

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****MARKET ROAD, LONG MOUNTAIN – INHABITANTS - COMPLAINTS**

(No. B/882) Mrs B. Juggoo (First 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 he will state if he has received any complaint from the inhabitants of Market Road, Long Mountain, dated 09 July 2007, regarding the degradation of the environment in the region and, if so, the remedial measures that have been taken.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have indeed received an unsigned letter dated 09 July 2007 from a group of inhabitants of Market Road, Long Mountain, complaining about the degradation of social environment in that region. The letter refers to a petition which was sent to the Commissioner of Police on 25 January 2007 regarding the situation in the locality. Subsequently a copy of the letter dated 09 July 2007 which was sent to me was transmitted to the Commissioner of Police for appropriate action.

I am advised by the Commissioner of Police that following the receipt of the original complaint, his department had already taken the following measures

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- (a) an action plan has been devised by the Divisional Commander of the Northern Division to tackle the problem;
- (b) intensive mobile patrol by the Long Mountain Police, the ERS and Divisional Support Units has been launched, and
- (c) stop and search operations are being effected regularly by ADSU and the local CID.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that his officers had two meetings with the inhabitants of the locality.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, judging from the letter sent to me, it appears that the situation improved for only about two weeks and then it was back to what it was.

Given that this situation is creating an unhealthy atmosphere and in order to maintain law and order in the locality, I have, therefore, requested the

Commissioner of Police to re-examine the arrangements made and perhaps consider a permanent presence of Police Officers in the locality.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Prime Minister, but I would like to ask him whether he is aware that in the same vicinity of the Market Road, there was a rape case about six weeks back. A 5-year old child was raped and ever since that day, every single day there has been a new incident happening in the vicinity of the same road. Even indecent happenings have been causing problems and embarrassing situation to the inhabitants of Long Mountain.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, I have talked to the Commissioner of Police and he is looking into the matter.

### **JAGRITI SAMELAN SABHA TRISHUL DHAN MANDIR, STE CROIX - BURGLARY**

**(No. B/883) Mrs B. Juggoo (First 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 he is aware that the Jagriti Samelan Sabha Trishul Dhan Mandir at Ste Croix has recently been, on several occasions, subject to burglary and, if so, will be, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two cases of larceny breaking have been reported on 20 and 29 June 2007 to the prejudice of Jagriti Samelan Sabha Trishul Dhan Mandir at Ste Croix. Articles amounting to Rs53,500 have been stolen.

Both cases are still being investigated by Port Louis (North) CID.

With a view to dissuading such offences at the said temple, I am advised that patrols have been reinforced by the various units of the Police Force in the region.

Moreover, frequent Police-Public Partnership meetings have been held with the representatives of religious bodies with a view to developing strategies to fight cases of larceny.

However, given that further thefts of religious statues made of copper have occurred in the region of Tranquebar, I have impressed upon the

Commissioner of Police to re-assess the situation and to ensure that there is increased vigilance.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Prime Minister aware of a new phenomenon of stealing copper Murtees in temples these days because of the problem of *vieille feraille*? Can we know from the Prime Minister whether this would be taken as a priority with the Commissioner of Police because we are facing lots of problems in the country?

**The Prime Minister:** There is a problem with the price of iron bars which has been increased worldwide. This is happening in other countries as well, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am not going to give details. There have been thefts. Thefts in religious places are not new. I have asked the Commissioner of Police to look into it and it has been increasing, in fact - I have the figures here – since 2002 up and down, but this problem of the price of iron bars is a new phenomenon.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Is the Prime Minister aware about the latest case in Tranquebar?

**The Prime Minister:** I just mentioned about the latest case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### TOURISTS – SECURITY – STEERING COMMITTEE

**(No. B/884) 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 Steering Committee set up by his office since November 2006 to address the issue of the security of tourists in Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) its composition;
- (b) the number of times it has met as at to date, and
- (c) if any report has been submitted, indicating –
  - (i) if he will consider the advisability of tabling copy thereof, and
  - (ii) the number of its recommendations that have been implemented.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Steering Committee co-ordinates actions taken by all stakeholders concerned with security of tourists.

It is a forum where public and private sectors discuss the security problems the tourist sector is facing and common decisions are being taken.

As regards part (a) of the question, the representatives of the following organisations form part of the Committee -

- Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications
- Commissioner of Police
- *Police du Tourisme*
- Beach Authority
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit
- AHRIM (*Association des Hôteliers et des Restaurateurs de L'Ile Maurice*).

As regards part (b) of the question, the Committee meets as and when the need arises. It has had three meetings so far.

As this is a Coordinating Committee, it does not submit any report. However, it does make recommendations which are being implemented by the various organisations concerned with this problem of security. The main ones are -

- *Police du Tourisme* are having regular meetings with Hotel Managers and Chief Security Officers in collaboration with AHRIM;
- Training of Security Officers of hotels are being carried out by *Police du Tourisme*, Crime Prevention Unit, the National Coast Guard and the Tourism Authority;
- *Police du Tourisme* are advising bungalow owners on security measures;
- Police are intensifying patrol in places where tourists most frequently visit, such as view points, the market, restaurants and public amusements place;
- A hot line (8910) operates on a 24 hours basis to register all complaints from tourists or tourist operators;
- Clearing of wasteland and bushy areas around hotels and public beaches are in progress;
- Lighting facilities are being provided near hotels and public beaches, and
- Hotels are being sensitised to put CCTV Surveillance System on their premises, not only in the building.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are conscious that Mauritius is an important tourist destination and the tourism sector is one of the main engines of growth

contributing to our economy. My Government is committed to put in place all necessary measures to ensure security of our visitors. These measures were enumerated in reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/16 of 27 March 2007 and the measures put in place are showing positive results.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on the issue of security of tourists, in reply to Parliamentary Question B/16 asked by my colleague, hon. Ganoo, on 27 March 2007, the hon. Prime Minister referred to the provision of a 24-hour service. I quote from the reply –

“The provision of a 24-hour service information counter at the airport terminal to inform the tourists about the contact numbers of the Police and other emergency institutions in case of need and help.”

Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister that necessary precautions be taken so that it doesn't leave a very wrong impression on the tourists as they would be their first contact with the country when provided with such information?

**The Prime Minister:** This is a good suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir. We'll take it on board.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Steering Committee has met since the beginning of this year since there has been a resurgence as per figures of the first three months? Has the Steering Committee met since then to review the situation?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, they have met this year. I can give the dates if the hon. Member wants, but I'll have to look for it, but I know they have met this year. In fact, as I said, they met three times and they are meeting when the need arises. The hon. Member is saying that there has been an increase, but it is never static. One crime is too many, but, in fact, the numbers are decreasing.

### MCB/NPF FUND – NTAN INQUIRY

**(No. B/885) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** 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 inquiry in the MCB/NPF fund misappropriation, he will state if he will consider the advisability of requesting NTan to resume the inquiry thereon.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in March 2003, the Bank of Mauritius enlisted the services of NTan Corporate Advisory Pte Ltd of Singapore to investigate into the irregularities of the Mauritius Commercial

Bank Ltd and to make recommendations. NTan Corporate Advisory Pte Ltd submitted its Report to the Bank of Mauritius in February 2004.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the report submitted by NTan Corporate Advisory Pte Ltd made the following wide-ranging recommendations -

- (i) the MCB Ltd should enhance the robustness of its internal control system;
- (ii) the MCB Ltd should thoroughly review the concentration of powers vested in its staff members;
- (iii) the MCB Ltd should ensure that it is equipped with adequately trained and qualified staff members in its key areas of operation, and
- (iv) the MCB Ltd should require all its staff members, particularly those dealing with customers, assets and liabilities to take compliance leave during which their supervisors and/or the Internal Audit Department and/or the Compliance Department should carry out appropriate reviews of their work.

These are among other recommendations. I am given to understand by the Bank of Mauritius that following the submission of the Report, the MCB Ltd has taken and is taking a series of measures to strengthen its internal control system, risk management structure and corporate governance.

I am informed that since March 2004, the Bank of Mauritius has been actively and closely monitoring the progress made by MCB Ltd in the implementation of the various recommendations contained in the NTan Report as well as the guidelines issued by the Bank of Mauritius.

I am also informed that the Bank of Mauritius carried out on-site inspections at the MCB Ltd during the period March to June 2004, January 2005, August to October 2005, 14 September to December 2006 and in April 2007. On-site inspections for the MCB subsidiary company in Madagascar were also carried out during the period 09 to 18 January 2007.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Bank of Mauritius that since the NTan Report has achieved its primary objective of elucidating facts and identifying the weaknesses in the internal control systems and procedures at the MCB Ltd, and that the report contained the necessary recommendations for remedial action, the then Board of Directors of the Bank of Mauritius

collectively took the decision in March 2004 that it was not advisable to proceed with any further enquiry in view of the escalating costs.

Additionally, the fact that the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was already investigating into allegations of fraud and corruption at the MCB Ltd, it was deemed appropriate by the Bank of Mauritius not to overstep into ICAC's domain.

Furthermore, I am informed that since there has been a Court case which has been brought by the Mauritius Revenue Authority concerning the publication of the NTan Report and this is in addition to investigation started by ICAC. Under these circumstances, it is felt that it is not advisable at this stage to request NTan to resume its enquiry.

The report submitted by NTan had cost Rs66,478,560 to the Bank of Mauritius. According to the Bank of Mauritius, if they were to be requested to proceed further with the investigation, the overall cost of such an exercise would be over Rs300 m.

**Mr Varma:** Can the hon. Prime Minister kindly inform the House who, in fact, requested the NTan to stop its inquiry?

**The Prime Minister:** I mentioned in my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the then Board decided collectively that the inquiry should be stopped. They motivated their reason by saying that, given the fact that ICAC was already investigating, and that the cost was escalating, they thought that they should not overstep into the domain of ICAC.

**Mr Varma:** I have one more supplementary question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister kindly inform the House whether the report of the NTan will be made public?

**The Prime Minister:** It is precisely the case which is before the Court by the MRA.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** This question of MCB/NPF affair, Mr Speaker, Sir, is of national importance. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand concerning the extradition of Mr Teeren Appasamy who was involved in the MCB/NPF affair?

**Mr Speaker:** This does not arise from this question. The hon. Member should come with a substantive question.

*(Interruptions)*

I am on my feet! Sit down! This question does not arise from the question!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, on parle ici d'un scandale qui met en cause l'intégrité et le bon fonctionnement d'une des plus importantes institutions financières de ce pays. Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut rassurer la Chambre que tout sera mis en œuvre afin que la vérité triomphe dans cette affaire?

**The Prime Minister:** It has always been our guiding principle, Mr Speaker, Sir, and that is why I am saying...

*(Interruptions)*

### **RODRIGUES - NATIONAL COAST GUARD OFFICERS – DEATH - INQUIRY**

**(No. B/886) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** 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 two police officers of the National Coast Guard who lost their lives in May 2007, whilst on duty, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the inquiry thereinto has now been completed and, if so, the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the inquiry into the case will be completed on receipt of -

- (i) the DNA report from the Forensic Science Laboratory, which is expected to be finalized, I am told, in about four weeks' time, and
- (ii) the report of the survey being carried out by the Director of Shipping on the two Heavy Duty Boats involving the incident, which is due to be completed by the second week of August 2007.

However, an interim report is being sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

**Mr Von Mally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, to prevent or minimise the occurrence of such a sad event, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister when a bigger heavy duty boat will be sent to Rodrigues to help these poor people there?

**The Prime Minister:** The Commissioner of Police has indicated to me that he is having one sent, but it has to be overhauled and that is what he is doing.

### **RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – WATER PIPES - THEFT**

(No. B/887) **Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** 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 lorry was seized in connection with an alleged case of theft of galvanized tube at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, on or about 11 June 2007 and, if so, if it is still being kept in police custody as at to date and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 06 June 2007, the Valve Operator reported that 11 galvanised water pipes have been stolen between Jardin Mamzelle and Grand Bois Noir.

After Police investigation, 6 persons were arrested and a provisional charge of “larceny and possession of stolen property was lodged against them before the Rodrigues Court and they were released on bail after furnishing a surety of Rs5000 each.

As for the lorry driver, he was arrested on 08 June 2007 and was provisionally charged under section 40 of the Criminal Code Act for possession of stolen property and released on bail on 13 June 2007 after furnishing a surety of Rs3,000. The case relates to stolen galvanized water pipes and not to a stolen lorry. That is why the lorry was not taken into Police custody.

After completion of the inquiry, the relevant dossier will be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

**Mr Spéville:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the owner of the lorry has been identified by the Police?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure he must have been identified, because they have already started the inquiry.

**Mr Spéville:** Does the hon. Prime Minister have the information?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not go into the details of what the Police are doing, but as I mentioned, the driver has already been taken to Court. They must know to whom the lorry belongs.

### **GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS & PARASTATAL BODIES – HYBRID-ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

**(No. B/888) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if consideration will be given for the purchase of hybrid-electric vehicles by Government departments and parastatal bodies as and when they will renew their fleet of motor vehicles.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that hybrid-electric vehicles are not being marketed in Mauritius at present and their prices are around 10% higher than those propelled by conventional fuels.

I am also advised that the maintenance and repairs of hybrid-electric vehicles require advanced engineering expertise which is presently lacking in Mauritius. In fact, there are only a few companies who are fabricating such cars, such as Toyota, Honda and, I am told also, Ford. However, I also have been told by Toyota Company Ltd that they cannot import such vehicles in Mauritius because the mother firm would not allow them because they do not have such engineering expertise in Mauritius

Therefore, the Government is not in a position to ask Government Departments and Parastatal Bodies to proceed with the purchase of such vehicles at this stage although Government will certainly consider such a move if and when such vehicles are available here.

I should also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I have been told that other makes are about to start producing, not hybrid-electric cars, but new conventional cars which, according to first tests, would be as economical and cause again much less pollution similar to the hybrid-electric cars.

**(No. B/889) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and 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 news coverage by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will state if, as provided for by section 28 of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act, he proposes to discuss matters pertaining to the provisions of section 4 (e) and (f) of the Act, namely, the adequate coverage in its broadcasting programmes to news items and ensuring, that the news bulletins are accurate and presented in an impartial manner and striking a fair balance in the allocation of broadcasting hours among various political standpoints.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/889 and B/890 together as they relate to the same issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Chairperson of the MBC Board that following the findings of the Independent Broadcasting Authority on 11 December 2006, the MBC is abiding to the requirements of providing a fair and balanced broadcasting of news.

*(Interruptions)*

In that context, the Director-General of the MBC has given appropriate instructions to the relevant Head of Departments and, in particular, to the Chief Editors, Senior News Editors and News Editors on whom is placed the responsibility of preparing the news bulletins and coverages of press conferences and other newsworthy items.

As a matter of policy, the MBC endeavours to cover all press conferences, besides the broadcast of the 72 news flash and news bulletins on radio and 8 news bulletins on TV. The news staff has also to cover newsworthy items daily. This is not an easy task given the limited resources, the increasing demands for coverage of various items, and the plurality and complexity of the Mauritian society.

The MBC has reorganised its news department to better comply with the provisions of section 4 of the MBC Act. The Chairperson of the MBC Board has assured me that he has given specific instructions for the provisions of section 4 of the MBC Act, in particular, sub section 4(a), 4(e) and 4(f) to be strictly adhered to and “to ensure to the best of its ability that the news bulletins broadcast are accurate and presented in an impartial manner”.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, everybody who lives in Mauritius knows ....

**Mr Speaker:** There is no need for the hon. Member to make any comment. He should ask the question.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am making my point, Sir. We are paying Rs100 as fees...

**Mr Speaker:** Everybody knows that.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Everybody who resides in Mauritius knows that the MBC is flouting what the Prime Minister has just said. Can we know from the Prime Minister whether there is a remote control in the Treasury Building...

*(Interruptions)*

I am not saying that it is the Prime Minister, but people who want to please him, giving instructions to the MBC to remove what can be removed from the Opposition?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, I have reminded the House last week that Question Time is at the heart of parliamentary democracy and Members should not waste time while putting questions.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, I am asking again in the public interest, for those who are paying a fee of Rs100 to the MBC, whether instructions are given to delete what can be deleted from the Opposition in the film.

**Mr Speaker:** The question has been put.

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know what it is there to remove from the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

It is appropriate that I remind the House of what was happening when we were in Opposition in the Labour Party...

*(Interruptions)*

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

**The Prime Minister:** Everybody seems to have forgotten the blatant bias that there was. Let me give you an example. We had been protesting to the IBA times and times again to such a point that some members of my party were saying that it is a loss of time; we kept writing, but nothing happened. We even said that we were going to protest in front of the MBC. I am giving you an

example which is very revealing. When we started protesting at the MBC, we complained to the IBA about another programme and the IBA sent us a fax which I have here and it says that the Complaints Committee has examined the subject matter of the complaint and noted that whilst the MBC in its news bulletin of 15 March 2003 had aired the function organised by the youth wing of the MSM political party for a period of 3 minutes and 18 seconds, the flag-raising ceremony of the Labour Party held on the headquarters of the latter was broadcast only for 45 seconds...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** ...compared to 3 minutes 18 seconds! Then, it says -

“The Committee had consequently concluded that by so doing, the Corporation had –

(a) showed a lack of balance and acted unfairly in the treatment of events of a political nature (...)”

*(Interruptions)*

Wait! They should not speak before time and they will see what happened. It continued –

“(...) and failed to present those news items in a balanced and just manner and the Complaints Committee also recommended to direct the MBC and the MBC is hereby directed(...)”

I do not want to quote everything here about the proper balance and attention of the MBC was drawn to section 5 (1) (a) of the IBA Act. That was sent by fax and I mentioned it in my press conference on Saturday morning which we did every Saturday when we were in the Opposition and they too, now! Obviously, there was some remote control, because on Monday morning, the IBA sent another letter contradicting everything it has said to us.

*(Interruptions)*

And I can say that nothing was done! At least, we are doing something.

*(Interruptions)*

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

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am here to do my job, nobody will prevent me.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** I'll be here again for another 25 years!

*(Interruptions)*

They know, I'll come here again!

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, order! Put your question now!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** At least the Labour Party can say it is lucky. Is the Prime Minister aware of the case I made on behalf of the MMM where the MBC was taken to task and no action was taken?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, action was taken in the case I entered also. As I have just said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Chairperson has informed me and the Director-General has given appropriate instructions. Let us wait and see what happens, but I should say, Mr Speaker, Sir, obviously, there is a lot of misinformation also going on and we'll have to come with a law to make sure that things are done properly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Prime Minister said that he is a true democrat, everybody agrees. Can the Prime Minister give the undertaking to the House that he will direct the Chairperson of the MBC to act responsibly as per the MBC Act? At least, if he does not, he should take him to task.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a democrat, but not to the point of telling the MBC not to show me on television at all! I am not that kind of democrat! There is only one Prime Minister in Mauritius and he has to get the covering that he should have.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Can I inform hon. Members that some priority for supplementary questions is given to the hon. Member who has set the question and then to the other Members. This is the procedure.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question concerns the case of MMM v/s MBC/TV. Can the hon. Prime Minister say to the House whether following the conclusion of the IBA which reads –

“The Committee has reached the conclusion that the respondent did not present the news in a balanced manner. Whenever a matter of great importance has been raised by any person and broadcast, the person or political party directly concerned, should be entitled to air his or its views as soon as possible in the same type of programme or news bulletin”.

What did the MBC do to remedy the situation?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, practically the same words were used in our complaint as well. I mean practically the same, not word for word! That is why I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Chairperson of the MBC has asked the Director-General of the MBC that appropriate instructions be given to the relevant Head of Department and, in particular, to the Chief Editors. I must tell you, in all fairness, even functions that I attend are not shown on the same day. It is not a question of showing it on the same day.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he will give due consideration to a request made for live broadcast of PQs, PNQs and parliamentary debates?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, such a request was made by hon. Shakeel Mohamed to me. He has gone to see Mr Speaker. Of course, it is Mr Speaker who decides on such matters, but I have absolutely no objection to that.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I thank the Prime Minister for his reply, but till we come to that, can I ask him whether he considers it fair that replies, especially to PNQs of the Ministers concerned are given live inserts whereas the supplementaries of the questions asked, even by the Leader of the Opposition, are given in voice over. Does he consider that to be fair?

**The Prime Minister:** That was the practice before.

### **IBA COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE – MMM V/S MBC CASE - FINDINGS**

**(No. B/890) 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, following the findings dated 11 December 2006 of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Complaints Committee in the case of the

MMM v/s MBC, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the measures that have been taken to -

- (a) redress and remedy the breach committed against the MMM, and
- (b) present news in an independent and balanced manner, in accordance with the statutory obligations under section 3 of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/889)*

### **PUBLIC OFFICERS - INTERDICTION**

**(No. B/891) 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 public officers who are currently under interdiction, he will state the number thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are currently 227 Public Officers who are under interdiction.

### **LATE MS D. D. – POLICE STATION - DECLARATIONS**

**(No. B/892) Mrs F. Labelle (Third 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 late Ms D. D., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if she had made declarations to the police station of her locality regarding threats she had received from one Mr S. B., and, if so, the action, if any, initiated by the Police.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 11 May 2007, late Ms D. D. aged 18 and residing at Camp Lilas, Triolet, reported to the Police Station of the locality that she had been assaulted by one Mr S. B while she was walking along Japonais Street, Triolet on 10 May 2007 at about 1900 hours. The Police started an enquiry which has been completed and the case was to be lodged in Court.

Another case of damaging enclosure has been reported to the Triolet Police Station on 15 April 2007 by the father of late Ms D. D. against Mr S. B. Police is still enquiring into the matter.

I am also informed that apart from these two cases, no other declaration has been made to the Police by late Ms D. D. against Mr S. B.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has just confirmed that, at least, on two occasions, threats have been reported to the

Police. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it that these threats are taken seriously because it is not the first time that following threats, victims have been killed? May I also ask the hon. Prime Minister to see with the Commissioner of Police that such actions are being treated with much more diligence to avoid such dramatic situations?

**The Prime Minister:** I have actually talked to the Commissioner of Police about it. The gentleman has had other cases of assaults and threats. He had been arrested in the past. I have asked the Commissioner of Police to do the needful.

### **DRIVING LICENCES – MEDICAL FITNESS CERTIFICATION**

**(No. B/893) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** 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 renewal of driving licences requiring a medical fitness certification, he will consider the advisability of –

- (a) increasing the age limit from 60 to 65 years, and
- (b) requiring such renewal to be effected every two years instead of every year.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **AGALEGA – MAURITIUS/INDIA - AGREEMENT**

**(No. B/894) 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 he will state if any agreement has been reached between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India for the installation of facilities in Agaléga and, if so, will he give the terms and conditions thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, PORT MATHURIN – PUBLIC GATHERING**

**(No. B/895) Mr J. Von Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the public gathering which was held in front of the Central Administration, Port Mathurin, on or about 27 March 2007, he will, for the

benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if –

- (a) prior authorization from the police was obtained and, if not, why not, and
- (b) if any member of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly participated therein.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on the 27 March 2007, a group of fishermen was convened to collect their 'Bad Weather Allowance'. A number of them complained of discrepancies in the allowance payable to them. Thereupon, the representative of the Fishermen Association, together with three fishermen, sought an appointment with the Chief Commissioner to discuss the matter.

After the meeting, the delegation came out and addressed the other fishermen. They were satisfied apparently with the decision taken, cashed their allowances and left.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that his prior authorization was not required for the group of fishermen to voice out their grievances, especially, as a matter of fact, they were called in at the Central Administration block because they were convened to collect their bad weather allowance. However, appropriate policing measures were taken to avoid any incident in the vicinity of the Central Administration Block.

As regards part (b), I am informed by the Police that they had not seen any member of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the group.

*At 12.45 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

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

**Mr Speaker:** Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/897, B/898, 916, 926 and 943 have been withdrawn.

### **MILK (INFANT) – PRICING POLICY**

**(No. B/896) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to infant milk, he will state the present pricing policy.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the price of infant milk powder was first brought under mark-up price control in March 2000 with a mark-up of 20% of CIF. In August 2005, when my Ministry brought milk powder under mark-up, I successfully negotiated that the mark-up prevailing on infant milk be brought down from 20% to 17%. This represented a decrease of about Rs3 per box or tin. For example, the price of Nursie Ad Bledina (450g) came down from Rs132.75 on 26 August 2005 to Rs126.03 on 11 November 2005.

As infant milk is already under the mark-up, there is no need to review the present pricing policy.

**Mr Soodhun:** Due to successive increases in prices - everybody is aware of it - is the hon. Minister proposing to change the policy?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member did not listen to my reply, but I can assure him that since March 2007 - I can take three examples - the price of infant milk has gone down. In March 2007, the price of Nursie Ad Blédina was Rs154.46, it came down to Rs150.04 and I have got examples of two other brands.

**Mr Soodhun:** I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would consider of going to the maximum price control rather than going to the maximum mark-up?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to March 2000, there was no price control on infant milk. The then Government put a mark-up which was considered reasonable at the level of 20%. This Government brought it down further to 17%.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer s'il y a le VAT sur le *Infant Soya Milk*? Si c'est le cas, est-ce que le ministre compte considérer de retirer le VAT sur le *Infant Soya Milk*?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I need notice on that specific item.

## **DEGREES RECOGNITION – MAURITIUS/INDIA - MOU**

**(No. B/897) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the recognition, in Mauritius, of all the degrees obtained in India, he will state if a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India, in October 2006 and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

**UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DESIGN, MYSORE  
ARCHITECTURE BACHELOR DEGREE**

**(No. B/898) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to degrees, mainly Bachelor degree in Architecture, obtained after five years study at the University School of Design, Mysore, he will state if they are now recognized in Mauritius by Government and the Professional Architects Council of Mauritius and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**

### **TELEMARKETING COURSES**

**(No. B/899) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority, information as to whether it has approved the running of courses in telemarketing by the Institute for Business and Professional Studies.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Institute for Business and Professional Studies is a duly registered training institution with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) and it has been granted approval on 7 March 2007 to run only one course in telemarketing entitled "*Le Métier des Centres-d'Appels*" on a non-award basis valid up to March 2008.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he MQA has got officers who are qualified to assess the validity of the course offered by the institution?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, MQA has got the mechanism and whenever needed they call people with expertise to look at the programme which is submitted before accrediting it.

## **ALCOHOLIC DRINKS – SALE - LICENCE**

**(No. B/900) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to alcoholic drinks, he will state if Government proposes to

amend the law to allow only “liquor shops” to sell these drinks within the parameters set by the law, with a view to combating alcoholism.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the sale of alcohol (whether by retail or wholesale, whether for consumption on or off the premises, whether at hotels, restaurants or places of entertainment) is regulated by the Excise Act and the Excise Regulations 1994.

No person can sell alcohol unless he is the holder of a licence issued by the licensing authority who, in the present case, is the Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (sections 9 and 10 of the same Act).

It is to be noted that “authorised persons” may object to the issue or renewal of such a licence. The Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority will hear and determine the objection.

The “authorised persons” are the owner of the premises, the owner or the occupier of any property situated within a radius of 400 metres from the premises, a person in charge of a place of worship, the manager or principal of a school.

The opening time of premises licensed to sell alcohol is set out at the First Schedule of the Regulations.

As regards penalties provided under the Act, any person who commits an offence is liable, where no specific penalty is provided, to a fine not exceeding Rs50,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

In addition, the Court before which a licensee is convicted for an offence may suspend any licence held by him for such period as it thinks fit or cancel the licence.

As our law stands, there are no specific provisions dealing with liquor shops and, in fact, the term “liquor shop” is not even defined, as we are fully aware, under the Excise Act. The sale of alcohol in Mauritius is licensed based and regulated both by the police and inspectors from the Ministry of Commerce. There is certainly a need to improve the Excise Act, and my Ministry, together with the Ministry of Health, is presently working on the different aspects stemming from a health point of view.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say whether the committee, or whoever is working on this piece of legislation, has a time-frame as to when this can come into Parliament for debate?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have already had the first draft and we are interchanging the different opinions. I believe it will be soon. Firstly, we have to revise the Excise Act; secondly, the regulation itself, and thirdly, certain public health aspects covering the different regulations prescribed. There is the question of selling, consumption, publicity and selling to minors etc.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard the hon. Minister refer to the possibility of amending the law. May I draw his attention to the serious situation caused by the so-called soft drinks, the alco pops, which contain the same level of alcohol as in beer and which is doing a lot of havoc in Europe as well as in Mauritius and it is being sold in *tabagie*?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is one of the reasons why we have to look again at the law. We will have to look again at the different definitions that are given in the Excise Act from brandy, shandy, whisky and the different types of wines. Certainly, if there is room for concern on the part of certain parents, maybe we will have to deal with the matter.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, being given the fact that some shops are not allowed to sell alcoholic beverages before 4 o'clock in the afternoon – this is what the law stipulates, if I am not mistaken – how can he reconcile the fact that shops on filling stations and hypermarkets sell all day through?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is like on the day of election where certain places cannot sell while others can. This is one of the plethora of reasons why we are looking into the Excise Act, the Regulations and different Health Acts that concern this matter. As Mr Speaker is fully aware, there are so many reasons behind the different legislation.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider the possibility of enforcing the law to see to it that the retailers off licence do not sell alcohol on spot because nowadays this is the practice?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the retailers off licence can sell it, but by putting this question, I believe the hon. Member is drawing the attention of consuming on spot. This is another area where I believe that the red flag is being waved by different NGOs. We have to look at it perhaps from a perspective of banning the consumption of alcohol in public places and public beaches.

**DROP-IN CENTRE FOR CHILDREN – NUMBER , FOLLOW-UP ETC.**

**(No. B/901) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the drop-in centre for children, she will state –

- (a) if an evaluation of its work, as at to date, has been carried out;
- (b) the number of victims;
  - (i) having been subject to psychological follow-up, and
  - (ii) who have responded positively to the therapy.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the drop-in centre at Bell Village was set up by my Ministry in December 2003. This centre was in line with the recommendation of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Action Plan published in June 2003.

The management of the drop-in centre has been entrusted to the Mauritius Family Planning Welfare Association.

As regards evaluation of the work at the drop-in centre –

- (i) a joint meeting is held with the personnel working at the drop-in centre on a 3-months basis to review and discuss management of cases as well as running of the centre.
- (ii) submission of monthly report including statistics by the Mauritius Family Planning Welfare Association is made to my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on the basis of all these information, a full-fledged report is underway.

With regards to part (b) of the question, a total of 355 cases of sexual abuse on children where it was felt that victims may become prey to CSEC have been handled by the drop-in centre for period July 2005 to date. All the cases are given psychological counseling and are followed up as long as appropriate.

Between July 2005 to date, 309 individual therapy sessions and 22 group therapy sessions have been held.

Moreover 466 parents of victims have been counseled.

Mr Speaker, Sir, most of the counseling do have a positive impact which is illustrated by the following –

- (i) 45% cases, the children have already been successfully reintegrated in their families;

- (ii) in 20% cases, the children are back to school. Arrangements for school are made by the drop-in centre itself;
- (iii) as for those who are above 16, arrangements are made for them to follow courses at the women centres level.
- (iv) 12 children victims are waiting for registration at the level of IVTB.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister feel that now it is time to revamp the objectives of the centre so as to meet it in the present context?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. Member and we are doing the needful.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House what is the duration of the therapy that these victims have to undergo?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the duration of the therapy will depend on the gravity of each case and it cannot be identical.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, after a child has attended the drop-in centre for a psychological follow-up, can the hon. Minister say for how long the follow-up stays there and for how long the child is being followed?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the therapy is done at a drop-in centre, but even later, where the follow-up is highly essential, it is done at home level as well.

#### **DOCTORS (FOREIGN) – NUMBER, FIELDS, ETC.**

**(No. B/902) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to foreign doctors working in Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) their field of specialisation;
- (c) the number thereof employed by his Ministry, and
- (d) if those employed by Government are allowed to practise in private clinics.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos B/902 and B/904 together, as they relate to the same subject.

According to data available, the total number of foreign doctors working in Mauritius is 94. Out of this number, there are 26 specialists working in

different fields, namely Rheumatology, Plastic Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Pathology, Dermatology, Internal Medicine, Radiology, Paediatrics, Anaesthesiology, Surgery and Neurosurgery.

Out of the 94 foreign doctors, 63 Medical and Health Officers and 16 specialists are employed by my Ministry. The remaining 15 doctors are employed in the private sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission again, I am tabling a copy of the terms and conditions of employment for both specialists and Medical and Health Officers. Their contract of employment makes no mention of private practice. However, it is to be noted that according to section 6 of the Public Health Act, specialists willing to perform private practice have to obtain the approval of the Minister. I can affirm that none of the foreign specialists has been granted such privilege.

Since July 2005 to date, 4 foreign doctors (3 in Internal Medicine and 1 in Pathology) at the level of specialist/senior specialist have been recruited to palliate the shortage of specialists in the public service.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of the fact that there are foreign doctors who come to Mauritius to practice in private clinics only during the weekend or for some three or four days?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been informed by the union of doctors that there are a few doctors who have come on a work permit to work in certain private clinics, but who are also practicing outside. It is a matter which we have to look into.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the Minister say whether foreign doctors working in Mauritius need to be registered with the Medical Council?

**Mr Faugoo:** As a matter of policy, they have to be registered before they can practise, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that, at some point in time, there was a serious lack of Mauritian doctors and a lot of foreign doctors came. Now a substantive number of Mauritian doctors are coming back. Can I appeal to the Minister to contemplate avoiding, as far as possible, except in scarcity areas, to renew the contract of the foreign doctors.

**Mr Faugoo:** This is exactly what we are doing, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have recruited since July 2005 only four Specialists whom we cannot get on the local market. As far as Generalists are concerned, we still need more according to the establishment of the Ministry of Health, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE - ANAESTHETISTS

(No. B/903) **Mrs S. Hanoomanjee** (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to anaesthetists, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof employed by his Ministry, and
- (b) if there is a shortage thereof in the Government Service.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 26 posts of anaesthetists on the establishment of my Ministry and there are 24 in post.

The number of anaesthetists employed by my Ministry is as follows -

Substantive appointment	-	13
Contract appointment	-	8

(5 Mauritians and 3 foreigners)

Medical and Health Officer assigned

duties as anaesthetist	-	1
On sessional basis	-	2

Mr Speaker, Sir, presently, there are 2 vacancies and a third one will occur shortly as one foreign specialist has signified his intention to terminate his contract. I have to point out that on 01 July 2005 the PSC was requested to fill in vacancies but could not do so due to the non-availability of local candidates. As at to date the situation is the same. To palliate the dearth of anaesthetists, arrangements have been made by my Ministry for the employment of three specialists in the field from India on contract basis for which Public Service Commission's approval has been sought.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Since the Minister has confirmed that there is a shortage of anaesthetists, can the Minister say then why it is not on the priority field for post-graduate study?

**Mr Faugoo:** I do not get the question.

**Mr Speaker:** Why is it not on the priority list?

**Mr Faugoo:** It is on the priority list.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Is the Minister aware that some two months back, because the services of an anaesthetic were not available at Rose-Belle hospital, a surgical operation had to be postponed?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please! Let the hon. Member put her question.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can I ask the Minister whether he is aware that some two months back, because the services of an anaesthetist were not available at Rose Belle hospital, the surgical operation had to be postponed twice for a certain patient and, subsequently, the patient had to have resort to a private clinic?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, there are only two vacancies as far as specialists in the field are concerned. In all the regional hospitals, there are at least four specialists in the field who are posted there. Some hospitals, like Victoria being a big hospital, there are eight specialists posted there. There have been some cases which were postponed due to the absence of a specialist. We could not do otherwise. If there are ten cases fixed and we have anaesthetists who can attend to six cases, the other cases are postponed and they are put on the list on a priority basis.

#### **MINISTRY OF HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE - MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (FOREIGN)**

**(No. B/904) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to foreign medical practitioners, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof employed by his Ministry in –
  - (i) non-specialist grades;
  - (ii) specialist grades
- (b) their terms and conditions of employment, and
- (c) the number thereof recruited since July 2005 to date.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/902)*

#### **MILK & PULSES – PRICE INCREASE**

**(No. B/905) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to imported milk and pulses, including lentils, broad beans and chana dhal, he will state –

- (a) the immediate measures that Government proposes to take with a view to ensuring that they are sold at a fair and reasonable price, and

- (b) if there has been any increase in the price thereof recently, indicating the reasons therefor.

**The Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection (Mrs I. Seebun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to the Parliamentary Question.

As regards imported milk powder, the hon. Member is aware, this product is subject to a maximum mark-up of 14% since August 2005.

Concerning prices of pulses, the House may wish to note that these items are not regulated. The prices are determined by market forces and Government has no control over the import prices of such items.

Regarding part (b) of the question, it is true that prices of both imported milk powder and pulses have undergone increases recently. I am informed that the price of imported milk powder has increased on the international market for the following reasons –

- (i) severe drought in Australia for the past five years;
- (ii) special levy of US\$1000 on each metric ton of milk powder imposed by Argentina, and
- (iii) increased demand coupled with decreased supply from Australia and New Zealand

As for the price of pulses, it has increased due to the following reasons –

- (i) severe drought in Australia;
- (ii) unavailability of pulses for export from India;
- (iii) special levy of 30% on exports from Pakistan;
- (iv) the purchase of a huge stock of pulses by Iran due to fear of boycott by the United Nations, and
- (v) adverse climatic conditions in Madagascar resulting in poor harvest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these external factors are beyond our control, and this is why prices of both imported milk powder and pulses have rocketed on the local market. A survey on the prices of these commodities has been carried out by the Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry and has been forwarded to the Ministry of Commerce. I am also tabling the lists on the evolution of the prices of imported milk powder and pulses both at import and retail prices.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Ministry of Commerce which is responsible for pricing policy, is presently conducting a study on the evolution of prices of pulses.

My Ministry is very concerned regarding this constant increase in prices. This very week, I am meeting the Indian and Malagasy Authorities with a view to encouraging these countries to export commodities like pulses to Mauritius.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'il y a une pénurie de lait dans certains endroits actuellement et en sus du pénurie on est en train de livrer deux boîtes de lait par consommateur ? Quelles sont les mesures qui sont en train d'être prises par le gouvernement pour pallier à ce problème ?

**Mrs Seebun:** I have been informed by some people that there is black marketing. My Consumer Price Unit is seeing to it that this is not practised and members of the public are aware that they can inform the CPU at through our hotline 185 if any such malpractice is being done.

**Mr Bhagwan:** This is happening actually and this is a real problem. We are asking the Government through the Minister to, at least, take urgent and immediate measures to stop this practice. This is happening in Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes. Can the Minister inform the House what immediate measures she intends to take, within the power she has as Minister, to enable the public to have an adequate quantity of milk and to stop this real problem and what are the measures she intends to take to avoid any recurrence?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, I cannot hear the answer!

**Mrs Seebun:** We are going to take whatever legal actions necessary towards unscrupulous traders and we are also encouraging more importers to get into the business of the import of milk and other products where there are **shortages**.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been informed - since unusual things are happening in the shops - that there will be a real problem of *penurie de lait dans les jours à venir*. Quelles sont les mesures que le ministre et le gouvernement prévoient ?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order !

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Minister of Housing is talking in the place of the Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, I said !

**Mr Bhagwan:** If hon. Miss Deerpalsing is not happy, she can go home!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No. Hon. Bhagwan, it is not for you to ask her to go home; it is for me to ask her to do so.

**Mr Bhagwan:** If she is tired, she can go home.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** If she is tired, she can go out!

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** Don't shout at me, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am not happy about it. My father did not shout at me, so do not shout at me, Mr Speaker, Sir. I won't allow this; I'll go out.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I am not shouting at the hon. Member.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I respect the Chair. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot shout at me.

**Mr Speaker:** I am asking the hon. Member to put his question.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I respect your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am putting my question. Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot shout at me.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Hon. Bhagwan, I have told you so many times that Question Time is a very important procedure of the House. There are many questions and sometimes these questions cannot be put because of the time you are taking to put supplementary questions. I am asking you, please, put your question as quickly as possible.

I will not allow any provocation.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I bow to your ruling. But I don't like anybody to shout at me. I respect the Chair; the Chair has to respect us.

**Mr Speaker:** I respect you, but I have to do my work.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I won't allow anybody to shout at me. Mr Speaker, Sir, being given the increase in the price of commodities and the fact that certain commodities are available in a limited quantity, which is creating a lot of problems to families, may I know what are the immediate measures which the hon. Minister and Government intend to take to prevent a *penurie* in the very near future?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the shortage of milk on the market is a worldwide phenomenon. However, as Minister responsible for Consumer

Protection, this problem is of great concern to me. During the course of the week, I will be meeting the officers of the Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry and those of the Ministry of Commerce so as to try to find out any possible solution to this problem.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the question of pulses, we have all noted that there is more than a 100% increase in the prices of pulses. Again, *gouverner c'est prévoir*. May we know what measures the Ministry and the Government intend to take to, at least, make provision for the coming months? What actions are taken at the level of the Ministry and the STC in order that such items are available in the shops?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the 14% mark-up since August 2005 already showed the Government's strong will to solve the problem of milk. As I said earlier, it is a worldwide phenomenon. I have already said - and I am going to repeat - that during the course of the week I am meeting officers of the Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry and officers of the Ministry of Commerce to see what can be done.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the population is worried because of the shortage of milk on the market. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether she has met the suppliers/importers of powdered milk to know what is the stock available in the country, what is the consumption level and how she sees the situation in the coming days?

**Mrs Seebun:** I am meeting all the main importers of milk on Thursday this week.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will come back again to the question of non-availability of milk and the prices of pulses. There are many doctors on the other side and they know the importance of these two products for the nourishment of the population.

*(Interruptions)*

What is your problem, Minister Dulull? If the Chair cannot hear you, I can!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Minister of Housing, you have been provoking Members for some time. Keep quiet, please!

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I was talking about this issue of scarcity. This is an issue which everyone could see coming, because in the public everyone is talking about that. Can I ask the hon. Minister what have been the

steps which have been taken not only by the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Consumer Protection, but also by Government to ensure that this problem did not arise and which could have been taken care of? The hon. Minister gave the reasons for the scarcity of products and many of these reasons are *conjoncturelles*. Can I ask the hon. Minister what plans she has now to ensure that there is no scarcity of milk on the market and can she reassure the population, being given the reasons she gave about droughts and Iran which are temporary problems? When can we expect the situation to get normal?

**Mrs Seebun:** A meeting has been scheduled for Thursday to meet all the importers of milk and it is only after this meeting that I will be able to pronounce about the future prices. I am also deeply concerned and we have to find out solutions to this problem. This cannot go on; there cannot be a shortage of milk or pulses in this country.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Will the hon. Minister agree that this situation cannot continue? If she can, at least, inform the House what immediate action Government intends to take in the coming months so that the population can be provided with these items?

**Mr Speaker:** This question has already been answered. Next question!

#### **HOTEL PROJECTS (NEW) – NUMBER, SITES, ETC.**

**(No. B/906) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to new hotel projects, he will state the number thereof which will be implemented in the coming years, indicating the sites which have been identified.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am tabling the information relating to the number of new hotel projects to be implemented during the period 2007-2010.

#### **FOOD ITEMS – PRICE UNIFORMITY**

**(No. B/907) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to price uniformity of food items, she will state the steps taken in connection therewith.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the price of only 11 food items is controlled, and hence price uniformity can be ensured for these items only.

As I informed the House in reply to PQ No. B/318, the prices of the commodities fluctuate due to numerous reasons such as fluctuations in exchange rate, cost price at source, freight charges, availability on the international market, etc. Thus, uniformity in prices of such goods cannot be ensured.

However, to protect consumers from exploitation by unscrupulous traders, the Consumer Protection Unit (CPU) of my Ministry monitors the prices of some 200 items of basic household commodities, which include several food items. In cases where wide fluctuations are found in selling prices, the Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives is informed accordingly for necessary action at their end.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether there have been any complaints which have been registered at her Ministry as regards the non-uniformity of prices of food items?

**Mrs Seebun** Even if complaints are registered, Mr Speaker, Sir, since the prices are not controlled, we cannot do much about it. But through programmes we keep telling consumers to find out the prices from different shops before buying, because just like '*gros pois*', some shops sell it at Rs24 while others sell at Rs34. Consumers have to buy in shops where they can get the commodities at lower prices.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether complaints have been registered at her Ministry?

**Mr Speaker:** I said that the hon. Minister has already answered. There have been complaints at her Ministry, she cannot do otherwise than to educate the population. The answer has been given. The hon. Member cannot go on repeating questions. This is prohibited by the Standing Orders.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Since the hon. Minister has made mention of '*gros pois*', is she aware that there has been a 118 % increase in that item, from Rs14 to nearly Rs40 and that there has been a 105% increase in '*dhall gram*', from Rs13 to nearly Rs30? Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether she has taken notice of these increases and, to explain to the population what

immediate action the Ministry intends to take, at least, to make such commodities available to poor people?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, everyone knows that a decrease in supply shoots prices up. This is the reason why on Thursday morning I am meeting the High Commissioner for Madagascar so that we could get a greater volume of broad beans from Madagascar.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has made mention that when there are wide fluctuations in the price, the matter is referred to the Ministry of Commerce. Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House in how many instances has the CPU reported matters to the Ministry of Commerce?

**Mrs Seebun:** This is a continuous exercise and reporting is done on a daily basis.

### MAHEBOURG – TAXI STAND

**(No. B/908) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if it is proposed to set up a taxi stand in Mahebourg and, if so, when.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that during the past years, due to developments in Mahebourg, the taxi stand has been moved three times. First, to a site between Labourdonnais, Mariannes and Keating streets.

Then, it was shifted to Rue des Colonies and in 2003, following consultations with all stakeholders for the taxi stand to be located on five sties, consensus was reached for three locations only, namely Flammands Street, Rue des Hollandais and Rue Mariannes.

The National Transport Authority has placed necessary sign posts in these locations which are being used by the taxis.

As regards the two other sites along Flammands Streets, the National Transport Authority is pursuing discussions with the Grand Port District Council to create additional taxi bays.

### MAHEBOURG MARKET – STALLS – ALLOCATION

**(No. B/909) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that the vegetable sellers of Mahebourg market are still facing problems regarding the allocation of stalls and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that vegetable sellers inside Mahebourg market are not facing any problem regarding allocation of stalls.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that there are not only vegetable sellers inside the market, but there are also those who operate on Mondays outside the market and there are complaints which have been registered from these vegetable sellers as well?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my first answer concerned those operating inside the market. Now, what about those operating outside? I have got some additional information. The number of stalls inside the market is 120, out of which 12 are vacant. That's for inside. With a view to regularising trading activities around the market and fair place, 102 new spaces have been created in the Mahebourg vegetable fair place in addition to the existing 197 spaces. The allocation of these 102 new spaces will be considered today 31 July by the Public Health Committee of the Council.

### **BEACH AUTHORITY – AUDIT SQUAD - REPORT**

**(No. B/910) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the Beach Authority, he will –

- (a) state if the Audit Squad of his Ministry has submitted a report in December 2006 on shortcomings and mismanagement thereat and, if so, will he –
  - (i) give details thereof, and
  - (ii) state if he has discussed the matter with the Chairperson and the General Manager of the Authority, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to if any remedial action has been initiated following the report.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that since my assumption of duty, I have personally taken the initiative to request the Audit Squad of my Ministry to look into the management of organisations falling under the jurisdiction of my Ministry. The initiative is mine, I underline. The Audit Squad will continuously carry out its auditing work as I want a constant assessment of the performance of the organisations with a view to ensuring that the procedures put in place are in line with the principles of good governance. It is with this objective in mind that such an exercise was also conducted at the Beach Authority in October 2006.

The House may wish to note that the report on the management of the Beach Authority not only highlights weaknesses in the internal control mechanism, but also makes recommendations for the review of financial management system of the Authority. As I have just said, we want to stand guided as regards the best practice.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that I have subsequently held discussions with both the General Manager and the Chairman of the Authority and drawn their attention on the need to constantly improve the procedures in the management of the Beach Authority. I am now informed that appropriate remedial actions have been taken.

### **BEACH AUTHORITY – LABOURERS - RECRUITMENT**

**(No. B/911) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to labourers recruited at the Beach Authority during the last recruitment exercise, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority information as to

—

- (a) the number thereof, indicating their names and addresses;
- (b) the procedure followed for their recruitment, and
- (c) if the Board of the Authority approved those recruitments and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following the passage of cyclone Gamede, the Board of the Beach Authority has, at the end of March 2007, agreed to recruit 30 general workers on a month to month basis subject to availability of funds. Accordingly, only 14 general workers were recruited in April 2007 from the list of applications received at the Authority. I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this was the procedure before July 2005. The particulars of these employees are being laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

With regard to the last part of the question, the matter has been referred to the Board for ratification.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House whether he has gone through the list of labourers who have been recruited and which has been approved and recommended by the Board? Is he aware that they come from two constituencies, No. 1 and No. 5? Does he find it normal although the choice has been made by the Board?

**Mr Speaker:** Is the hon. Member making a statement about the two constituencies or is he putting a question?

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am asking a question.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, even if they come from one, two, three or more, don't they have the right to be appointed? Are they debarred, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member must tell me whether ....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Let the hon. Minister answer now!

**Dr. David:** The hon. Member must tell me whether people coming from one constituency are debarred from jobs and employment. If that's the case, then he should say so.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking about equal opportunities. Can the Minister inform the House – unfortunately, I have been asked to mention names – whether one Mr Fawaz Agawan who is the son of one of the advisers at the Ministry...

*(Interruptions)*

He has been recruited. That's why I am asking.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Let me listen to the question!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the Minister inform the House whether one Mr Fawaz Agawan residing at Dina Road, Plaine des Papayes is the son of his adviser, Mr Agawan, who is the one who has been recruited?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, to start with, I have got no other adviser apart from the Press Attaché on information matters. What the hon. Member is saying is completely out of focus. Secondly, may I mention, Mr Speaker, Sir, that these are labourers. When the hon. Member...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. David:** ... was a Minister, he appointed 11 advisers to the tune of Rs5.8 m. per year.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Dr. David:** I can lay this on the Table of the Assembly, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please! Sit down! Hon. Bhagwan, you have started flouting my authority when I am asking you to keep quiet. When the Minister is answering, you have no right to make provoking remarks and hinder the procedure of this House. I am asking you for the last time not to continue with this.

**Dr. David:** I have answered, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am proud...

**Mr Speaker:** There is no need for the hon. Member to make any...

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Order! Is it a matter of personal explanation?

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have been told that I have recruited more than 15 advisers. It is not 15 or 10.

**Mr Speaker:** It is true or is it not true?

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am proud that some are still working. They have done good jobs. And I am proud that...

**Mr Speaker:** There is no need for the hon. Member to go to that extent.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Some are still working. Sir, there is one Mr Agawan who is working as PRO, labourer or driver at the Ministry of Local Government. Is he the father of Mr Agawan Sawaz residing at Plaine des Papayes?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I still maintain that I have got no adviser apart from the Press Adviser. Secondly, I maintain that the Beach Authority has taken its responsibility; and thirdly, as I said, these are labourers. Mr Desveaux was getting over Rs150,000...

**Mr Speaker:** Alright!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the Board refused, in the first instance, to approve these applications which were submitted?

**Dr. David:** Let the Board work at its own pace. I don't get into the operation of the Board, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BILL – INTRODUCTION**

**(No. B/912) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether he will state if an Equal Opportunity Bill is under preparation and, if so, will he state if provision will be made therein in regard to the appointment of political nominees in Government institutions and parastatal bodies.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I can confirm that an Equal Opportunity Bill is under preparation and will be introduced in this House very shortly.

The second part of the question is a bit vague for me to bring a reply thereto at this stage.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer qu'avec ce projet de loi tous les *taxpayers* éligibles pourront postuler les postes vacants dans toutes les sphères du gouvernement, du plus bas au plus haut, et des corps para-publics à travers des appels de candidatures publics?

**Mr Valayden:** The new law will come and reinforce this principle, as has been advanced by the hon. Member.

**CAMPEMENT SITE TAX/CAMPEMENT TAX – AMOUNT  
COLLECTED – YEARS 2002-2007**

(No. B/913) **Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, he will state the yearly amount of *campement* site tax and *campement* tax collected since the year 2002.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information asked by the hon. Member. But for the enlightenment of the House it can be mentioned that the *campement* site tax was around Rs23 m. in 2002/2003 and Rs26 m. last year, whereas for the *campement* tax it was Rs27 m. in 2002/2003 and Rs35 m. in 2006/2007 which gives a grand total for the two taxes of Rs50 m. in 2002/2003 and Rs61 m. last year.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he has figures with regard to the arrears in respect of these two taxes?

**Mr Sithanen:** I don't have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will provide it to the House and also take remedial measures to ensure that these are paid.

**DECLARATION D'ABSENCE - CIVIL CODE**

(No. B/914) **Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to *déclaration d'absence*, he will state if it is proposed to amend article 122 of the Civil Code with a view to reducing the required period of five years to one year in cases where there are concrete proofs and witnesses of the disappearance.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In a case where there is concrete proof as well as evidence from witnesses of the disappearance of any person, the applicable procedure is to be found at "*Chapitre Deuxième – De la disparition pour cause D'accident*" under Articles 133 to 142.

Under those articles an application by way of affidavit can be made at any time after the disappearance of the person either by the Ministère Public or

any interested party to establish that the circumstances in which the person has disappeared are “*de nature à mettre sa vie en danger lorsque son corps n’a pas pu être retrouvé*”. My Ministry is presently liaising with all the different bodies to speed up matters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, therefore, Article 122 caters for cases where a person has left his domicile and his whereabouts are unknown. There is, therefore, no need to review the scope of Article 122 for the reasons put forward by the hon. Member, but there is cause to streamline Article 133

### **POTATO PLANTERS - CÔTE D’OR & MON DESERT ALMA – COMPLAINTS**

**(No. B/915) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the potato planters of Côte d’Or and Mon Désert Alma, he will state if he has received representations from them concerning –

- (a) the poor quality of seeds for the Spunta variety allocated to them in 2006 by the Agricultural Marketing Board and which has resulted in heavy financial losses to them, and
- (b) the difficulties they are now facing for the reimbursement of their loans with the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) that in May 2006, 23 planters at Côte d’Or and Mon Désert Alma made complaints of delayed germination and stunted growth of their potato plantation from Spunta Seeds.

For the first planting season, that is, mid-April to end June, the supply of seeds is met mostly from local Spunta seeds which are approved by the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI). The AMB ensures that only local seeds which have been certified by MSIRI are sold to planters.

Site visits by officers of the AMB, MSIRI and Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) were conducted to investigate into the problems. Field

observations and surveys revealed that the delayed germination was attributed to deficient rainfall from April to June, which was only 37.5% of the normal.

No evidence was found to associate the unsatisfactory growth with the seed quality. Furthermore, no complaint was received from growers who had used the same seeds in other regions of the island. The problem was, from information obtained of a physiological nature which is beyond control.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, though the problem was not linked with the quality of potato seeds, support was given to the planters who suffered heavy financial losses and called for assistance.

The following measures have already been taken to assist the planters –

- (a) Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) examined the cases of the affected planters who had contracted loans and provided relief on a case-to-case basis. Eventually, their existing loans have been rescheduled and they have been provided with additional funds to facilitate new plantation.
- (b) AMB offered the affected planters to be included in the Local Potatoes Boost Up Scheme 2007. In this scheme, they are provided with a credit of 80% on the price of seeds against a commitment to sell, at least, 60% of their ware potato production to the AMB.

Furthermore, I have requested that a committee be set up by the AMB, including MSIRI and AREU, together with all stakeholders to look into the issue as follows –

- (a) whether there is any recurrence of the problem, in those regions and other regions, for this year's plantation;
- (b) if so, to accordingly recommend on measures to be taken to improve the situation, and
- (c) if not, how to compensate those planters and to advise them on alternatives.

### **KYOTO CONVENTION – BALI MEETING**

**(No. B/916) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if a meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Convention has been convened in Bali for December 2007 and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the purpose of the meeting;
- (b) if the committee will –
  - (i) formulate a roadmap for the long term co-operation on the implementation of the convention, and
  - (ii) engage in further negotiations on the comprehensive measures required to ensure continuity beyond the protocol's first commitment period, and
- (c) the strategy, if any, to be adopted by Mauritius in that meeting.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **QUATRE BORNES STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/917) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** 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 Quatre Bornes, State Secondary School, he will state if any time frame has been set for its completion.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has requested renovation works to be carried out at the ex-Stratford College Building, Quatre Bornes with a view to accommodating secondary school students in January 2008.

In that respect, my Ministry is presently carrying out an extensive survey for the preparation of a detailed scope of works and estimated costs. The expected date of completion of the works at ex-Stratford College Building is scheduled for December 2007.

Once those temporary renovation works are completed, new buildings will be put up in the premises to complete the school. Construction will start after the necessary procedures and designs will have been completed.

### **TRIANON PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS – CLOSURE**

**(No. B/918) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Trianon

pedestrian underpass, he will state if he has received representations from the inhabitants of Pellegrin for its closure between 11.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. and, if so, will he state the measures, if any, that will be taken.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, a petition was received on 24 July 2007 for the closure of the Trianon pedestrian underpass between 11.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.

The RDA was providing security services at the underpass until 04 August 2006 when, following discussions held with stakeholders, it was decided that the Police Department would take charge of the security aspects of the underpass from then on. The proposal to close the underpass at night was raised at that meeting of August 2006, but not retained at the time.

Further to the petition, I now propose to raise the whole issue with TMRSU, Ministry of Local Government and the Police Department. In the light of information that has been provided by the hon. Member, I think we should look at this request favourably.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** May I appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to have this problem urgently looked at because there have been cases recently where young girls and women have been almost attacked in this underpass?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Yes, Sir.

## **FOOD PRICES – HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE**

**(No. B/919) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state if a national food policy will be formulated in view of the fact that basic staple food prices worldwide are projected to be subject to sustained increases over the long term.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am going to circulate the reply.  
**(Appendix)**

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I appeal to the hon. Minister whether he could make it an urgent priority, because we are seeing worldwide inflationary trend on both wheat and milk prices, so that we don't get into a situation where we have *insécurité alimentaire* in this country?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to highlight the reasons as to why people are saying that this is the end of cheap food. Many of the reasons

have already been spelt out, but I know one of the great concerns which has expressed in this House is precisely the milk issue. Let me impress upon Members of the House that there are three enterprises which have expressed interests to set up a dairy farm in Salazie. We have already earmarked 30 acres of land for Food and Allied in Richelieu. Medine has started with, what we call, the zero grazing concept in the growing of elephant grass; the farmers in Triolet are doing so. There are 150 *arpents* of land which will be earmarked for small cow-breeders and in respect of La Brasserie, land is available over and above the land that has been released and allocated to Mr Choolun. Of course, I don't have to highlight that the *village laitier* is progressing and a station at Nouvelle Découverte, which was earmarked, had been allocated to small cow-breeders. However, I must say that the price of fodder is constantly going up because no new land is being put not only for fodder, but most of the land is going for bio-fuel production and this is causing a real problem. When we look at the prices, for example, the price of flour has shot up by more than 400%, let alone the drastic price increases of milk, eggs in India, New Zealand and UK. We are facing with a serious problem and this is the reason why we are holding this High-Powered Committee at the University of Mauritius. Once the report is going to be released, I would invite inputs from all colleagues, because this is a serious matter that is to be addressed in a very serious manner.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he could consider having a *campagne de vulgarisation* for people to have kitchen gardens at least?

**Dr. Boolell:** This is ongoing in the light of the campaign being waged by AREU to sensitise farmers at large.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that various schemes for the production of milk on smallholders have actually failed in Mauritius for various reasons? Does he not believe as some people that for cow-breeding and milk production to succeed in Mauritius, it has to be done on a large scale and on an industrial basis? If this is so, how does he propose to reconcile the importance of the production with the policy to ensure that we have a lot of small people getting involved?

**Dr. Boolell:** I do fully concur with hon. Jayen Cuttaree. In fact, this is the reason as to why we invited entrepreneurs from India to come and set up this dairy farm. The project was allocated to those people, the feasibility study was conducted, but, finally, they told us that the South African partner has pulled out and I totally agree unless and until we have a power house, it would be difficult to tug the others along because what we have is backyard livestock breeding and this is the reason why we want to cluster them. First of all, in respect of collection of milk, distribution of fodder etc. In respect of fiscal incentives, there is the rationalisation of incentives, but we have to see to it as to

whether new incentives need to be given over and above technical assistance being dispensed by the veterinary services. Let me highlight the fact that even our veterinary services was scanty and the services being provided was not up to the mark and following recruitment of veterinary services, now we are dispensing the relevant services to the cattle breeders. We have brought together importers of cattle and local breeders to see if they can import with all the technical assistance being dispensed to them in respect of mentoring and seeing to it that when it comes to import, they have all the relevant information. It is certainly not easy, but I can assure the House that a lot is being done.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of the answer that has been given by the hon. Minister, I have learnt somewhere that when Creambel pulled out, there were three other companies that have shown expression of interest in that particular field. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has started discussing with them to see whether someone is very much interested in taking over this project?

**Dr. Boolell:** Sir, people who showed interest are Tanacooty, Sookun and Surath. They are conducting the studies; we've given them all the relevant information over and above the fact that the French came, did a study as how best to revamp the livestock sector. Contrary to Réunion Island where they have all the assistance and support, unfortunately, we need to ensure that there is revamping of the livestock sector.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that we have 1,862 small cow breeders in Mauritius around the island? There have been continuous meetings with the Minister at Réduit. Does the Minister intend to continue meeting and helping these poor cow breeders in the livestock? This will, at least, minimise the problem of milk.

**Dr. Boolell:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, between 2000 and 2006, the number of cattle has declined from 9,600 heads to 5,800 and the number of farmers from 2,500 to 1,700. What we've done lately is to even increase the price of milk that they sell to the public just to encourage our farmers to invest more. There is ongoing interaction between FARC and the cattle breeders.

#### **KUALA LUMPUR/HIGH COMMISSIONER & MOSCOW EMBASSY**

**(No. B/920) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation whether he will state if the High Commissioner for Kuala Lumpur

and the Ambassador for Moscow have respectively been appointed and, if not, why not.

**Mr Dulloo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the appointment of an Ambassador for the Russian Federation with residence in Moscow has already been completed in June 2006. Mr Mahendr Dosieah assumed duty as Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius to the Russian Federation on 21 June 2006, on a contract basis of three years.

The appointment of a High Commissioner to Malaysia with residence in Kuala Lumpur is under active consideration of the Government.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, nearly every six months, I am asking the question as to when are we going to have the High Commissioner for Kuala Lumpur?

**Mr Dulloo:** We have right now a Chargé d’Affaires in Kuala Lumpur with the whole staff and giving the services that we require. As I said, the matter is being considered and there is a process to be followed. Once it is started, it will take some time for us to be able to finalise the whole exercise.

### **FSC – BUILDING - TENDER**

**(No. B/ 921) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to if the Commission has purchased any property at Ebène since January 2007 and, if so, the details thereof.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Financial Services Commission, with the approval of the Central Tender Board, issued a tender in January 2007 for acquisition of office space. Seven bids were received and a public opening of the bids took place at the CTB on 15 February 2007.

An Evaluation Committee comprising representatives from various public institutions was appointed to make an evaluation of the bids received.

I am informed that CTB has approved the recommendation for the purchase of a building to house the Financial Services Commission and an award is yet to be made.

## ROCHE BOIS TRANSFER STATION – ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS – COMPLAINTS

(No. B/922) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Roche Bois Transfer Station, he will state if he has received complaints from the inhabitants of Roche Bois in relation to environmental problems prevailing in the region and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J.B. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/922 and B/932 concurrently.

I am informed that the *Forces Vives de Roche Bois* has in a letter dated 04 July 2007, addressed to the Lord Mayor made complaints regarding the bad state of the drains, the deplorable condition of the dumping site and drug users having access to that site. The Lord Mayor and other Councillors effected a site visit on 13 July 2007 together with the *Forces Vives*. Subsequently, I also met the member of the *Forces Vives* in the presence of the Lord Mayor and assumed that appropriate remedial measures were being taken. We also agreed to set up a monitoring committee comprising of the *Forces Vives* and the Municipality of Port Louis to ensure follow up.

I am further informed that the following remedial measures have been taken at Roche Bois by both the Municipal Council of Port Louis and my Ministry –

- (a) Cleaning and removal of earth refuse debris and scrap metal in the vicinity of the transfer station and on the dumping site;
- (b) Cutting of bushes and cleaning of drains;
- (c) Proper lighting provision for the dumping site as well as the transfer station;
- (d) Cleaning of nine bare lands in the vicinity.

Action is also being taken to –

- (i) erect a temporary perimeter wall, using unused culvert boxes to prevent access to the dumping site;
- (ii) level and compact the surface of the dumping ground to prevent fire outbreak.

The above works are expected to be completed by the end of this week.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether the station is presently being used as a transfer station or as an open air dumping ground?

**Dr. David:** It is used as a transfer station, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that some people usually stop the lorries going to the dumping ground? The driver has to stop his vehicle and these people just go on the vehicles, take what they need from there and leave some rubbish on the road - I have witnessed that these days. Would the hon. Minister look into it and take the necessary measures?

**Dr. David:** I'll look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know that this was done some time back, then people protested and rightly so. The Municipality and the Ministry took the decision they had to take, but I don't know whether it is still on. I'll ask the inspector, or whoever is responsible, to have a look at that.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether the control of the transfer station falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government or the Municipality of Port Louis?

**Dr. David:** It is under the Local Government

### **RUISSEAU DU POUCE – HAWKERS - STALLS**

**(No. B/923) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the stalls for hawkers on the Ruisseau du Pouce, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) the cost of installation thereof, and
- (b) the number of stalls -
  - (i) available
  - (ii) allocated as at to date
  - (iii) occupied as at to date.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that the cost for the installation of stalls for hawkers on the Ruisseau du Pouce is Rs252,161.37. The House may wish to note that the Municipal Council has used the same stalls in steel structure which were temporarily fixed along Farquhar Street, Port Louis while the new central market was under construction.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the number of stalls available is 244 whereas the number of stalls allocated as at to date is 118.

As far as the last part of the question is concerned, I am informed that only 38 stalls are occupied as to date.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Municipality of Port Louis is envisaging an extension of the stalls on Ruisseau du Pouce?

**Dr. David:** I'll look for the answer from the Municipality of Port Louis.

### **MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – BUDGET ALLOCATION & EXPENSES**

**(No. B/924) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the budget allocated to the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to –

- (a) the reasons why the amount has been increased to one million rupees for the year 2007-2008 under the items – Grants to Voluntary Organisations, item 330295634 miscellaneous contributions;
- (b) a breakdown of the expenses incurred during financial year 2006-2007 and
- (c) a list of the beneficiaries.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that since the total expenditure incurred under Miscellaneous contribution during financial year 2006/2007 was Rs975,000, it has decided to round the provision under this item for the current financial year to Rs1 m., which represents a slight increase of Rs25,000 only.

### **AS REGARDS PARTS (B) AND (C) OF THE QUESTION, THE INFORMATION REQUESTED WILL BE LAID IN THE LIBRARY OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.**

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether expenses incurred under this same item in 2005 was around Rs365,000 and that it has increased three times the amount for this financial year?

**Dr. David:** I'll check, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the question referred to 2007/2008.



## POINTE DES LASCARS – SQUATTERS

(No. B/925) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware that the houses of the squatters at Pointe des Lascars, Rivière du Rempart have recently been demolished and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the number thereof,
- (b) the reasons therefor, and
- (c) if alternative lodgings have been identified for them.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, it is a matter of deep regret that the houses of the three squatters, who were illegally occupying State land at Pointe des Lascars, Rivière du Rempart, had had to be demolished on Thursday 19 July 2007 because, despite numerous requests made to them to vacate the land since 2003, they continued to illegally occupy the said land, thereby hampering the completion of a Government project.

In fact, since July 2003, these squatters have, on several occasions, been requested to vacate the land, and a notice was even served on them in June 2006. Their presence on the State land was hampering the completion of the Pointe des Lascars Waterfront Project being executed by the Ministry of Environment and NDU. The contract for this project was awarded since May 2004, but the project could not be completed due to the presence of the squatters.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the following steps were taken by Government in order to facilitate their relocation –

- (a) an alternative plot was identified in the same region and allocated to them in July 2003, and
- (b) in February 2007, the Trust Fund for Social Integration and Vulnerable Groups had provided construction materials of a value of Rs40,000 to each of the three squatters for the construction of a house.

Despite the relocation measures and since the squatters were still occupying the said State land, the authorities had no other alternative than to have recourse to demolition.

My Ministry has already prepared their lease agreements in respect of the new plots of land, and these will have to be signed and granted shortly.

Sir, it is certainly not superfluous to keep reminding that Mauritius is an *État de Droit* and that the public interest must, at all times, prevail over individual interest, however much one may sympathise with any tribulation of the individual which should, in no way and in no circumstances, be an excuse for the individual to flout the law.

Sir, squatting on State land or on private land is an illegal act. In the wake of the irresponsible acts of squatting we were faced with on assuming power, it has been the policy of Government since July 2005 to eradicate such acts altogether in the long term.

Thus, any State land, which, is to be reminded, is the property of the Mauritian nation, and which is assessed, after careful consideration, as having the potential for developmental projects in the national interest, will indeed be freed from such squatting.

Other squatted State land will equally be freed from squatting, as we practise a policy of zero tolerance for such illegal acts.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is certainly not in the public interest that the costs of the Pointe des Lascars waterfront project should continue to escalate because of the failure of squatters to release and vacate much needed State land. No responsible Government can tolerate such a situation, encouraged regrettably by a handful of people with political motivations to put spokes in the wheels of the national development. It is indeed a matter of regret that the good faith of people in some relative difficulties, like the three families, can also be abused by such politically-motivated people who also mislead and use them for narrow political purposes.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not get the answer for the number of persons concerned, but there is one thing I would like to add. The Minister said that Mauritius is an *État de Droit*, but what about Karo Kalyptis; about these structures on public beaches? The Government did not bring any remedial action to these problems, but is focussing only on those at Pointe des Lascars? Is there any specific reason for that?

**Mr Dulull:** I mentioned it clearly in my answer. I suppose the hon. Member has got a set of questions and did not listen to my answer. I said there are three families. Other squattered spots will be freed depending on the use of the land and the priority of the project.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if I heard the Minister well, he said that a plot of land was identified a long time back in 2003. Therefore, can I know why after two years and still up to now, no lease agreement has been given? If, after having given the lease agreement, these persons do not move, then we come to the demolition of their buildings?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I explained clearly in my answer that since they did not want to move, I met the squatters in June 2006. I informed them that the Government has got a project, that there is a lot of money going down the drain and that they have got to move. Still they have refused because they have been motivated by some people not to leave the site so that the project can be hampered. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a letter which I got from the three squatter families. It is mentioned clearly that they do appreciate what we did for them and, more importantly, they mentioned how they have been manipulated. People wanted to get cheap political gains out of it; and that is in the letter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the leases were finalised after the three houses had been pulled down?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned, the lease has been prepared but not yet signed because now that we have demolished, they have moved elsewhere. I had a meeting with them and I informed them that we are ready to help them as long as they are willing to help themselves.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned that Government is adopting the procedure of zero tolerance in respect of squatters. I would like to ask the hon. Minister ...

*(Interruptions)*

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

**Mrs Martin:** ... whether his Ministry has identified other places where squatters are residing and whether it is envisaged to demolish their houses soon?

**Mr Dulull:** As I have mentioned, we have identified land for this project in the national interest and these State lands have been squattered. Government is committed to free these lands.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning lease agreements which have to be given to squatters, can the hon. Minister ensure that these be given first and in case squatters don't want to move, then to proceed with demolition?

**Dr. Jeetah:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member is putting a hypothetical question, and I understand that it is against the Standing Orders. I would like to have your ruling on that.

**Mr Speaker:** No, it is not a hypothetical question. The hon. Minister raised it in the answer.

Order, please!

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question relates to future squatters. The policy of this Government is not to encourage squatting. As we have said, we are going to practise zero tolerance and we are not going to encourage anyone to do future squatting.

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
- MR B. S. – APPOINTMENT**

**(No. B/926) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr B. S., Adviser at his Ministry, he will state –

- (a) the date of his appointment;
- (b) his terms and conditions of appointment;
- (c) the number of overseas missions undertaken by him since his appointment, indicating in each case -
  - (i) the countries visited;
  - (ii) the purpose thereof, and
  - (iii) the expenditure incurred in terms of air tickets and *per diem* allowances

*(Withdrawn)*

**LE VAL NATURE PARK - LEASE**

**(No. B/927) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Le Val Nature Park, he will state –

- (a) the name of the lessee;
- (b) the terms and conditions of the lease, and
- (c) the amount due, if any, by the lessee, as at to date.

**The Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ No. B/927.

I am informed by Prime Partners Ltd, Corporate Secretary of Le Val Development Ltd that Le Val Nature Park is owned by Le Val Development Ltd.

With regard to part (a), I am informed that the name of the lessee is The Nature Park Development Ltd, represented by Mr Bissoon Mungroo of Royal Road, Montagne Blanche.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that it is a lease between two companies entered into in August 1994 for the purpose of park management, tourism, bird sanctuary, aquaculture, flower cultivation, watercress cultivation and the exploitation of the water resources of the park, except for the setting-up of a mineral water bottling plant. The lease is for a period of fifteen years, renewable by mutual consent for two further periods of ten years.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that there were several court cases on the issue of rent, and following mutual arrangements made, both parties have agreed to withdraw all court cases.

I am further informed that the amount due by the lessee as at 27 July 2007 is Rs3.425 m. and that Mr Bissoon Mungroo is now effecting a regular monthly payment of Rs250,000 (being Rs75,000 as rental and Rs175,000 to settle the amount in arrears).

Mr Bissoon Mungroo has further made a standing order in favour of Le Val Development Ltd for an amount of Rs100,000 monthly with effect from June 2007.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is satisfied with the state in which the Nature Park is actually?

**Dr. Boolell:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister is on the same wavelength, can I know from him what action he proposes to take? He will agree with me that it is a beautiful site, but we have to maintain it and we cannot leave it in the state that it is.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, SIC being a partner of that company, it is looking into the matter and we have impressed upon the entrepreneur to do the needful or else corrective measures will have to be taken.

## CPE EXAMINATIONS - PREVOCATIONAL STUDENTS

**(No. B/928) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to prevocational students who passed the CPE examinations, he will consider the advisability of shifting them to the normal stream classes in the same school and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the prevocational stream and the normal stream, also referred to as the mainstream, are two different systems which run in parallel.

Admission to Form I in the normal stream is made electronically by MES on the basis of the overall grade aggregate of the pupil at CPE and the choice of the parent as to schools. Any student who is school-going and is not overaged who passes the CPE and has applied for a seat in Form I in either a State or grant-aided secondary school will be allocated a seat by MES. They may accept or refuse the seat. Such students on accepting the admission in Form I continue their schooling in the same stream up to School Certificate and eventually Higher School Certificate. As regards admission to the prevocational stream, it is open only to students who have either failed the CPE twice or failed the CPE once but are overaged to repeat. They follow the Year I, Year II and Year III prevocational programme at the end of which they take a National Examination and, if successful, they are allowed to go up to the NTC Foundation Course.

It is to be noted that, as per the MES Regulations and Syllabuses, the CPE examination is basically a school examination although provisions exist for private candidates, including overaged candidates, to take part in the examinations. However, it is only students who satisfy the age factor and are school-going who are concerned with the admission in Form I by MES.

As regards a student who has obtained admission in Form I – prevocational in either a State or grant aided secondary school, he/she is not debarred from taking the CPE anew and for as many times as he/she wishes, but as a private candidate. However, in view of the age factor provided for in the Education Regulation to the effect that for admission in Form I a pupil must have attained the age of 12 but not the age of 14 on 01 January in the year of admission such pupils do not qualify for admission in Form I in the normal stream in either a State or grant aided secondary school through the MES mechanism. However, any private candidate who passes the CPE may seek admission in a grant aided private secondary school on the basis of the 50% seat which these schools fill on their own.

Consequently, there is already a pathway for a pre-vocational student who has passed the CPE to seek and obtain admission in Form I in the mainstream in a grant aided private secondary school. It is also possible for a pre-voc student of a grant aided private secondary school to move to the mainstream in the same school if he or she has passed the CPE.

As regards pre-voc students of a State secondary school who may pass the CPE, they cannot, in the present state of affairs, automatically move to Form I in the mainstream in the same school and it is not proposed at this stage to review the system to allow same. However, my Ministry does give consideration to admission in Form I mainstream in the same school or another school, on a case to case basis, any pre-voc student who has passed the CPE, provided vacancies are available and the admission of the pre-voc pupil does not prejudice other pupils. In so doing, my Ministry will have also to consider the psychological, social and pedagogical dimension of the case being treated.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister consider the advisability of amending the legislation for those students who satisfy the criteria of age and having performed well at the CPE? Being given that they join the prevocational and they perform well, does not the hon. Minister consider that this will be a source of encouragement and will give incentive to other students to perform better?

**Mr Gokhool:** There are few cases right now which have been handled and the adaptation has not worked. We are taking a global view of the prevocational in the context of the new TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training) and in that context we will address the issue raised by the hon. Member.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the past we have had cases of students who had left the prevoc stream to join the mainstream: and from the information I have, many of these students have been doing well during the past years. They have been successful up to the HSC level. Basing ourselves on these experiences, we can see how we can help others to join the mainstream, to extend these chances to all students who can do well. As hon. Dayal says it can be a motivation for these students to do better.

**Mr Gokhool:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I gave the impression that all those students do not do well, this is not the case. There are a few cases who are given the opportunity, but they do not do well whereas others did continue. Our policy is to open up more opportunities to the students in prevocational. Fundamentally, what is most important is to raise the status of the TVET stream so that those who want to continue can do so, and our view is that there should be pathways for them to even reach to university level, as it happens in Singapore. But those who want to go back to the mainstream this is an issue that

will be addressed in the context of the new TVET policy which is being developed by my Ministry.

**Mr Dayal:** In view of the fact that we have late developers, will the hon. Minister try to create a bridge between the prevoc and the mainstream?

**Mr Gokhool:** As I have said, pathways exist right now, but it is not a general policy. If we have to come with a general policy, it has to be addressed globally and not on a case to case basis, as is the case because of the existence of regulations

**Mrs Labelle:** The hon. Minister has mentioned that aided private schools can receive the students on the 50%. My question is: why what is applicable for these schools cannot be applied for the State Secondary Schools?

**Mr Gokhool:** I said that the admission is done by MES taking into account the CPE and the parental choice. As at now, the MES regulation does not allow it. Secondly, in the 50% cases, you may have vacancies to which the student may access, but in the State schools there is already a waiting list which is determined by the criteria applicable for admission to State colleges. Therefore, if we admit a prevocational student who has passed, it may be to the prejudice of those students under existing regulations who are on the waiting list and are better qualified.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why I am asking the hon. Minister if he can consider the advisability of amending the present legislation to take into account what we have just mentioned.

**Mr Gokhool:** As I said to the hon. Member, we are addressing the issue on a case to case basis, but not on a piecemeal basis. I want to come with a proper policy. The point that is raised will be taken care of; it is being prepared and it will come. We have to do a good preparation, this is an important issue.

**Mrs Labelle:** Just one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. The argument that the hon. Minister has just given can be applied to these private schools too. This can create problem. Are we offering opportunities to these children? Using this argument will not other colleges shut the doors to these pupils?

**Mr Gokhool:** In the grant aided colleges, 50% of seats are allocated electronically by MES and the other 50% is left to the schools to admission; and this is where the facility is provided as at now. So, the prevoc students who have passed and satisfied the conditions can go to Form I, but this is not the case as far as the State colleges are concerned, where all the seats are allocated by MES electronically and not 50%.

## MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE LTD – CLEANING SERVICES

(No. B/929) **Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether in regard to the cleaning services at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the company, information as to –

- (a) the name of the service provider;
- (b) if a tender exercise was carried out in relation thereto, and
- (c) the contract value.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the management of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd that Alpha Cleaning is the service provider since May 2006.

In respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a three year contract for cleaning services for the period July 2005 to July 2008 which had been awarded to a different company had to be terminated in May 2006 due to the various adverse security reports concerning that company's staff working in the premises of Mauritius Duty Free Paradise. In fact, one of the cleaners had committed a larceny at the retail outlet for which he was sentenced by the District Magistrate in March 2006.

In order to continue with the cleaning of its premises, Mauritius Duty Free Paradise approached Alpha Cleaning with a request to quote for cleaning services as the latter was already providing such services to the other Airport users and had been its cleaning services contractor just prior to July 2005.

Regarding part (c) of the question, the cleaning services are being provided at a rate of Rs49,500 per month.

**Mrs Perrier:** The Minister has just answered that there was no tender. Can we know if the Board has approved the contract of Alpha Cleaning?

**Mr Sithanen:** In fact, I asked that question, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the answer which has been provided is that there are only two providers of such services at the airport: one which was awarded the contract and then there was the problem that I mentioned; and they resorted to the second provider of services there.

I also asked the question as to whether it is a competitive bid. I am given to understand that the scope of the services was widened to include the cleaning of the warehouse and this was taken into account. The contract value is admittedly higher than it was before, but it includes now the cleaning of a warehouse of approximately 2500 sq. ft.

**Mrs Perrier:** The Minister did not answer the question. Has the Board approved that decision?

**Mr Sithanen:** I presume they must have, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not have the information here. But if the hon. Member has any doubt about it, I'll seek the information from the Mauritius Shopping Duty Free Paradise and give it to her.

**Mrs Perrier:** Is the hon. Minister aware that the director of Alpha Cleaning is also a member on the Board of Mauritius Shopping Duty Free Paradise? Does he not think that there is a conflict of interests in that case?

**Mr Sithanen:** I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir. But let me give the facts that have been given to me by the management of Mauritius Duty Free Paradise. There are only two providers of the services there. One is the firm – I do not want to mention the name - that was awarded the contract, but apparently the contract had to be terminated; and the second one is Alpha Cleaning. I also understand from the management of Mauritius Duty Free Paradise that Alpha Cleaning provides services to other stakeholders at the airport. I presume, if the information that the hon. lady has given to the House is right and I hope that when the decision was taken, that member would not have taken part in the deliberations. I hope this was the case.

**Mrs Perrier:** Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance find out if the service provider has declared his vested interest and whether he did not take part in the decision of the Board?

**Mr Sithanen:** I don't want to enter into a debate on vested interest, because I asked the question myself, Mr Speaker, Sir, as to why there was no tender. The answer was that there were only two providers of services at the airport; one of the two was disqualified for reasons which I have just mentioned and the other one was given the tender. I think the question put by the hon. Member is pertinent. I'll seek the information and I'll provide it to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if I get it right from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Alpha Cleaning got a contract for three years?

**Mr Sithanen:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir. The first contract, which was cancelled for reasons that I have spelt out in my answer, was for a period of three years. This one, I am given to understand, is for a period of two years.

**Mr Guinness:** It can be that because of urgency they cancelled the previous contract. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has been told that there were only two service providers, but if a tender is launched we can get more service providers on the market.

**Mr Sithanen:** It could be more expensive also.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance inform the House who are the Directors of Alpha Cleaning?

**Mr Sithanen:** I don't know. How does the hon. Member expect me to know that, Mr Speaker, Sir?

**Mr Speaker:** I won't allow this question. This information can be checked at the Registrar of Companies.

### **FLOREAL WOMEN CENTRE – SPORTS STRUCTURES**

**(No. B/930) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to the sports structures of the Floreal Women Centre, she will state if they will be made available to the inhabitants of the vicinity.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants of Floreal and its vicinity, mostly women and girls, who grouped into Women Sports Associations, have regular access to the sports infrastructures, namely *petanque* court and volleyball/basketball pitch, located within the premises of the Floreal Women Centre.

These facilities are also put at the disposal of other players of the region whenever requests are made.

I am informed that the volleyball/basketball pitch located behind the women centre is under the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Curepipe and that the inhabitants of the region have access thereto, on the days and time specified on the notice board affixed at the women centre.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that these structures are not being used to its full potential and that there are many youngsters, not only girls, but also boys who would like to take advantage of these infrastructures? Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is no youth centre there, may I ask the hon. Minister whether these youngsters, be it boys, can have access to these sports infrastructures?

**Mrs Seebun:** Certainly, they can have access to it since this is for the welfare of the family. I'll ask the officers of my Ministry to get in touch with those youngsters so that we can work out "specific time" for boys as well.

## POINTE AUX SABLES MARKET – OPERATIONAL

**(No. B/931) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Pointe aux Sables Fair, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) when it will become operational;
- (b) the number of stalls available, category-wise;
- (c) the criteria laid down for the allocation of the stalls, and
- (d) if the allocation of stalls has been finalized and, if so, the list of the beneficiaries.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that the new Pointe aux Sables market will be operational as from the end of August 2007.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that in all 107 stalls are available as follows –

- (i) 12 stalls for meat, fish and general retailer, and
- (ii) 95 stalls for vegetables and haberdashery.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the Council is currently finalizing the criteria for the allocation of stalls and I am given to understand that priority of consideration would be given to those persons already working at the temporary fair on Sundays.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he has the information from the Municipality of Port Louis to the effect that they already have a priority list for this exercise?

**Dr. David:** As I have said, I understand that they are finalizing the criteria and the list.

## ROCHE BOIS TRANSFER STATION - REPRESENTATIONS

**(No. B/932) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Roche Bois Transfer Station, he will state if he has received representations

from the inhabitants of the region in relation thereto and, if so, the measures that will be taken, if any.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/922)*

### **VERDUN – ROAD HUMPS**

**(No. B/933) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the road hump which is located near the Ferrag shop at Verdun, he will state if he has received representations for its removal on account of the fact that two adjacent houses sustain shocks when heavy vehicles run over it.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have received no such representations. On 26 March 2007, at a site meeting convened by the hon. Member the request for the removal of the hump was made to the TMRSU which, however, did not recommend its removal in view of the road safety risks. On 24 July 2007, my Ministry was again informed through the hon. Member's letter of 11 July, addressed to the Road Development Officer of representations for the removal of the hump at Verdun.

On receiving the request, the TMRSU carried out a site visit on 25 July 2007 and noted that four humps, including the one near Ferrag shop, were built following a fatal accident which occurred on 28 March 2000.

It has advised that the hump is at a strategic location and its removal will encourage speeding and create road safety risks.

However, this issue will be considered by the Regional Road Safety Committee which has been set up in the context of the Global Road Safety Week and will include the relevant stakeholders.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have personally been to the houses and I have seen the extent of the damages, particular the crack. I'll impress upon the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to consider the matter with sympathy and to address the problem that the inhabitants are facing?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** I'll certainly look at the issues involved. There is a road safety element which will have to be considered, but I will look into all the possibilities.

**EASTERN INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED LEARNING IN  
MANAGEMENT – ENROLMENT, COST, ETC.**

**(No. B/934) 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 courses offered by the Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning in Management University in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to –

- (a) the number of students who have enrolled therefor;
- (b) the cost thereof, and
- (c) the body which will be awarding the certificates after the completion thereof.

*(Vide reply to PNQ)*

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FUND –  
PROJECTS – JULY 2005 TO 31 AUGUST 2007**

**(No. B/935) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the projects funded by the National Environment Fund since July 2005 to date, he will give a list thereof.

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation (Mr M. Dooloo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, 14 projects have been funded from the National Environment Fund since July 2005 to date. A list of the projects will be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

**Mrs Martin:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has the total amount which was involved for the funding of the projects?

**Mr Dooloo:** I have been given the details and it would take time for me to calculate the total amount, but the paper will be placed in the Library. The hon. Member will have the benefit of calculating the figure.

**CONSUMER PROTECTION UNIT (CPU) - SURPRISE CHECKS**

**(No. B/936) 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, in regard to essential commodities, she will state the number of surprise checks carried out during the years 2005-2006 and 2006 to date to prevent black market and abuse by retailers, indicating the number of cases in which prosecution has ensued.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, during period July 2005 to June 2006, 5,252 surprise checks and 122 contraventions were established.

As for period July 2006 to date, 5,919 surprise checks were carried out and 115 contraventions established by the Consumer Protection Unit.

I would like to inform the House that once contravention is established, the Consumer Protection Unit refers the case file to the Director of Public Prosecutions for necessary action.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there are cases where the same retailer has, on a number of times, gone against the law and not provided priced articles correctly?

**Mrs Seebun:** It is up to the Director of Public Prosecutions to see the way the retailer should be penalized.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question was....

**Mr Speaker:** It is about the continuous offender.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am unable to give an answer, but I am sure that legal actions are taken against such unscrupulous traders who are repeatedly doing the same mistakes.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** In fact, my question was: whether in cases of unscrupulous traders any sanction can be taken whereby the permit is taken back?

**Mrs Seebun:** The CPU of my Ministry can recommend for severe actions to be taken.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she would consider an amendment to the law - just like in the Ministry of Labour where action can be taken for criminal offences pertaining to the Labour Act without having to send the file to the Director of Public Prosecutions - whereby the CPU also has the same powers to basically take legal action and for matters to go faster, and also to take into consideration what has been suggested by the hon. Member of the Opposition with regard to pulling away of permits?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a good suggestion and it can be considered.

## PITON BUILDING, CUREPIPE – STREET VENDORS

(No. B/937) **Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the 60 street vendors operating near the Piton building in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if they will be allowed to continue operating thereat.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that the 60 street vendors operating near the Piton building in Curepipe have been requested to vacate the site which will be used for the construction of a new building including a new market.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, en attendant de trouver une solution pour ces pères et mères de famille qui travaillent, est-ce que le ministre peut considérer les laisser opérer parce qu'ils ont des *loans* à rembourser?

**Dr. David:** Je dois vous dire, M. le président, que j'ai beaucoup de sympathie pour eux. On trouve toujours des arrangements. Mais il y a eu des lettres qui ont été envoyées au ministère du logement et les procédures ont été enclenchées pour qu'on puisse prendre l'emplacement. Mais, certainement, on trouvera bien une solution pour eux.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre a un site alternatif à proposer à ces marchands ambulants?

**Dr. David:** On a proposé un site alternatif et, comme vous le savez, les marchands ambulants veulent toujours travailler là où passent les clients. On les comprend!

*(Interruptions)*

Ils ne sont pas ambulants d'après la définition stricte du terme, mais on trouvera bien un autre site pour eux. Je voudrais bien les rencontrer ainsi que la municipalité de Curepipe pour discuter.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Minister said that he is going to find time to discuss with the vendors, may I know when he envisages to do so?

**Dr. David:** As quickly as possible, Mr Speaker, Sir. I'll do that by tomorrow morning, asking the Municipality to come, together with the hawkers. I don't know when, but, believe me, as quickly as possible.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the representatives of the constituency also be present?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let it be at management level with the Municipality and the Ministry. The hon. Member will definitely be kept informed.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre va accorder un délai aux *hawkers* pour trouver une solution?

**Dr. David:** M. le président, comme je viens de le dire, on a déjà enclenché toutes les procédures auprès du ministère des terres et du logement. Je crois que la meilleure façon c'est de discuter avec eux et de voir ce qu'on pourrait trouver comme solution. Je suis ouvert à toutes les propositions qui pourraient aller dans le sens d'aider ces marchands-là.

#### **FLAT ISLAND/ILOT GABRIEL – LEASE – TENDER**

**(No. B/938) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to the lease of the Flat island and the Ilot Gabriel, he will state if any tender exercise was carried out in relation thereto.

**The Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

Flat Island and Ilot Gabriel are both Nature Reserves under the Forests and Reserves Act.

As the House is aware, both islets are visited by a large number of persons and there has been a marked deterioration in the environment of both islets with increasing volume of rubbish/litter such as empty cans, plastic bags, plastic bottles, broken glass, food, carton boxes and picnic fires.

Therefore, when Ocean Blue Island Co. Ltd applied for lease of Ilot Gabriel for an eco-touristic purpose, and agreed to watch over and protect the islet, to regularly clean it and ensure that visitors keep the islet clean, the proposal that the islet be leased for a period of 7 years as from 30 March 2007 was acceded to after careful examination. It is to be noted that Ilot Gabriel has

on it the tomb of Dr. Beaugeard, a famous doctor, who looked after lepers quarantined in Flat Island and Ilot Gabriel.

In the case of Flat Island, where there are monuments of cultural and historic significance such as a lighthouse which is still functional, old graves, boiler, a historical building now in ruins, a coastguard monitoring post, it was thought that an NGO could be interested in the protection of the islet.

The well-known NGO Nature Watch was approached, as well as several others namely Environment Protection and Conservation Organisation (EPCO), Community Development Programme Agency (CODEPA), Mauritius Wildlife Association (MWA) and Reefs Conservation of Mauritius who have been active partners in conservation work. These NGOs did not have the means to access the islet.

It was thought fit to lease Flat Island to Discover Mauritius Ltd, a Government company that also manages Citadel. The lease is effective as from 01 July 2007.

The House may note that similarly Iles Aux Aigrettes, another islet forming part of the Nature Reserves, has been leased to Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) since 1986 for conservation, eco-tourism and educational purposes. The islet has been well-protected and rehabilitated since it has been leased. The lease will expire on the thirtieth day of June 2036 with the rental being as follows –

01 July 2006 to 30 June 2016: Rs150 per annum

01 July 2016 to 30 June 2026: Rs225 per annum

01 July 2026 to 30 June 2036: Rs350 per annum

For the period, 01 July 1986 to 30 June 2006 the rental was R1 per year. MWF is an NGO and it derives some revenue through controlled access of our visitors to the islet.

It is expected that both Ilot Gabriel and Flat Island will, after some time, be rehabilitated and better protected with guidance and supervision being provided to the lessees by my Ministry.

No tender exercise was carried out in respect of any of the three islets, as there is no question of leasing such reserves merely to the highest bidder.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut nous donner le nombre d'applicants concernant ces deux îles ?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is Mr Jayraj Wochit for the Ocean Blue Island Co. Ltd. and Flat Island is leased to Discover Mauritius Ltd., a Government company.

**Mr Guimbeau:** There has been no open tender?

**Dr. Boolell:** It has always been the practice.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, le ministre a parlé d'un projet touristique sur une des îles? Est-ce qu'il peut nous donner le loyer annuel?

**Dr. Boolell:** It is Rs60,000 per year.

### **RENGANADEN SEENEVASSEN GOVT. SCHOOL, CASSIS – FOOTBALL PITCH – LOCAL TEAMS**

**(No. B/939) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the football pitch of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School at Cassis, he will state if it will be placed at the disposal of the local teams and, if so, the conditions that will be attached thereto.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that any local team wishing to make use of the football pitch of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School should first apply to the Head Teacher with the relevant details. The latter will then consult the PTA and Zonal Directorate before arriving at a decision after having considered the merits of the request and the availability of the pitch.

Should the request be agreed to, the Head Teacher will send a letter of authorisation to the team, detailing the conditions for the use of the facility. I am tabling a copy of the conditions.

Those conditions are primarily to ensure the integrity of the pitch as well as the rest of the school premises while allowing the local community to benefit from the use of the pitch.

I need to point out that additionally schools have been requested to carefully assess the security aspects before making any decision on applications, especially in view of the numerous thefts that have occurred in our schools of late.

## MALINGA-CREVE COEUR LINK ROAD PROJECT

**(No. B/940) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the project for the construction of the Malinga-Crève Coeur link road, he will state where matters stand.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Malinga-Crève Coeur Road Project which was to provide a link between the villages of Malinga and Crève Coeur, will not be implemented as originally planned in the 1994 project, as an active landslide in the area was identified, implying a serious risk to road users in the future.

The hon. Member may wish to refer to the reply I made to PQs B/48 and B/150 on the same subject at our sittings of 21 March 2006 and 17 April of this year, respectively.

I reiterate that in March 2005, a contract was awarded to Messrs. BCEOM to review the design of the Malinga-Crève Coeur road. Subsequently, the Consultant identified a new alignment known as the Terre Rouge-Verdun-Ebène link road.

The draft detailed design report and tender documents have been submitted and are presently being examined by the Road Development Authority.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since now the Deputy Prime Minister is confirming that there is a new road alignment, may I ask him what will happen to the land that has compulsorily been acquired under the previous road alignment?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think once we go ahead with this project, we will look at the previous alignment and we may give the opportunity to those who sold the land to claim the land back.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether any source of financing has been identified with regard to the Verdun/Crève Coeur road?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** There are two options; we are looking at both, but we have not decided on the final one.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS - HIV AND AIDS CASES

(No. B/941) **Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware of cases of HIV and AIDS amongst students and, if so, will he state the measures that will be taken to monitor and prevent their propagation in the educational institutions.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that from 1994 to date, tests carried out at the Virology Laboratory have identified 86 HIV positive cases (38 males and 48 females) between 15 to 19 years, the age group of secondary school students. However, an increase in the number of cases has been noted as from 2004 and 62 cases (30 males and 32 females) have been identified in this age group from 2004 to date.

I wish to point out that it is not possible to ascertain, according to data available at the Virology Laboratory and the AIDS Unit, how many students form part of this particular group. My Ministry does not verify the information submitted by the client in order to preserve confidentiality and to encourage people to come forward for testing. Furthermore, some people purposely do not give correct information regarding identification, such as age, profession and address. Following an interview given by the Director of PILS in the weekly edition of 'L'Express Dimanche' of 15 July 2007 on the existence of cases of HIV/AIDS...

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister cannot bring in his answer what the press has said. He can comment without mentioning the press.

**Mr Faugoo:** Following an article in the press, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a meeting with PILS...

**Mr Speaker:** No, the hon. Minister cannot bring in what the press has said.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Faugoo:** As regards the second part of the question, Government has adopted a multi-sectoral approach in the response to HIV and AIDS. My Ministry works in close collaboration with various Ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions, Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection, NATReSA, NGOs such as Mauritius Family Planning

Association, *Action Familiale* and other stakeholders with a view to sensitising the student population on Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS.

A number of activities in the educational institutions has been carried out on a regular basis. These activities include, amongst other –

- (i) awareness sessions on HIV and AIDS and sexuality transmitted diseases for students of secondary schools;
- (ii) organisation of forum debates on HIV and AIDS in secondary schools;
- (iii) training workshops on HIV and AIDS organised for all secondary school teachers and administrative staff who, in turn, hold information sessions for the students;
- (iv) distribution of HIV and AIDS pamphlets to all students of secondary schools. So far, 115,000 copies have been distributed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, and
- (v) talks on family life education and HIV and AIDS in schools by the Family Planning Unit of my Ministry. Since 2005 to date, 9000 students have been sensitised.

Moreover, NATReSA in collaboration with United Office on Drugs and Crime and social workers have carried out a number of activities, including talks and presentations for the prevention of HIV and AIDS in schools. 150 sessions have been held in 30 colleges. It also, in collaboration with “*Ecole des Valeurs Humaines*”, undertook training workshops for 110 secondary school co-ordinators (i.e teachers) and students who are now acting as prevention vectors in their schools by delivering lectures on human values to prevent substance abuse and HIV and AIDS proliferation.

I am informed that NATReSA has sensitised some 5000 students, 1000 teachers and rectors as well as non-teaching staff during the financial year 2006-2007.

Furthermore, the Community Prevention Programme of NATReSA, which is being carried out during evenings, reach all target groups, including students who are being sensitised on substance abuse and HIV and AIDS.

I am also informed that during the period July 2006 to June 2007, the Ministry of Women’s Rights Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection has sensitised nearly 2000 adolescents on this issue.

These measures are being reinforced in the newly developed National Multi-sectoral HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2007-2011. One of the strategic objectives addresses specifically the youth. The National AIDS Secretariat, has been set up recently at the Prime Minister's Office, to coordinate multi-sectoral response and to provide a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the activities carried out by different partners in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one case of HIV and AIDS in our schools, if confirmed, is one too many. I thank the hon. Member for putting this question and I reassure the House that with the help of all stakeholders, we will maintain a focused approach targeting the student population.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether in the context of the AIDS awareness campaign minors, especially students from colleges, are required to come with their parents to undergo the test?

**Mr Faugoo:** It is open to anybody. In fact, minors under 16 have to be accompanied by their parents. Anybody above 16 can have the test done in any other hospital without their responsible party. In fact, it was limited to just one hospital. Today, this test can be done in all the hospitals and we have also allowed the private laboratories to carry out this test.

**Mrs Labelle:** The hon. Minister has given figures for young people aged 15 to 19. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has figures for children who were born with the HIV virus, which means that by now there may be cases in our primary schools of children with the virus?

**Mr Faugoo:** I don't have the figures for those under 15, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are few babies recently born with the virus, because of the mother carrying the virus.

**Mrs Labelle:** Some years back, there was a young girl who was deprived of her right to education because she was HIV positive. I think it occurred some three or four years back. There was some uprising regarding this case. Can I ask the hon. Minister to see to it that these cases do not happen?

**Mr Faugoo:** I did not get the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Perrier:** There is a regular exercise of blood donation in schools. Isn't it a way to find out new cases and is there any follow-up after positive cases are found after blood donation?

**Mr Faugoo:** All blood collection for transfusion purposes - I have said it in the House before - are automatically checked for this virus, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far as I know, there is not a single case where that virus was found in the blood collected.

**Mr Speaker:** I am informed that PQ Nos. B/942 and B/944 have been withdrawn.

### **BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION - MEDICAL BOARD – MEETING**

**(No. B/942) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Medical Board of her Ministry, she will state –

- (a) the frequency at which it meets to consider applications for Basic Invalidity Pension, and
- (b) the number of times it has met during the period July 2004 to June 2005.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND – DISBURSEMENT, BOARD MEETINGS, ETC.**

**(No. B/943) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the National Solidarity Fund, she will, for the period July 2004 to June 2005, state –

- (a) the sum disbursed in terms of aid, indicating the names of the beneficiaries, constituency-wise, and
- (b) the number of board meetings held, on a monthly basis.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **POUDRE D’OR & GRAND’BAIE – BEACHES - SOIL EROSION**

**(No. B/944) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the problem of soil erosion affecting the beaches of the Poudre d’Or village and of Grand’Baie and if, so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **EX-SERVICEMEN – MEDICAL DOMICILIARY VISITS**

**(No. B/945) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the domiciliary visits to the ex-servicemen effected by the Director of the Medical Unit, she will state who supervises and approves the work done.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the Mauritius Ex-Services Trust Fund Board operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

**Mrs Perrier:** In the light of the answer which the hon. Minister gave last week to PQ B/837, it was said that the amount paid to the Director for these domiciliary visits is Rs1,535,000. Can we know who approved the payment?

**Mrs Bappoo:** The Director is accountable to the Ex-Services Trust Fund Board and it is the Board that is responsible for the payment.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over!