have falsely alleged that my Ministry has caused to be imported a bug detector without obtaining the relevant clearances and that Customs has forfeited same.

I am advised that these false allegations are defamatory and constitute a *prima facie* case of publishing false news of such a nature as to trouble public peace. I wish to inform the House that the matter has been referred to the Commissioner of Police for a criminal inquiry to be instituted at his end.

**Mr Bodha:** My question is very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir. Has there been the importation of a bug detector?

**Mr Sinatambou:** The question of the hon. Member is very clear and simple: whether my Ministry is alleged to have caused to be imported a bug detector without obtaining the relevant clearances. And the answer was also very clear: Not at all! All clearances were obtained and any allegation to that effect as alleged in the question is false and the matter has been referred to the Commissioner of Police for a criminal investigation to be started.

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the hon. Minister what is the purpose of having a bug detector at his Ministry?

**Mr Sinatambou:** First of all, a Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications surely has everything to do with any technology, whether it be a bug detector and so on and so forth.

In any event, the decision was taken at my Ministry to consolidate measures aimed at securing confidentiality and eliminating the risk of bugs being introduced within the premises of my Ministry.

*(Interruptions)*

Of course, not on this side of the House! This is about bugs being introduced within the premises of the Ministry. Accordingly, it was decided to arrange for the purchase of this bug detector.

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the hon. Minister who is the officer who decided on the specifications of this bug detector? What is the brand of the equipment and what was its cost?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Specifications for the equipment were prepared at the level of my Ministry – I don't know by whom; I don't look at that – and, in line with established procurement procedures, a quotation form was prepared, inviting bids for the supply of the bug detector.

I am informed that, on completion of the evaluation exercise, an order was placed on 28 September 2007.

I am also informed that on 05 October 2007, a letter was issued to the Customs Division of the MRA, requesting the needful to be done for the clearance of the equipment.

I am finally informed that the equipment was delivered at my Ministry on 11 October 2007, after clearance by the Customs Division.

**Mr Bodha:** I have not had the answer as regards the cost. I have another question: who is going to man the bug detector at the Ministry?

**Mr Sinatambou:** The reason for which it went to the whole procurement procedure is that this equipment would have been kept at the store of the Ministry. That is why the Ministry proceeded officially, and from then on, whenever required, anyone could have switched it on and I presume that it is the Stores Officer who would have come and checked it.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is simple: what is the cost of the detector? And who has the expertise? Does the hon. Minister have an officer in his Ministry whose scheme of duties relates to the manning and handling of a bug detector?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** I do not think it requires manning as such. I believe you would simply switch it on. I have myself never seen it nor manipulated it. Secondly, the stated price - from the quotation form - is 6,500 Rands, which is about Rs29,000 to Rs35,000.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Are we to understand from the hon. Minister that he has doubts that his own conversations are being tapped?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Everyone knows that there are long-standing instructions at the level of all Ministries to the effect that mobile phones are not allowed in the office of Ministers. From the time I was a public servant, that was the rule and that already goes back about ten years ago.

Now, what happens, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that, systematically, people come in my office with their phones in clear violation of all the notices outside the offices and in the office to the effect that it should not be so.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know whether all clearances from the ICTA have been obtained for the importation of this bug detector?

**Mr Sinatambou:** I am informed that a letter was also issued on 09 October 2007 to the ICTA requesting for clearance for the equipment to be removed from Customs.

My information is that it is for the Customs Office to do the needful then. Following the letter of 05 October, addressed to the Revenue Authority, and the letter of 09 October, the forwarding agent got the clearance and cleared it.

**Mr Bhagwan:** At a time when the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is asking the population to *serre ceinture*, to make *sacrifices*, when overtime is being reduced, basic commodities are being reduced in hospitals, was it necessary for the Ministry to buy such a sophisticated equipment?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order now!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the best things that could have happened to me in coming into politics is that accusations, imputations, lies etc. have caused me to go back to the Bible; and what I read is very enlightening, Mr Speaker, Sir. From the new book (Matt 7) it is said –

*“Pourquoi regardes-tu le brin de paille qui est dans l’oeil de ton frère... »*

**Mr Speaker:** Can I ask the hon. Minister to answer the question, please?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order now!

**Mr Sinatambou:** The point I am making, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that, before attempting to see the *brin de paille in my eye*, they should look a the *poutre* in theirs.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I just want to know from the hon. Minister whether permission from the Authority was obtained before importation, or was it when the bug detector was at the Customs that he sought clearance?

**Mr Sinatambou:** I don’t know exactly. What I know, however, is that the Customs cleared it.

**Mr Jhugroo:** M. le président, est-ce que je peux demander au ministre si cet équipement est déjà fonctionnel ?

**Mr Sinatambou :** I have not seen it nor touched it yet, so I can’t say.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I’ll insist on the point, because the law is very clear...

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member cannot insist for an answer if the Minister does not want to answer. The hon. Minister has in anyway given an answer.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** But the law is very clear, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** I will allow the hon. Member to put the question again. If the hon. Minister wants to answer, he will do so, if not, that is in the Standing Order.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have in front of me the Information and Communication Technologies Act 2001. I am referring to Clause 46 – offences, which is very clear.

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister is aware of that.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Clause 46 says, I quote –

“(m) without the prior approval of the Authority, imports any equipment capable of intercepting message;”

Therefore, prior authorisation is needed. May we know the exact date of the letter on which the hon. Minister obtained clearance from the Authority? Can he table copy of that letter relating to that importation?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that there is no legal infringement concerning this case.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when we come to Parliament, we see officers with apparatus detecting whether people are bugging. This Government, through the State Security Service, has such an equipment. Can I know whether the hon. Minister has asked, through the Secretary for Home Affairs, for the State Security Service to come and check all his offices instead of spending and losing public money?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have asked for only two things since my becoming a Minister in my Ministry.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister should not go down memory lane. He should answer the question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am saying it for you to understand the pertinence of what I am going to say. One was a seat and what I got from my Ministry was that they couldn't allow my request for a seat for the time being. The second was the bug detector and they would have known it.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the range of the detector is about 400 metres and his office, being in Air Mauritius building, the Prime Minister's Office will fall within that range?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** I have no idea about the technicalities of the matter, but this detector cannot listen to or tap any telephone conversation.

## **FLOUR – PRICE**

**(No. B/1198) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether in regard to flour, he will state if he has received representations for an increase in the price thereof.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the negative.

**Mr Bodha:** Can I ask the hon. Minister how long will the present stock and the present price last?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another question asked by hon. Ganoo which is quite comprehensive. Can I answer that with your permission?

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, the hon. Minister can do so. What is the number of the question?

**Dr. Jeetah:** It is No. B/1213. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to hon. Ganoo for raising this question which is of vital importance to the country. Flour represents a basic commodity which Government has to make available to ensure food security. The hon. Member will concur with me that such an issue should be treated above party politics.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the State Trading Corporation (STC) has launched an international tender on 05 October 2007 for the supply of 47,000 metric tons of flour representing half of the estimated annual consumption for 2008. At the closing time of the tender, on 26 October 2007, only one bid was received.

The price quoted by the bidder was –

- (i) USD 675 per metric ton for 37 tons of type A (mostly used by bakers)
- (ii) USD 681 per metric ton for 10,000 tons of type B (mostly used by households)

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that no representation has been received for an increase in the price of flour.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, I would like to inform the House as follows –

For year 2006, the quoted price of flour was awarded to the successful and it was USD 294 per metric ton for type A and USD 298 for type B. For year 2007, the quoted price of flour was awarded to the successful bidder and it was Rs12,824 and converted in USD it was 389.50 per metric ton at the date of opening of tender, that is, on 26 October 2006. For the same year and in order to maintain the retail price of flour at Rs5.30 per half kilo, STC has disbursed Rs400 m. as subsidy. If the present offer is to be accepted and with the existing subsidy of Rs400 m. the retail price of flour per half kilo would reach Rs9.18 instead of the actual fixed retail price of Rs5.30, that is, an increase of 73%. Again, if the present offer is to be accepted at this time without subsidy, the retail price of flour per half kilo would reach Rs11.30 instead of the actual fixed retail price of Rs5.30. The House may also wish to note that it would cost over Rs1.1 billion to keep the retail price of flour at its present level.

To come to the question of hon. Bodha, I understand he asked the stock. I'll give all the information with regard to stock. The stock of wheat flour at LMLC, as at 26 November, that is, yesterday, stands at 3710 tons. I also inquired about the stock of wheat. As at 27 November, the stock of wheat stood at 8,590 tons and I am given to understand that there is a vessel coming in on Thursday with 11,842 tons.

With regard to the stock at the State Trading Corporation, I understand that wheat flour stock at the shed as at 27 November, that is, today, stood at 2,912 metric tons and the stock left with LMLC, that is, the sole supplier, to be delivered before the end of this year, stands at 14,914 metric tons.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is very simple. With the present price structure, the present tender and the present stock, how long were we assured to have a regular supply at the same price, for how many more weeks? Together with this question, the other question which follows is: when will the next bid start, that is, the next supply? At what price does the Minister think that the bid would be for the second segment of the year?

**Dr. Jeetah:** The bid, Mr Speaker, Sir, normally takes place for the period of a year, that is, it starts from 01 January till end of the year. I am informed that on this issue there is absolutely no difficulty.

With regard to the provision of flour for next year, STC has taken all the necessary measures required to ensure that there would be flour supply throughout the country. With regard to the price, it is fixed for a year, that is, the price would be fixed as from 01 January this year till end of this year. I have also mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this Government is well aware of the difficulties of the population and we'll do everything within our powers to make sure that there is no increase in the price of flour.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister assure the House and the population at large that for the year 2008 there is not going to be an increase in the price of flour?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I just replied, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the new measures that STC intends to take to ensure supply?

**Dr. Jeetah:** The usual procedure, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the past, STC normally called for a tender for half of the requirements of the country. On this occasion, we've only had one bidder. At this very moment, my officers are talking to the supplier.

### **AMERICAN SITE WEB FACEBOOK - ACCESS**

**(No. B/1199) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information Communications Technology Authority (ICTA), information as to whether, on Thursday 08 November 2007, access to the American site web Facebook was blocked and, if so, if directions were issued to that effect to the Authority, indicating by whom.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 07 November 2007, the ICT Authority issued a directive to all licensed Internet Service Providers to prevent access to website <http://www.Facebook.com>, following reports that the site was hosting contents of a defamatory nature.

In so doing, I am further informed, no directions were issued to that effect to the ICTA which has acted in pursuance of the power conferred upon it under section 17(3) and in accordance with its functions under section 18(1)m of the ICT Act 2001 as amended.

I am also informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that ICTA then established contact with the site administrator for corrective and remedial action. The illegal content was consequently removed.

I am finally informed that on 08 November, the ICT Authority informed the ISP's that the website could be reopened.

**Mr Bhagwan:** M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre si c'est une tentative délibérée du gouvernement encore une fois - nous avons vu récemment ce qui s'est passé en ce qui concerne la presse et les radios privées - de bloquer les informations, de venir avec une attitude répressive?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Not at all, Mr Speaker, Sir! I am informed that the ICT Authority has, in the past, had recourse to similar actions on, at least, two occasions. Firstly, in 2004, following reports that the contents of the website were defaced and more recently, in July this year, when the MGI website was also reported to have been defaced.

In this respect, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me refer the hon. Member to section 18(1)(m) of the Act which states as follows—

“The ICT Authority shall take steps to regulate or curtail the harmful and illegal content on the Internet and other information and communication services”.

They passed that law and should know what this paragraph is all about. There is nothing illegitimate. On the contrary, it is about the respect of the rights of others.

**Mr Bhagwan:** We have to be open. Can I know from the hon. Minister how he reconciles the statement made by Mr Dwarka of the ICTA, stating « *Même si l'on me pose des questions sur la pertinence de la décision consistant à bloquer même temporairement l'accès...* » ? Even Mr Dwarka had reservations about the action.

**Mr Speaker:** Can I inform the hon. Member that he cannot quote statements that have been made?

**Mr Bhagwan:** It is official, Sir!

**Mr Speaker:** No! The hon. Member cannot quote! He must rephrase his question in another way.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether Mr Dwarka of the ICTA has had discussions with him on this issue? We see that Mr Dwarka and the Minister are not on the same wavelength.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not had discussions with the Chairman of the ICTA on that issue. As a matter of fact, it is the Authority, under his chairmanship, which took those steps.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the ICTA received verbal directives from the PMO and his Ministry to do so?

**Mr Sinatambou:** That is totally inaccurate, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## **EX-CHA HOUSING ESTATES – PAS GEOMETRIQUES - PURCHASE**

**(No. B/1200) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether he will state if Government is proposing to amend the law to make provision for the sale of the ex-CHA land found at Pointe aux Piments , Grand Gaube, Trou d'Eau Douce, La ChauX, Flic-en-Flac and Pointe aux Sables, respectively.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of Government's policy of democratising access to land and of empowering people to own land, the State Land Act was amended in April 2007 to allow the owner of an ex-CHA house to purchase the portion of State Land on which stands the owner's house.

Out of the 177 ex-CHA Housing Estates, ten are found on *Pas Géométriques* and nine are on *Pas Géométriques* proclaimed as villages under Section 18 of the *Pas Géométriques* Act of 1982.

The ex-CHA houses at Pointe aux Piments, La ChauX and part of Pointe aux Sables were built on *Pas Géométriques*, while the ex-CHA houses at Grand Gaube, Trou d'Eau Douce and Flic en Flac were built on *Pas Géométriques* proclaimed as villages.

As the law stands today, these portions of land found on *Pas Géométriques* form part of the '*domaine public*' and are '*inaliénable and imprescriptible*', and the State Land Act was amended to cater for those ex-CHA houses found on State land, exclusive of *Pas Géométriques*.

The desirability and advisability of amending the law further to allow the possibility of sale of State land on which stand the ex-CHA houses described by the hon. Member will be considered.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since people are coming at his Ministry and filing in requests for purchasing those plots of land, can the hon. Minister confirm whether instructions have been given to officers of his Ministry to take the requests, but to keep them in abeyance, for the time being?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, the advisability of amending the law will be considered.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the course of the debates on this Bill, I had myself raised this point. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us about the situation? Is there a need for amending the law or not?

**Mr Dulull:** As I mentioned in my reply, as the law stands, we need to further amend it.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may we know how many plots of land are concerned with regard to the *Pas Géométriques*?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated in my reply, we have ten ex-CHA housing estates on *Pas Géométriques*.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the same condition being applied, that is, they cannot sell the land found on the old railway track?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a Government decision not to sell land found on the railway track, in case we will need it for future transport development.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether requests coming from people owning CHA houses on State land are being taken care of by his Ministry?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Government policy is not to re-lease it, but we do have a temporary lease on these houses. As I mentioned, requests are being considered at the level of the Housing Management Unit, but all decisions are taken within the ambit of the legislation, following rules and procedures.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it seems that, for the time being, there are ten ex-CHA housing estates which are found on *Pas Géométriques*. Is the hon. Minister prepared to issue a communiqué informing the people that, for the time being, these portions of land cannot be sold to them?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, they have been informed. When we passed the legislation, we did inform all the ex-CHA owners about the locations that would be put on sale. The public is informed. Should the need to further inform them arise, we will do so in the public interest.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House, out of the 25,000 CHA owners, how many applications have been processed up till now?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the figures. But, should the hon. Member come with a substantive question, I will give him all the details.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another plot of land at Rivière des Galets on which stand CHA houses. This area is not mention in the present question. Can I ask the hon. Minister to take care of that area also, which is on *Pas Géométriques*, when amending the law?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, for sure, we will look into it, because we were the ones to bring the legislation, and we want to bring it to the satisfaction of our people. Of course, we are very attentive to the need of our less privileged citizens.

### **BALACLAVA MARINE PARK – SAGAR HOTEL – EIA APPLICATION**

**(No. B/1201) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Marine Park at Balaclava, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the Sagar Hotel has been delivered with all the necessary permits and clearances to carry out works thereat.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has received an EIA application from Sagar Hotel & Resorts Ltd on 25 October 2007 for the creation of two swimming zones and construction of a jetty in the lagoon within the boundaries of Balaclava Marine Park in front of the hotel site situate at Baie aux Tortues, Balaclava. The application is presently under consideration.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether works have been carried out within the Marine Park?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have read – I can't use the word 'newspapers' – outside that, apparently, some works at night were being undertaken. The following morning, I immediately sent officers, and I have given instructions to the people concerned to stop the works.

## **DRUG ADDICTS - TREATMENT**

**(No. B/1202) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to drug addicts under the age of 18, he will state the treatment available to them.

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

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that most of the treatment and rehabilitation centres falling under the aegis of NATReSA offer necessary treatment to drug addicts irrespective of age. These centres are –

Dr. Idrice Goomany Centre (Day care centre);  
Centre de Solidarité pour une Nouvelle Vie (Residential Centre);  
Chrysalide Centre (Residential centre);  
Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge (Residential Centre);  
HELP de Addiction Centre (Day Care Centre);  
Sangram Sewa Sadan (Day Care Centre);  
Etoile d'Espérance Association Alcool Femmes (Residential Centre);  
Ayurveda Centre (Day Care Centre).

These treatment and rehabilitation centres and associations offer different modalities, ranging from outpatient detoxification to drug-free inpatient rehabilitation, that is, therapeutic community.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a list of all these centres with details of the treatment provided to drug addicts, including those below 18 of age.

**Mrs Labelle:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that when minors are sent to these centres, particularly by social workers, they are being turned down?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I am not aware whether they are being asked to go back, but several of these centres do request the minors to be accompanied by their parents, I mean one responsible party.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the great difficulty, because the parents of many minors in such a situation are already facing problems and they can't be accompanied by them. There are social workers who are taking care of these children, but, unfortunately, they are being imposed a condition that can't be fulfilled, because their parents are not available. Will the hon. Minister look into this matter? Because this is very big hurdle towards the treatment of these children?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I will certainly look at this, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I know that the centres have very good counselling programmes to be able to help the children under age. I do understand the problem that the hon. Member has referred to and we will look into it.

**Mrs Martin:** May I ask the hon. Minister if she has any figures regarding the number of minors being under treatment and how this compares with the number of adults who are undergoing treatment currently?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I have given the figures in the answer which I have circulated; it is quite *minime* compared to adult drug addicts.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister what treatment is being provided to these young drug addicts?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I have just said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are lots of counselling which are being done, but treatment also ranges as from outpatient, detoxification programme and to those which are also known as the drug-free inpatient rehabilitation programme who are mainly the counselling programme to the children below 18 years old.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how she has reacted after the report from the Mauritius Institute of Health stating that one in five of the students in our schools are consuming drugs?

**Mrs Bappoo:** It is not relevant to the proper question which has been put. Of course, anyone hearing about students in schools being taken to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or whatever it is, is a concern to all of us and we need to take appropriate actions concerning counselling or psycho-social programmes or psychological support by social workers doing their programme in the Ministry of Education. I know that my colleague has taken bold steps in having social educators in the schools.

**Dr. Mungur:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether, at this point in time, we do have a national estimate of drug addicts below 18 years old?

**Mrs Bappoo:** Maybe from those cases which are reported to the centres, we can have a broad estimate, but I do not have the figures at hand.

### **SSS – TRIOLET – COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND**

**(No. B/1203) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the plots of land compulsorily acquired for the construction of the State Secondary School at Triolet, he will state if all the plots were found within the

- (a) boundaries of the irrigation area and classified as primary agricultural land, and
- (b) boundary of permitted development under the Northern Outline Scheme.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1195)*

## **SIC - DOMAINE LES PAILLES – RESTAURANTS - SALE**

**(No. B/1204) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the restaurants owned by the State Investment Corporation at Le Domaine Les Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if they have been sold or are on sale and, if so –

- (a) the procedures followed or being followed;
- (b) the name of the successful buyer, if any, and
- (c) the price paid or being offered.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the restaurants owned by the State Investment Corporation at Domaine Les Pailles have not yet been sold.

However, I wish to further inform the House that in line with Government's policy, as announced in the Budget Speech 2006-2007 for SIC to move out from all commercial activities, SIC in October 2006, invited expressions of interest from both local and international firms for development projects in Les Guibies Valley. With respect to the structure of the development project, the proposals could be in the form of equity from strategic partnership to attract international expertise, or management contracts or any other acceptable commercial agreement. Eight expressions of interests were registered at closure.

Out of the eight firms showing their initial interests, only Golf Development International Holdings (GDI), a South African company pursued its interest and submitted its detailed plan. It should be noted that GDI's proposal is not limited to purchase of Domaine Les Pailles Ltee which owns the five restaurants, but it also includes development of the properties owned by Domaine Les Pailles.

GDI intends to form a consortium to purchase and develop the property. The Development project would consist of an integrated project including, *inter alia*, residential apartments, a retail centre, upmarket high-street shopping centre and A-grade office accommodation.

Discussions are still going on with GDI. SIC is proposing to sign an MoU with GDI whereby the latter will be granted a 4 month period to carry out a due diligence exercise in view of submitting to SIC a detailed final plan and feasibility of its overall project.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can inform us how were the calls for offer brought in? Were they through publication in international press, local press, through letters? How were the offers called for?

**Mr Sithanen:** I am not sure, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether it was in the local press or a combination of local and international press. The expression of interest was launched in October 2006 and the deadline for submission of offers was 15 December 2006; and there were eight expressions of interest. I will check the answer for question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition as to whether it was only local or a combination of local and international.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we have the details of the other bidders which, supposedly, pulled out?

**Mr Sithanen:** The information I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that there was one from South Africa, two from France, another one from India, two local, but, very often, when it is local, in fact, they are acting on behalf of a foreign investor. The information I have from SIC is that none of them pursued in detail as GDI has done and GDI is currently doing a due diligence.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the hon. Minister say that none of the bidders – seven, I think - did not go as far as GDI has done. I am very puzzled by the fact that excellent operators come in with a bid and then pull out like that. Can we have the details of the seven bidders, and the reasons as to why they pulled out?

**Mr Sithanen:** I can give the list of those who have bid, Mr Speaker, Sir. The list is as follows –

- (i) Atalis Altus from France
- (ii) Mr André from France
- (iii) someone acting through a lawyer in Mauritius under the name of “Top Event Entertainment Ltd” from UK
- (iv) Aurica City Project, Floréal
- (v) a person who is acting on behalf of a foreigner
- (vi) Lateral Holding from Port Louis
- (vii) ICGTEX Ltd. from Black River.

**Mr Guinness:** Can we know from the hon. Minister whether sale of land owned by SIC at Domaine des Pailles is also involved?

**Mr Sithanen:** If they want to develop the property, as I have just stated in my answer, there will be four components: a residential accommodation, office and two components of retail. It has to be the sale of the land. Or what else would they do? Otherwise, it becomes a management contract.

**Mr Guinness:** Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the price that has been quoted by GDI?

**Mr Sithanen:** There is a price that has been given in US dollars, but obviously this price will depend on the due diligence exercise that is carried. All of us know how this type of bids are done. They do it on the basis of some assumptions that are contained in the document and they need to find out whether the assumption is correct. There is an amount that has been given, but this is subject, obviously, to the due diligence being carried out currently, I understand.

## **MIE REPORT “YOUTH HEALTH RISK BEHAVIOUR IN MAURITIUS”**

**(No. B/1205) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of the report submitted by the Mauritius Institute of Health, entitled “Youth health risk behaviour in Mauritius” and, if so, the measures he has taken so far in connection therewith.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry strongly believes and advocates that a healthy school population is essential for quality education.

I am aware of the report on “Youth Health Risk Behaviour in Mauritius: Prevalence and Determinants” prepared by the Mauritius Institute of Health following a study conducted by the Institute and targeting the youths of the country. While the report under reference constitutes a useful document both in terms of information and preventive actions, I wish to point out that my Ministry is already implementing a series of measures independently of the report.

A Health and Anti-Drug Unit has been set up at my Ministry for the coordination of health promotion and drug prevention activities in the education sector. A whole range of activities has been organised. Some of these are -

- (i) training sessions on HIV & AIDS targeting both teaching and non-teaching staff of private and State secondary schools with the help of the National Aids Secretariat of the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life;
- (ii) organisation of “Drama for Health” concerned with HIV & AIDS and Drugs at Regional and National levels for State and private secondary schools;
- (iii) school based activities related to -
  - World Health Day
  - World No-Tobacco Day
  - World Diabetes Day
  - International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

- Posters Competition on HIV & AIDS and other health issues have been held.

Road Safety Awareness Campaigns are undertaken in conjunction with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping.

My colleagues are aware that we have already banned the sale of soft fizzy drinks in school canteens so that we may protect our youth against emerging diseases such as diabetes and obesity. Other measures are presently being examined to deal with healthy food habits like, for example, replacing oily foodstuff and snacks by more healthy alternatives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, health clubs already exist in almost all State and private secondary schools the main objective of which is to sensitise students on health related issues, including physical activities. An Action Plan has already been elaborated to revitalise health activities at the level of health clubs. My Ministry is also coming up with a proper structure for the operation of health clubs with a Regional Health and Education Council at its apex as announced in the Government Programme 2005-2010.

Furthermore, the document 'Empowering the Nation's Children-Towards a Quality Curriculum-Strategy for Reform' spells out the need to promote an all-round development of the individual – physical, intellectual, social and emotional leading to a balanced, active, healthy and productive lifestyle. In this document, the Ministry has revisited the health and physical education subject which will enable students to develop positive attitudes and values that will encourage them to adopt healthy habits. Physical Education activities have now been revived with schools being encouraged to engage in drills and sports activities. Similarly inter-college national games have also been revived.

In the same context, the modules for teacher training at the MIE cover several aspects of health issues such as sex education, nutrition, communicable and non-communicable diseases, drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

The hon. Member will agree that the recommendations of the report concern all stakeholders and will also require inter and intra ministerial initiatives, which can be envisaged in parallel. In this respect, my Ministry is already working with several organisations, among others, the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, NATReSA, ADSU, ICAC, and Ombudsperson for

Children, Mauritius Research Council, *Action Familiare* and Mauritius Family Planning Association.

All these measures have to be seen within a global and integrated approach to encourage and ensure that our youth develop and adopt healthy lifestyles and eating habits. As and when we go along, adjustments, as required, will be made.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** I will ask the hon. Minister the same question I asked before with respect to drugs. According to that report, one out of five children is, in fact, using drugs. In other words, there is a widespread of drugs in the school. On that particular issue of drugs, I would like to know what are the specific measures his Ministry is undertaking to get rid of this scourge.

**Mr Gokhool:** I have enumerated a whole series of measures. I think that the problem that is being referred to is an international one, and each Government is trying to do its best as referred to by my colleague. My Ministry is working with other Ministries as far as this is concerned. NATReSA is very active in providing training and other support services.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** May we know from the hon. Minister since when his Ministry has embarked on such a project and what has been the outcome so far? Is he satisfied that the targets have been met or not?

**Mr Gokhool:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said at the beginning of my reply, in the context of the reforms, we have reviewed all the initiatives and measures with regard to promoting a healthy student population. In that respect, many problems, which affect the student population, are being addressed. NATReSA is particularly very active, in collaboration with my Ministry, in running a number of workshops, training programmes, poster campaigns to sensitise the youth towards the problem of drugs.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the hon. Minister has laid emphasis on the HIV/AIDS problem. We are all aware that one of the preventive measures is protected sex. May I know from the Minister why his Ministry has not given permission for the installation of condom distributors on the campus of the University?

**Mr Gokhool:** I need to put this issue in perspective, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission. In fact, we have a National AIDS Coordination Committee where Government and NGOs work in terms of the implementation of Government strategy with regard to HIV/AIDS. Secondly, there is a student organisation which organises an activity relating to HIV/AIDS on the campus. They do not announce to the University authorities that they are going to distribute condoms. Thirdly, if we want to have a programme, we have to plan it carefully and ensure that it is sustainable. There was no mention of installation of equipment and all that. When this matter was brought to my attention, I checked and, in the light of the information I had, I said, at this point in time, that we could not go ahead. If the student organisation wishes to go ahead, it will have to sit down with the University authorities, relay with the National AIDS Coordination Committee and work out the proper strategy. May I add, Mr Speaker, Sir - and this is an important issue - that the expert, Dr. Ng Man Sun, has commented on the issue of distribution of condoms and other initiatives. What he said is that, very often, we take initiatives, but there is no forum. This is what he has said -

*‘Mais quand j’étais co-ordinateur au AIDS Unit, je dois le dire, il s’agissait davantage de piecemeal programmes ou de one-off programmes. On organisait quelque chose de grandiose à laquelle il n’y avait pas un bon suivi’*

I don’t want this to happen. I want things to happen properly and, therefore, there must be proper coordination. If things are done along that line with the possibility of sustaining the initiative, I don’t think there will be any problem.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I’ll come back to the issue concerning drugs within the colleges. The hon. Minister has mentioned that NATReSA is doing its work. Can I know how many colleges NATReSA has reached so far during this campaign? What is roughly the percentage?

**Mr Gokhool:** I have some figures which I can communicate to the House. The number of training sessions, between 2003 and 2006, with regard to HIV/AIDS is 168. The student population concerns 114,650 and it is estimated that 7,500 teaching and non-teaching staff

has so far been trained in HIV/AIDS prevention. These are the figures I have.

**Mrs Labelle:** M. le président, le ministre vient de mentionner une organisation sur le campus et je crois qu'il parle de l'organisation *KISS*. Ce sont des jeunes qui, actuellement, essayent de conscientiser, qui font un travail formidable et ils avaient soumis leur programme d'activités et l'une d'entre elles était, justement, l'installation des distributeurs de préservatifs. M. le président, puis-je demander au ministre de revoir cette décision parce que nous avons des jeunes adultes sur le campus et ils n'attendent pas les préservatifs pour avoir une vie sexuelle active. La vie sexuelle active de nos jeunes ne commence pas sur le campus, M. le président, mais malheureusement à partir du primaire.

**Mr Gokhool:** The very basis of the question of the hon. Member does not hold because, as I have said, I have checked the information and I have the report from the University. This organisation did not even publish a brochure to indicate what will be the activity to be conducted on that day. There was no indication as to whether that activity was being organised and if there would be a follow up. I have to check all that. I cannot give authorisation off-hand. I am not saying that this should not be done, but I have to make sure that the conditions are there for the project to go ahead and to be sustained. This is what we did with regard to this project.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the same question asked by my colleague, hon. Mrs Labelle, may I ask the hon. Minister when exactly he learnt about the programme proposed by *KISS*? When was it submitted to him and whether or not that programme was interdicted on the same day that it was supposed to be held?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I remember, it was on the eve that mention was made to me. Then I checked the whole information and, I said, on that occasion, that I don't think it is proper. But if they work out with the University authorities a carefully defined and proper plan as to how it is going to be implemented, I don't think there is any problem on that.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have only one supplementary question. Concerning the intrusion of drugs in schools, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Ministry contemplating, as a measure, the search of students which is prohibited today?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, there is a number of measures. This can be looked into by the officers.

**Dr. Mungur:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think a very important study has been done and, of course, it has some main recommendations which, I believe, Government is addressing. Can I ask the hon. Minister when this programme will be evaluated because of the resources involved?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the report is there. I am sure, in view of the interest of the hon. Member, he should have read the report. I don't find anything new that has been mentioned except the statistics. The problems are known. As I said in my answer, we have already initiated actions in a proactive manner with regard to all those problems. If the hon. Member will look at my answer and the report, he will see that we have already started taking actions well before the report was published. As far as the evaluation is concerned, I think it is a valid point. We will ensure that an evaluation is done so that we can assess the effectiveness of the initiatives we have taken.

## **ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – HOUSEHOLDS - DISCONNECTION**

**(No. B/1206) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the number of households who have had their electricity supply disconnected, since January 2006 to date, on a monthly basis.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the CEB that for the year 2006, 8707 households have had their electricity supply disconnected. The figure from January 2007 to present date is 7,308. I have arranged for a document to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly giving details on the disconnections as well as the number of reconnections for the same period.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned the figure of 2006. How is this figure compared to the previous years? Is there an increase or a decrease?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a decrease, more significantly, for the vulnerable group, that is, those people who have a tariff of 100A, which means those people who use less than 75 Kilowatt hour. It has gone down from 250 in 2006 to 212 this year. So, there is a slight decrease. But I dare say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the CEB has adopted a very positive attitude towards the more vulnerable group, especially, the old-age pensioners. With a view to reducing the number of disconnections effected, the CEB launched a campaign in 2006 to register participating customer telephone numbers on the database. Henceforth, the CEB endeavours to inform the customers having had their contact numbers on its database by phone two days prior to effective disconnection. Electricity supply is effectively disconnected in cases where the overdue amount is not recovered within this delay.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the numerous difficulties which are being faced by consumers, can the hon. Minister pledged with the CEB to be more flexible in terms of repayment. Sometimes, they have got a huge sum of money which they cannot pay in one instalment. May I ask the hon. Minister if there can be some flexibility in terms of part payment so that their electricity is not being disconnected?

**Dr. Kasenally:** As far as I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the policy of the CEB is, as far as possible, not to disconnect, but there is a limit to everything. If you allow huge sums of money, this means that they have not been paying for many months. Actually, the CEB has been directed to be lenient towards the vulnerable group and old-age pensioners. I dare say old-age pensioners get an extra 14 days over and above the delay. Besides, if an old-age pensioner comes with a bill of Rs1,000 and wants to pay Rs500, we will take the Rs500 and then not disconnect it. Facilities and paying by instalments are given to the poor.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that in cases where the electricity supply has already been disconnected, the CEB is not accepting payments by instalments? They want the whole sum to be paid at one go. Will the hon. Minister see to it that arrangements be made with the CEB so that the customers whose services have been disconnected, can pay by instalments?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I think this was the case before I became Minister. But, since then, we have tried to be flexible. But have to use the carrot and the stick. As far as possible, if there is a big sum, there is a sort of negotiation, even with big consumers.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in case of disconnection, I think there is a particular delay, maybe of three weeks or one month, and after that, the person is not allowed to pay a reconnection fee, but they have to go for a new application. Will the hon. Minister confirm this to the House?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I am not aware, but there are certain people who create difficulties for consumers, but, gradually, they are being asked to toe the line of the official policy, that we have to help our customers rather than punish them.

#### **WMA – NON-DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS – BAD DEBTS**

**(No. B/1207) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of public utilities whether, in regard to the unpaid dues to the Waste Water Management Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to a breakdown of the bad debts recorded from its non-domestic clients.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have arranged for a document to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly giving details about the bad debt in respect of non-domestic customers in terms of waste water charges for period August 2001 to September 2007. There are three categories of non-domestic customers –

- (i) MEPZA members;
- (ii) others which fall under industries, commercial, and
- (iii) Government and parastatals

Arrears standing as at 30 September 2007 is as follows –

(i)	MEPZA	Rs37.4 m.
(ii)	Government & parastatals	Rs16.4 m.
(iii)	others – industries, commercial	Rs19.0 m.

It is to be noted that the WMA came into operation in August 2001. The arrears prior to August 2001 were as follows –

(i)	MEPZA	Rs3,408,381.00
(ii)	Government & parastatals	Rs 666,027.20
(iii)	others – industries and commercial	Rs 911,110.50

Since then, the WMA has endeavoured to use all legal instruments in its power to try to make these people pay up their arrears. However, I am very concerned that there are some irresponsible people going around and asking people not to pay wastewater charges. I will ask them to refrain from these measures. If the wastewater system is not financially sustainable, it will crash and we will have a real environmental disaster.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know why the hon. Minister insisted on giving figures for non-domestic. We are not asking for names but, for comparison purposes, can we have the figure for domestic?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is for non-domestic. However, I would not deny that there are some debts from domestic customers. But, by and far, the people do grumble, but they do pay. We have a particular problem with the religious and charitable institutions, but we are trying to persuade them to pay because it is in the interest of this country that we get, as I said, a financially sustainable wastewater system.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether Irrigation Authority owes any amount of money to the Waste Water Authority and, if so, the amount thereof?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I haven't got it offhand. It is quite true that the Irrigation Authority has been taking treated water from the Waste Water Authority at St. Martin and has been using it for irrigation purposes which have been very useful, especially during the drought period. But we are trying to negotiate with them to pay up.

### **SUSPECTS - RIGHTS - SAFEGUARD**

**(No. B/1208) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to the rights of suspects, he will state the additional measures that have been or will be taken for the safeguard thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **GOVERNMENT QUARTERS - RAILWAY CAMP, MAHEBOURG**

**(No. B/1209) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the occupiers of the Government quarters at Railway Camp, Le Quartier, Mahebourg, he will state if his Ministry had required them to vacate the premises and, if so, if this decision has been reviewed since.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **SOCIETE JEUNESSE ET FRATERNITE MUSULMANE DE MAHEBOURG – PLOT OF LAND**

**(No. B/1210) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if he has received any request from the *Société Jeunesse et Fraternité Musulmane de Mahebourg* for the allocation of a plot of land in Beau Vallon, in the Constituency of Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien to be used for religious purposes.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS – BUG DETECTOR**

**(No. B/1211) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to a bug detector recently ordered by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Comptroller of Customs, information as to whether the Customs Department has not approved the clearance thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the bug detector recently ordered by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications was cleared from Customs and delivered on 09 October.

I am further informed that radio communication/telecommunication equipment for commercial use requires “Type Approval certificate” from the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA).

I am further informed that, according to Customs, this bug detector is not classified as radio communication/telecommunication equipment and as such it does not require any clearance certificate from ICTA.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a supplementary question. Did the Customs ask any queries to the Authority prior to the final list?

**Mr Sithanen:** I think it was the opposite.

**PQ No. B/1212 - See “Written Answers to Questions”**

**STC - FLOUR – TENDER**

**(No. B/1213) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to flour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to whether –

- (a) tenders were recently launched by the Corporation for the supply thereof on the local market and, if so –
  - (i) the number of tenders received and,
  - (ii) the price quoted by each tenderer, and
- (b) if he has received representations for an increase in the price thereof and, if so, by how much.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1198)*

### **SECONDARY SCHOOLS - STUDENTS SC/HSC – ATTENDANCE**

**(No. B/1214) Dr. M. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school attendance of students of Form V, Lower VI and Upper VI for the first, second and third terms respectively, regionwise, he will obtain information as to the average thereof.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that the question of absenteeism at school during the third term particularly concerning students of Form V and HSC is not a new phenomenon and has always existed. As I indicated to reply to Parliamentary Question B/428 at our sitting of 22 May 2007, I have taken note of the extent of the problem and in the context of the quality education reforms, I am determined to address and solve the problem. Having said that, there are several factors, both internal and external to the school which adversely impact on the attendance of SC and HSC students at school, particularly, during the third term.

My Ministry is working on several fronts in order to address the problem. Firstly, Heads of schools and teachers have been requested to ensure that the syllabus is not completed too early and that an attractive and well planned school based revision programme is introduced, along with a compressed time table and the re-scheduling of the mock examinations at the beginning of the third term.

Secondly, a committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Technical Officer of my Ministry has been set up to look into the root causes of absenteeism and indiscipline and to make recommendations. In due course, the committee will come up with recommendations to be implemented in 2008.

Thirdly, my Ministry in consultation with the Attorney General's office is looking into the possibility of reinforcing existing legislation regarding attendance at school, including more stringent legal provisions for the award of scholarships. It is hoped that the updated legal provision will act as a deterrent against absenteeism.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only over time that we will assess the degree of effectiveness of these measures but, above all, it will require the concerted efforts of one and all including parents to get students to attend school during third term in accordance with the school calendar.

My Ministry is also coming up with an innovative "100% attendance project" which will target the Form I students in 2008. The project will be run on a pilot basis with the objective of encouraging pupils to go to school for a 100% attendance. The project will be sustained in Form II to Form VI so as to bring about substantial improvement generally in school attendance. In the light of the outcome of the pilot project, same will be generalised for implementation across the secondary schools.

I am tabling the information asked for by the hon. Member in regard to attendance in term I, II and III.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I know from the Minister whether the information that he is circulating is regionwise as the question has asked, that is, the towns and villages?

**Mr Gokhool:** The information is zonewise and the hon. Member will see that, in third term, the attendance is low.

## **CAROLINE/BEL AIR – SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE – UPGRADING WORKS**

(No. B/1215) **Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the upgrading and extension works of the Social Welfare Centre at Caroline/Bel Air, she will state if she has received representations from the President and Members of the Caroline/Bel Air Organising Committee and, if so, where matters stand.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, I have received representations for the upgrading and extension works regarding Social Welfare Centre at Caroline/Bel Air from the Chairman of the Caroline Organising Committee which relate to –

- (i) the construction of a shelter with the profilage and construction of a children's playground cum family corner, a fencing work and embellishment of yard;
- (ii) the extension of the Caroline Health Centre, and
- (iii) the construction of an additional floor at the Caroline Social Welfare Centre building.

Mr Speaker, Sir, several minor upgrading works have been undertaken at the Centre by my Ministry since the first representations were made and as follows –

- (i) they are the placement of naco windows with metal opening amounting to Rs75,000;
- (ii) the purchase of furniture, paintings works and upgrading of toilets amounting to Rs23,750, and
- (iii) the burglar proofing works are being carried out actually by the MPI at a cost of Rs85,000.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has only a capital provision of Rs2 m. for upgrading and maintenance of 54 Social Welfare Centres and 13 Day Care Centres which have to be equitably allocated amount the different centres on a priority basis.

As regards to the construction of a shelter with profilage and construction of children's playground cum family corner, fencing work and embellishment of the yard, the MPI submitted a cost estimate of Rs1.3 m. and owing to financial constraints, my Minister could not undertake the work. I have been informed that the managing committee has now referred the above works to the NDU.

Secondly, as far as the extension of the Caroline Health Centre is concerned, my Ministry has already conveyed approval to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to undertake the relevant works, and thirdly, following information obtained from the Caroline Social Welfare Committee a few months back to the effect that sponsorship is being sort for the construction of an additional floor, my Ministry has requested the MPI to carry out a survey of the structural soundness of the building as it is an old one dating back to 30 years.

MPI has recommended that only a light structure could be erected with strengthening measures to the existing building, consequently, the MPI has been requested to work out a preliminary drawing and to submit a cost estimate for the construction of this light structure to accommodate the additional floor.

And, lastly, I wish to inform the House that in the event that the fund raised through the sponsorship would not be adequate, my Ministry can only consider supplementing the cost of construction depending upon availability of funds and necessary clearances being obtained from the relevant authorities regarding use of private funds for construction of Government building.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I...

**Mr Speaker:** It is a long answer and the hon. Member is not satisfied.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if she has liaised with the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit and whether she has been informed in a correspondence when the work start?

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that the Minister concerned at the NDU has already effected a site visit there and the NDU is entertaining the request. It is up to the NDU to see for the implementation of the work.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understood correctly, the request was made some time before the first half of the year 2006. We are in 2007 and in six weeks' time we would be in 2008. May I ask the hon. Minister what has she done to impress upon the Ministry of MPI to ensure that corrective measures be taken?

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question rests now with the MPI. I have just explained that we have asked the MPI to examine the request. The cost estimate is going to be submitted by the MPI. Depending on the availability of funds, I can then state whether we can embark on the contract.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister - who has been very nice to hon. Mrs Seebun, hon. Sayed-Hossen and myself - if she has liaised with the Ministry of Health in order to ensure that the Social Welfare Centre, which also houses the Health Centre of this region, has proper and adequate space for a shelter for the patients who are using this Health Centre?

**Mrs Bappoo:** The next question will be replied by my colleague, the Minister of Health, who will give the answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. I cannot answer for the Minister of Health ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member, you are losing the time of the House. Please, put your question!

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question to my hon. colleague Minister is: whether she has liaised with the Ministry of Health in order to make sure that the work be done as soon as possible.

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister has answered that the hon. Member should put the question to the Minister of Health.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Bappoo:** I cannot do that. I have only approved the project. It is for the Minister of Health to see about the implementation of the construction phase.

**Mr Guinness:** I heard the hon. Minister said that there is only a sum of Rs2 m. for capital projects. Can I know what are the social welfare centres which have been earmarked for capital projects?

**Mr Bappoo:** I can't answer offhand, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member should put a substantive question and I'll let him know next week.

### **CAROLINE/BEL AIR SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE –UPGRADING & EXTENSION WORKS**

**(No. B/1216) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the upgrading and extension works of the Community Health Centre located within the compound of the Social Welfare Centre at Caroline/Bel Air, he will state if he has received representations from the President and members of the Caroline/Bel Air Organising Committee and, if so, where matters stand.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Chairman and the Secretary of the Caroline Organising Committee and the Caroline Social Welfare Community respectively made a request in June 2007 for the extension of the Caroline Community Health Centre to accommodate a waiting area.

My Ministry is favourable to the request and the matter is being looked into.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he could inform the House whether he has approved the extension of the health centre and when work will start?

**Mr Faugoo:** The request was made in June this year, and a site visit was effected in July. The project for extension has been approved in August this year and we have got the clearance from the Minister of Social Security in September. We have requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to work out the preliminary drawings.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a question of the chicken and the egg. Until such time that works have not started, the possibility for consideration by the MPI for the extension or adding one floor for the computer room could start. May I, therefore, impress upon my colleague, the hon. Minister of Health, to see to it that works are started and finished within the permitted time?

**Mr Faugoo:** I would impress upon the MPI to see to it that the necessary be done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **OCCUPATION PERMITS – GRANT – AUGUST/NOVEMBER 2007**

**(No. B/1217) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to foreigners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the number of Occupation Permits issued since August 2007 to date.

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, an occupation permit is a combined work and residence permits that came into force on 01 October 2006 with the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006.

From August 2007 to 22 November 2007, 442 occupation permits have been issued by the Passport and Immigration Office to foreigners. The breakdown by categories is as follows -

- Foreign investors : 89

- Foreign professional : 340
- Self-employed : 13

And, additionally, residence permits issued to retired citizens stand at 37.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance give the names and nationality of those who have been granting these permits?

**Mr Sithanen:** I'll have to find out the information.

**Mr Jhugroo:** The Deputy Prime Minister may table the information.

**Mr Sithanen:** I thank the hon. Member for allowing me to table the information.

**Mr Guinness:** Out of the 442 occupation permits granted, can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the number of people who work in hotels?

**Mr Sithanen:** I do not have the figures. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say for the enlightenment of the House - and I think this is extremely important - we have moved from a system that was quota based on a sector basis to a uniform system. And let me tell my hon. friend, because very often, he comes back with the same question, nobody can tell with certainty what would be the structure of the economy in ten years' time. And we have paid very dearly for sectoral incentives in order to prop up, probably, uncompetitive industry and that is why the paradigm shift that we have introduced two years ago is about creating a level playing field that will make sure that this country, in five to ten years' time, would have ten clusters as opposed to five sectors. So, I think that talks or allegations that we are protecting one sector as opposed to the other does not make sense.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the same people...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, forget about the remarks they have made! Address the Chair.

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, last year, when we introduced the system, there were some people, not only in this House, but outside the country, who thought that there were going to be an *avalanche*, that people had queued up in the airports of Bombay, London, Paris or Johannesburg to come. This is not the way the world is governed, Mr Speaker, Sir. What we have done is that across the system now we have introduced an incentive for professionals, investors, and also for the retirees and the self-employed people, and the system is working. We don't even use it in this category now, but I can ask the BOI to dig and to know in that particular tourism sector how many people have come in.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance inform the House how many foreigners who are less than 60 years have obtained the resident permits?

**Mr Sithanen:** I don't have the figures. I don't know whether we classify by age. Mr Speaker, Sir, again, let me tell my hon. friend that in some countries, there is a relationship, probably, between age and new ideas. In some countries, I have seen that where they attract retired people, initially they were preventing those retired people, probably, from doing some activity, and then they realise that they are depriving the country of a wealth of experience and know-how. We don't have a discrimination on the basis of age. I think we don't even compute it on the basis of age. We have a nomenclature that is based on the four criteria that I have given and this is the way it is done, and I think it is the right way.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le vice Premier ministre peut nous dire si ceux qui ont eu le *Residential Permit* ont le droit de travailler à Maurice ?

**Mr Sithanen :** Mr Speaker, Sir, I started my answer by saying that an occupation permit is a combination of a work and residence permit. This has been the definition all along. In fact, what we have done is that we have collapsed these two and make it easier for Mauritius to attract people. That is why last week we got a good article in 'Time Magazine'. This does not happen very often.

**AMBASSADORS/HIGH COMMISSIONERS  
APPOINTMENT – JULY 2005 TO NOV. 2007**

**(No. B/1218) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member of Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation whether, in regard to the Ambassadors/High Commissioners posted in Mauritius Embassies or High Commissions, since July 2005 to date, he will state their names, indicating –

- (a) the Embassy or High Commission to which they are posted, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of appointment, allowances and other fringe benefits drawn and the currency in which they are being paid.

**Mr Dulloo:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a list of Ambassadors/High Commissioners posted in Mauritius Embassies or High Commissions since July 2005 to date giving the other information asked for. I should state that the terms and conditions of their employment are basically in line with the provisions of the Pay Research Bureau's Report of 2003.

**CPE EXAMS 2007 – QUESTION PAPERS - ERRORS**

**(No. B/1219) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the Question Papers for the Certificate of Primary Education Examinations 2007, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to whether errors have been noted therein and, if so –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the remedial measures that have been taken to ensure that the students be not penalised as a result thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**(Nos. B/1220 & B/1221 - See “Written Answers to Questions”**

## **EX-SERVICEMEN – WIDOWS – PENSION**

**(No. B/1222) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether in regard to the widows of the ex-servicemen, she will state if they have been paid a pension as announced in the 2007-2008 budget speech and, if so, the number thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **WOMEN - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**(No. B/1223) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether she will state if her Ministry is in presence of data of women having passed away following acts of domestic violence and, if so, indicate the number of cases wherein these women were under the protection of a Protection Order.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **BERJAYA HOTEL (FORMER) – EMPLOYEES - COMPLAINTS**

**(No. B/1224) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether in regard to the employees of the former Berjaya Hotel, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof still in employment thereat, and
- (b) state if he has received complaints from these employees in relation to the prevailing conditions at their place of work and, if so, the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that out of the 304 employees of the former Berjaya Hotel, 23 have left on their own. One has, unfortunately, passed away due to serious illness not at all work related and 280 are still in employment to date. Out of these 280, 200 are reporting for

work at their site of work at the hotel and 80 others are working in two other hotels belonging to the Sagar Hotels & Resorts Ltd which has taken over Berjaya Hotel since 13 August 2007.

As regards part (b) of the question, my Ministry received a letter from the employees of the hotel on 14 September 2007 complaining about the working environment which was deemed unsafe and dangerous to health as demolition and construction works were being carried out on the site. A health and safety audit was requested.

The complaint was promptly investigated by the Occupational Safety & Health Inspectorate of my Ministry. I am informed that the workers were restricted to the Casino complex away from the demolition area. A few Occupational Safety & Health issues were noted and the management of the hotel was requested to take all appropriate remedial measures.

This was done to the satisfaction of both the complainants and the Occupational Safety & Health Inspectorate section of my Ministry as has been confirmed by officers of my Ministry during the numerous follow-up visits undertaken by them.

My Ministry also wrote to the management of the hotel to draw attention to the possible presence of asbestos in the working environment in view of the demolition works. This was not a complaint coming from the workers but, during the visit, note was taken of that. The hotel has sent a sample of construction material which may contain asbestos to the Mauritius Standards Bureau for analysis. According to information obtained by my Ministry from that Bureau, the sample has been sent to Cavendish Laboratories in the UK and the results are being awaited.

I am informed that workers have been instructed not to wander around and to stay away from the area where renovation works are being carried out.

I am further informed that many facilities including kitchen, canteen, food and refreshments, indoor games, recreational facilities and sanitary conveniences have been provided by management at the site of the complex housing the workers so that they do not have to move out and be exposed to risks arising from the demolition works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that no further complaint has been received from the employees of the hotel since remedial actions have been taken by my Ministry and I have been informed this very morning that they are satisfied with the present prevailing situation.

**Mr Ganoo:** I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I understand from the answer is that 200 workers who are on the Berjaya site where construction works are being conducted, have been placed in the casino complex. We know what is a casino complex and 200 workers are now occupying the casino complex. Can I ask him to send his officers regularly to see to it that everything is respected and all the undertakings of the employer are being respected?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the officers of my Ministry have been going there regularly. I must say I was myself very impressed and I would like to congratulate them. When the question came, I realised how often they have been going there. I'll take the commitment to ask them to continue. In fact, the management is trying to find another place where they can lodge these workers until the time the renovation works are over, which is around May or June next year, then, they will have to resume their duty normally.

### **PIERREFONDS, BEAUX SONGES/PHOENIX – LINK ROAD - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/1225) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the project for the construction of the new link road from Pierrefonds, Beaux Songes to Phoenix, he will state when works are likely to start.

**The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the detailed design and tender documents for the construction of the new link road from Pierrefonds, Beaux Songes to Phoenix over a length of 6.0 km have been completed in 2006. However, the implementation of the project has been delayed because of the Plaine Wilhems Sewerage Project which clashes with the alignment in some sections. The project has not been included in this financial year. The RDA

will implement the project in the next financial year subject to availability of funds.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister one question, Sir? I have been told that, in the meantime, some new houses are being built along the alignment and that might jeopardise the whole project. Can I ask the hon. Minister to use his good offices to inform *à qui de droit*, the relevant authorities, to see to it that this project, whenever it will start, unfortunately, may not jeopardise by allowing people to build on the alignment?

**Mr Bachoo:** I'll do the needful, Sir.

### **RADIER MACONDÉ – BRIDGE – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/1226) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the project for the construction of the new bridge over the Radier Macondé, he will state where matters stand.

**The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** Sir, on 09 October 2007, the Central Tender Board approved the award of the contract to construct a bridge across Macondé across Rivière Baie du Cap to General Construction Company Ltd.

On 22 October 2007 the Road Development Authority issued a Letter of Intent to the prospective contractor listing all the terms and conditions attached to the award. The prospective contractor has already accepted some of the conditions and has proposed to carry out additional investigations before considering the remaining conditions. A reply is expected by 29 November 2007.

If General Construction Company Ltd agrees to all the terms and conditions imposed by the RDA and the Ministry of Housing and Lands completes the land acquisition procedures, work would start in December 2007 or January 2008.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I know what is the cost of the project?

**Mr Bachoo:** The contract has been awarded for the sum of Rs184,998,182.07 inclusive of VAT.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Minister made reference in his answer to the conditions that RDA has imposed upon the contractor. Can he table these conditions?

**Mr Bachoo:** I will do so, Sir.

### **THOW HING HALL, PORT LOUIS – FIRE OUTBREAK**

**(No. B/1227) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the recent fire outbreak which occurred at the Thow Hing Hall in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fire Services Department, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Fire Services Department that inquiries into cases of fire outbreaks are conducted by the Police.

Consequently, the Commissioner of Police who was consulted has informed that the inquiry is still underway.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Thow Hing Hall was registered as an entertainment and wedding hall and whether it has any form of permit to do so?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Chief Fire Officer has informed that an inquiry at department level has revealed that Thow Hing Hall in Port Louis does not possess a fire certificate in accordance with section 76 (2) (a) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005. The matter is being referred to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and the Municipal Council of Port Louis for appropriate action to be taken at their end.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the same hall holds a trade licence from the respective municipal authority?

**Dr. David:** Obviously, yes, Mr Speaker, Sir; they need it.

### **HALLS – ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS – SAFETY AUDITS - LEGISLATION**

**(No. B/1228) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether in regard to the halls used for the holding of wedding ceremonies and entertainment events, he will state if he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to provide for compulsory yearly safety audits to be carried out thereat in respect of ventilation, lighting, sanitary amenities and emergency exits.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. Different Ministries concerned are liaising with my office to that effect.

### **DARUTY FOREST, PETIT RAFFRAY – *PARCOURS DE SANTÉ***

**(No. B/1229) Mr R. Guttee (First Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre D'Or)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether in regard to the setting up of a *Parcours de Santé* in the Daruty forest, Petit Raffray, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Bachoo:** Sir, a survey plan and approval to the proposed project is being sought with the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries.

**Mr Guttee:** Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether officers from his Ministry visited the site?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, site visits have been carried out on many occasions.

**Mr Guttee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, so far as I can remember, there was only one visit in which I was present. May I know what has been the outcome?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member was present in one visit. But, whenever officers of my Ministry prepare any design, they are given the freedom to go on site any number of times. Secondly, I have just stated that the plan and approval of the proposed project is being discussed with the Ministry of Agro Industry. Thereafter, subject to availability of funds, the project will start.

**Mr Guttee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I impress upon the hon. Minister to inform the House what is the distance of the *parcours de santé* and the cost of its implementation?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very difficult for me to know, because the designs are still being worked out.

### **GRAND' BAIE FOOTBALL GROUND - UPGRADING**

**(No. B/1230) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the upgrading of the Grand' Baie football ground, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that the upgrading works at Grand' Baie football ground, namely levelling of playfield, construction of a volleyball cum basketball, a *pétanque* pitch, changing room, toilet, parking and fencing have already been completed with the support of a private company. The football ground is presently being used by various clubs and inhabitants of the region.

Moreover, my Ministry has also made arrangements for the provision of lighting facilities and a jogging track at the site.

Regarding lighting facilities, the contract is being awarded, and the works are expected to be completed before June next year.

As regards the jogging track, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping is working on the designs, and tender procedures will be initiated once the designs are finalised.

**Mr Guttee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I impress upon the hon. Minister to inform the House what has been so far the financial contribution to carry out the project?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had a contribution from one private company to the tune of Rs3 m, and my Ministry has provided Rs4 m. for the project.

**Mr Guttee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister to let us know how much money his Ministry has so far contributed out of the sum of Rs4 m proposed to implement the site?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the money is here. As I said, we have already awarded the tender for lighting facilities.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over.

*At 4.20 p.m the sitting was suspended.*