

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## POLICE OFFICERS - INTERDICTION

(No. B/780) Mr S. Naidu (Third 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 the Police officers presently under interdiction, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof indicating in each case –

- (a) their names, grade and date of interdiction;
- (b) the reasons therefor, and
- (c) the outcome of the departmental inquiry.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that there are presently 135 Police Officers who are interdicted from duty.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am tabling the information requested for.

**Mr Naidu:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the information I have, some of the officers have passed away or retired. If the inquiry, when it finally comes, find them not guilty, will any compensation envisaged to be paid to these officers of their families?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, I must say it gives me the opportunity to say it. I have asked the State Law Office to look at whether we should make amendments because, very often, when people are interdicted, it is as if they have won a lottery. This time they don't work and they get paid. We want to do amendments to that so that at one point in time they can't just get paid for ever. If the inquiry takes five years, they get paid for five years. We are looking into this. In some other cases, I must tell you – the hon. Member will see when he looks at the list – for example, they have been found guilty, but they have appealed. In other cases, the DPP is deciding and some cases are in front of the Court; that is how it is going on.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 135 Policemen are interdicted. I have raised that in the past, even if it is not a lottery, some of them remain interdicted and on full pay for ages. For the innocent ones, it is very unfair. For the guilty ones it is a lottery. Time is wasted at the level of the Police establishment and then maybe time is wasted at the level of the Discipline Forces Service Commission. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what concrete action is being taken to activate matters?

**The Prime Minister:** There are two things. We have asked for matters to be activated be it at the level of the Court or at the Discipline Forces Service Commission. But also, as I said, we are looking at amending the law. For example - this question was asked earlier - if somebody has been interdicted and supposed, at one point, he stops getting his pay, if he is found not guilty, he must get a compensation, obviously. But we are looking at that.

### **PAEDOPHILIA – REPORTED CASES**

**(No. B/781) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** 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 paedophilia, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since January 2006 to date, indicating in each case, the number of arrests effected and the number of foreign nationals involved.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that since 2006 to date, 369 alleged cases have been reported to the Police. Police has arrested 350 accused, including two foreign nationals.

As regards the two foreign nationals, the DPP has advised that no further action should be taken in one case. The other one is still pending

enquiry and the accused has been released on bail after furnishing a surety of Rs5,000.

**Mr Naidu:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the proliferation of paedophilia in some of the countries of Far East, can the hon. Prime Minister give assurance to the House that our Police and Immigration Officers are properly equipped to scan all the foreign nationals coming in, in order to make sure that they don't have any antecedent in this respect?

**The Prime Minister:** That is being done on a regular basis. I can say, without mentioning names, that twice already, in October last year and in March this year, we have had information from abroad about known paedophiles who have come to Mauritius and immediately action has been taken.

**Mr Bérenger:** We have been told that there have been 369 alleged cases of paedophilia since January 2006. Since then, has there been any sentence passed in Court concerning paedophilia?

**The Prime Minister:** I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that our law does not define paedophilia, but they put it differently, sexual intercourse with female under age and all this. But whether we should amend that law as well, we shall have to see. But in the cases, yes, there have been convictions and people have been arrested as well.

**Mrs Perrier:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us what happened to the victims? Are they sent back to their parents or does Government take care of them?

**The Prime Minister:** It is taken care under the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare and there is a series of Units that look into how to give support to children who are victims of sexual assault. For example, the services of Child Development Welfare Officer from the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare is immediately involved. And if there is need, the victims are accompanied by the Child Welfare Officer to hospital for treatment whenever there is need. There is also a series of people who get involved in that.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that the people who are charged with alleged cases of paedophilia come out with a surety of Rs5,000. Is that correct?

**The Prime Minister:** Paedophilia is not defined under our law. They are sued under different connotations but, in the one case, the accused has been released on bail after furnishing a surety of Rs5,000 - that is in the Court.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Will the hon. Prime Minister impress upon his colleague, the hon. Minister of Tourism, that necessary training be provided to hotels' staff and workers of the tourism industry so that they may detect suspected cases of paedophilia in hotels?

**The Prime Minister:** It is not going to be an easy task to train them to detect, in case they start going into rooms themselves. But I'll pass the message to my colleague. I am sure he is listening too.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I come back again to the issue of children who are taken care of by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare? May I impress upon the hon. Minister to be very careful and not to be in a hurry to send back the children in their families, because in many cases....

**The Deputy Speaker:** This can be the matter of another question to be put directly to the hon. Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare.

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Member is asking the hon. Prime Minister to impress upon the other Minister.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in many cases, this is a worldwide phenomenon ....

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know what the hon. Member mean.

**Mr Lauthan:** ....including Mauritius. At times, the mothers of those children are dependent financially on the aggressors....

**The Deputy Speaker:** In that case, this will be the matter of another question that the hon. Member will put later on.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that a lot of minors work in the entertainment sector in the hotel industry?

*(Interruptions)*

They are minors and they worked in the hotel industry...

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should put her question.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are minors and they work in the hotel industry as singers, dancers, etc. Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that minors are not recruited to perform in the hotel industry, because it can link to paedophilia?

**The Prime Minister:** The Minister of Tourism is already listening to the hon. Member, so I don't need to pass on the information.

**Mr Barbier:** The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that we lack some clauses in our law concerning paedophilia. May I ask him when are we going to have these amendments brought to the House so that we can vote the appropriate law in that direction?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not sure whether we need to amend the law, but I am saying that paedophilia is not defined in our law. We have different Acts, for example, the sexual intercourse with female under 16, the Criminal Code, etc. take care of this. So, we are not sure whether we need it actually. In fact, it is not felt that we need it, because it is said here that the term 'child of sexual abuse' covers a wide range of behaviours which can be treated under our law.

**Mr Bérenger:** A few years' back, the G8 group of industrialised countries made *le combat contre la pédophilie* one of their priorities and they agreed to share information on paedophiles and so on and to set up a central data bank that must be available at Interpol. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether our Police are tapping fully into such sources of information?

**The Prime Minister:** I know they are in contact with the Interpol. Whether they are actually using the database or not, I can't say for sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I'll ask the Commissioner of Police to advise us on this. As I said, we get this sort of people who are known paedophiliacs from abroad and we immediately take action once they are there. In fact, there was a case recently in March of this year of somebody who has been sentenced abroad as a serious sexual offender. He came to Mauritius and, unfortunately, married a Mauritian. He has then made application to extend his stay in Mauritius, but that was not entertained.

### **PRISONS – PRISONERS, STAFF - NUMBER**

**(No. B/782) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the hon. 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 Prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to, in each prison, the number of –

- (a) prisoners incarcerated, and
- (b) staff posted.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prison population and the number of officers posted at the various institutions as at 04 July 2008 are as follows -

<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Number of Detainees</b>	<b>Number of officers posted at the institution</b>
Beau Bassin Prison	1022	352
New Wing Prison	209	64
Phoenix Prison	8	35

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether the hon. Member wants me to read all the information or to circulate it, because I don't know whether he has additional questions. If need be, I'll circulate the answer.  
**(Appendix)**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister can have it circulated.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to my information, there is a lack of staff in some prisons and they have introduced the Bank system of bank as it exists in hospitals where there are bank doctors and bank nurses. In prisons also there is a bank officers working on a 24-hour basis and this is creating frustration among other officers. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of this situation?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am told that our ratio of prison officers to detainees is actually better than in many other countries. For example, we have the figures for the year 2000. In Mauritius, it was 1 : 2.5, whereas in UK it is 1 : 5. In India, it is 1 : 10. But, there are vacancies in various grades which are being filled at the moment. I think there are 81 which are going to be filled very soon. There are 25 vacancies that have been reserved and that is why they are not filled. They are reserved for officers who are under investigation. As I said, they are interdicted and they are facing disciplinary actions and we are waiting for these to be sorted out.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that our ratio of prisoners to prison officers is a good one compared to other countries. He has the figures of prisoners also. Have we looked at how does our ratio of prisoners compared to the total population compare with other countries?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't have this figure just now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I can look into it.

## **MBC – FIXED DEPOSITS –FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**(No. B/783) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and 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 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if the Corporation has been holding fixed deposits with financial institutions since July 2005 to date, and if so, obtain a list thereof, indicating in each case –

- (a) the amount of money deposited, and
- (b) the date of the transactions.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information called for by the hon. Member pertains to commercial operations of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation which, as a body corporate, enjoys the benefit of confidentiality in respect of its deposits made with financial institutions under the Banking Act 2004 and the Financial Services Act 2007.

It would not be, therefore, appropriate to give the information requested.

**Mr Bérenger:** I am a bit surprised. We could, at least, know whether it is 'yes' or 'no'. It is the population who has to contribute a Rs100, if the MBC is rolling into funds and so on and putting them at fixed deposits left, right and centre. I think the population has the right to know. I don't see what is confidential in that. Is that the situation? And I tend to think that it is, being given that we are not being provided with information. If that is so, the whole situation must be reviewed.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these accounts are audited. As the question was asked, these audits are being prepared. Once they are audited, they will become public knowledge.

*(Interruptions)*

In fact, it is not a question of hiding the information. They have deposits - not a huge sum from what I see here - but they are being audited. Once they are audited, they will be in the public domain.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether these fixed deposits have been derived from the sale of the assets of the MBC to Multi-Carrier Ltd.?

**The Prime Minister:** That I can't say, I don't run the MBC; but I'll answer if the hon. Member asks another question.

## CLOSE CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) - INSTALLATION

(No. B/784) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether in regard to the Close Circuit Television (CCTV), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof already installed;
- (b) the various locations thereof;
- (c) the costs incurred, and
- (d) if it is proposed to install additional ones and, if so, when.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that a Close Circuit Television (CCTV) system comprising a set of 43 cameras was purchased by the Police Department at the cost of Rs3,002,300 in March 2004. This system was installed at the Moka Detention Centre with a view to ensuring proper monitoring of detainees at risk. A similar system comprising 57 cameras was acquired in July 2007 at the cost of Rs1,979,725 and installed at Line Barracks Detention Centre (Alcatraz).

I am further informed that the Police Department is proposing to extend the CCTV system to the Vacoas Detention Centre. Funds to the tune of Rs5 m. have been provided in the budget of the Police Department for financial year 2008/2009, for that purpose.

As regards the project of installation of CCTV systems for street surveillance across the island, I think I can refer the hon. Member – I think he himself asked the question - to Parliamentary Question B/743 which I replied on 01 July, 2008.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether an impact of the use of CCTV as a dissuasive measure has been effected?

**The Prime Minister:** There is no doubt that it is a very good measure. In fact, we have had cases where lots of things have been detected. Recently on my official visit in Paris, when I was speaking to the Minister of Interior, she brought out to my attention that what is very important is the quality of the picture. I remember, at one time, there were incidents at SAJ stadium and then when you looked for the pictures, you heard that the video was not working, the camera was not on and all those things. I have told the Police that I don't want to hear this at all. The system will have to work, people will have to take their responsibilities and I am, in fact, trying to get foreigners to be involved in that. I want to make sure that on the day there is an incident, if ever, it happens, the camera has been working and that we get the pictures that we have to get.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider the advisability of encouraging local authorities in making use of the CCTV in order to monitor public places like market places, fairs, hospitals, etc.?

**The Prime Minister:** We can't do everything at one go, but we are trying to do it.

**Mr Guinness:** With regard to the Parliamentary Question I asked last week on the CCTV camera for street surveillance, can I know from the Prime Minister whether there was one Mr Barber from the US who came to Mauritius to prepare a report for the Government and, if yes, whether he has submitted any report?

**The Prime Minister:** There has to be a record because we have to know how the system works. In fact, I must say that we are also looking at close collaboration with somebody from France who is actually working here. There is no conflict of interests, we have to check on that as well, because my attention was drawn that the equivalent of the Commissioner of Police in Paris who is a very well-known person is actually here in Mauritius and he could help us and this also we are doing.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will see to it that the footage from the CCTV system can be used as evidence in Court in cases of offences?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes.

**Mrs Martin:** With regard to street surveillance, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister say whether when the cameras will be installed in public places, the general public will be advised that they are being filmed permanently?

**The Prime Minister:** We have to look at the other side of the coin because we don't want a situation where everybody is spying on everybody. If we do that, a lot of them will be in trouble, I can say it.

**Mr Gunness:** In the reply to Parliamentary Question B/743 regarding the project for street surveillance, it is said that a Chinese expert team visited Mauritius in April and submitted a report to the Government. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how this report compares with the report prepared by Mr Barber from the US?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't know whether Mr Barber has actually made a report because we are using the line of credit that we have from China. Because of that, it has to be the Chinese who do the design and all those things and this is what we are trying to do.

**Mr Gunness:** It says in the reply that in the first instance Port Louis, Grand' Baie and Flic en Flac will be covered and I see a quite good number of cameras will be installed, for example, 271 in Port Louis and 69 in Grand' Baie. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he does not feel that there is an urgency for other areas also to be covered?

**The Prime Minister:** Let me just clarify, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First of all, the hon. Member referred to Mr Barber who was a consultant from the United States. He came to Mauritius in April 2004 and he did submit a report in October 2004, but the cost of his project was estimated at Rs300 m. That is why the project was put on hold in view of the financial constraints, but I don't blame the previous Government for this. One thing that we must understand – and I think that is one thing that people should understand in this country - is that we are not Eldorado and we are not the

United States of America. Even in France or in the UK, they can't do everything at once. We have to prioritise. That is why we are not saying that there is no area, but we have to look at some areas to start with.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the fact that placing CCTVs in certain places may, in fact, displace the criminal problems and attitudes to other areas? Will he, therefore, consider the reinforcing of patrols in areas where CCTVs are not installed?

**The Prime Minister:** In other words, the hon. Member wants CCTVs in all areas all over Mauritius.

*(Interruptions)*

Let's not forget that it is a deterrent. Do you think that the criminals will move away from these areas to other areas? We will have to reinforce.

### **CENTRAL PRISONS, BEAU BASSIN – UPGRADING WORKS**

**(No. B/785) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Central Prisons of Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to if any upgrading works have been carried out thereat, since July 2007 to date, and if so, give details thereof, including the cost incurred?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Central Prison of Beau Bassin is a building which is more than one hundred years old. I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that in the past, there had been few improvement works carried out in that prison with the result that the state of the building had deteriorated significantly. However, over the past three years, upgrading works were undertaken in that prison in order to enhance security and improve facilities for detainees.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that a series of upgrading works has been carried out at the Central Prison of Beau Bassin.

With your permission, I am tabling a statement giving the details of the works carried out as well as a breakdown of the cost incurred.

**Mrs Martin:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether when the workers are doing the upgrading works, they are in contact with the prisoners or whether measures are taken so that they are not in contact with the prisoners?

**The Prime Minister:** Measures are taken so that they are not in contact, because if they were in contact, they could give all sorts of weapons.

### **GRNW REMAND PRISON – NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - REPORT**

(No. B/786) **Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware of the problems prevailing at the Grande Rivière North West Remand Prison, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has not referred to any specific problems prevailing at the Grand River North West Remand Prison.

The House would appreciate that everywhere in the world you have to face some routine problems on a daily basis. The Grand River North West Remand Prison is no exception.

However, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that there has been no specific major problem brought to his attention as far as the Grand River North West Remand Prison is concerned. I have been reassured by the Commissioner of Prisons that good order, supervision, control and discipline are being maintained at that prison.

Moreover, he has taken cognizance of the 2007 – I don't know whether that is why the question was asked - Annual Report of the National Human Rights Commission, whereby mention was made of some problems at that prison relating to overcrowding and bed-bugs in cells, poor quality of rice and the foul smell from toilets in the association yard. The Commissioner of Prisons has already taken remedial action with regard to the food, bed-bugs and toilet problems. However, regarding the overpopulation at that prison, the problem will be taken care of. We can't do anything about this at this point, but hopefully with the construction of the new prison at Melrose, this will be solved. But if there are any specific problems other than that, the hon. Member can let me know, I will be happy to look into it.

### **FLOODS – FACT FINDING COMMITTEE**

**(No. B/787) Mr M. Allet (Second 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 the Fact Finding Committee set up, following the recent floods, he will state where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Secretary of the Fact Finding Committee that the Committee started its work on Monday 14 April 2008.

It has so far held 12 sittings and has heard 32 witnesses.

The Committee has effected site visits at Mont Goût and at La Nicolière Reservoir on Friday 13 June 2008.

The next sitting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 15 July 2008.

### **JUMBO, RICHE TERRE – MR G. R. – ASSAULT**

**(No. B/788) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & 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, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case was reported of one Mr A.R. having been injured during an alleged case of larceny with violence at the parking of Jumbo, Riche Terre, on 21 May 2008, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that, on 21 May 2008, at about 16 55 hrs, the Police Information Room received a phone call from one Mr P. H. who reported an incident which had happened at Jumbo Hypermarket, at Riche Terre. A Police Officer from Terre Rouge Police Station immediately proceeded to the hypermarket to attend to the case. There, he found one Mr G. R., an inhabitant of Long Mountain with an injury to his lower lips. As he was bleeding profusely, he was immediately conveyed by the Police Officer to SSRN Hospital, where he was admitted for treatment. In view of the state of his health, the Police could not record his statement on that day. However, the spot where he was injured was examined by the Police on the same day.

Mr G. R. was in a position to give his statement to the Police on 29 May 2008. Therein, he reported that, on 21 May, at about 16 40 hrs, whilst he was coming out of Jumbo Hypermarket at Riche Terre, he saw two young boys tampering with his private car in the parking area. He rushed towards them but was assaulted by a third man who came from behind, armed with a cutter. Mr G. R. was injured at the right cheek and lips by the cutter. The aggressor ran away without stealing anything from the victim.

Mr G. R. was brought to the Police Crime Records Office, where he was shown several pictures, but he could not identify the culprit.

I am further informed that, on 04 July 2008, at about 05 00 hrs, following certain information, a team comprising officers of the CID, the Delta Squad, the Emergency Response Service, the Divisional Supporting Unit, the Special Mobile Force, the Special Support Unit, the Anti Drug Smuggling Unit and the Police Dog Unit carried out an operation at Karo Kalyptis and Batterie Cassée. In the course of this operation, one inhabitant of Batterie Cassée, suspected of being involved in the incident, which occurred at Jumbo Hypermarket, was brought to Terre Rouge CID for

inquiry. However, following an identification exercise, he was not positively identified by the victim, and thus was allowed to go.

A *portrait robot* of the culprit has been elaborated by the Police IT Unit following the description given by the victim. The *portrait robot* has been flashed on MBC TV and published in local newspapers.

Therefore, the Police are still investigating the case.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would make an appeal to the hon. Prime Minister. I think the problem is with regard to the location of that ATM at Jumbo, Riche Terre. Maybe, the SBM should relocate it inside the premises of the hypermarket.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's a good suggestion. I can pass it on to the SBM.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQs No. B/810, B/833 and B/812 have been withdrawn.

## SC EXAMINATIONS 2006 - FACT FINDING COMMITTEE

(No. B/796) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Fact Finding Committee set up in October 2007 in relation to the errors that had cropped up in the French paper results of the November/December 2006 Cambridge School Certificate Examinations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to –

- (a) the composition thereof, and
- (b) if the Committee has submitted its report and, if so, when.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions No. B/796 and No. B/828 at the same time, as they relate to the same issue.

In August 2007, Government approved the setting up of a Fact Finding Committee to investigate into discrepancies noted in the results of School Certificate candidates who sat for French Paper 3014 in November 2006. The Committee was chaired by Mr Nicolas François Ohsan-Bellepeau, Sitting Magistrate, with Mr Medavy Pillay Munien and Mr Habeebulla Hyatoolla as Assessors. The terms of reference of the Committee were broadly to -

- (i) ascertain whether procedures had been followed;
- (ii) situate responsibilities, and
- (iii) make recommendations to improve the existing procedures.

The Committee first met on 11 October 2007 and, on completion of its investigation, submitted its report to me on 27 June 2008.

The report is at present under study at the level of Government. As soon as Government has completed its examination of the report, the MES will be requested to initiate remedial actions to prevent recurrence of same, as well as disciplinary actions as appropriate.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will give the names of the persons who have signed the report that has been submitted?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as I can recollect, it's the Chairperson as well as the two assessors.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned the name of Mr Munien as one of the assessors. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, at the time Mr Munien signed the report, he was also an adviser to him?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I received the report on 27 June. I cannot say at what material point in time the report was signed. As far as Mr Munien is concerned, he is not my adviser.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is he adviser to the Ministry?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am saying that he is not the adviser.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he would give us an indication on the recommendations made by the Fact Finding Committee?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand the interest of the hon. Member. But, at this stage, I cannot reveal the content of the report. It has to be viewed by Government, and then a decision will be taken.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what the hon. Minister is saying, has Government not yet taken cognizance of the Fact Finding Report?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the procedure is that the Fact Finding Committee was set up by Cabinet. The report has not been submitted. I have to report to Cabinet and, from there, things will follow.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said that he received the report on 27 June. Therefore, everybody in the country is waiting for this report. I thought that the Minister would have made the report public. Why is the hon. Minister taking so much time to bring it to Cabinet?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the report has been submitted to me on 27 June, but it has to be looked into. We have to go to Cabinet, and afterwards the issue of whether making the report public or not will be addressed. I don't think it's too long a time since the report has been submitted.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister, besides being one of the assessors, in what capacity is Mr Munien attached to the Ministry for the time being?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member herself said that he is an adviser.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think it arises out of this question. But, I can answer the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister will take stock of what the hon. Member has said and will ask whether he is an adviser.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, maybe I have not been clear. From what the hon. Minister stated, Mr Munien was one of the assessors of this Committee, and besides he is attached to the Ministry. May we know from the hon. Minister in which capacity he is attached to the Ministry?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr Munien is employed to look after the ZEP schools as a Project Coordinator.

### **MINORS – CIGARETTES – SALE**

**(No. B/797) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the sale of cigarettes to minors, she will state the measures she proposes to take to sensitise the public of its ill effects and for a strict enforcement of the law.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sale of cigarettes is regulated by the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 1999 made under section 193 of the Public Health Act, under which sale of cigarettes to minors is an offence. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is at present working on an amendment to these regulations with a view to strengthen the law in respect of sale of tobacco products to and by minors.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has developed a National Action Plan on Tobacco Control for the period 2007 to 2011 and is conducting an intensive anti-tobacco campaign based on activities at the level of the community and with the media.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to stress upon the fact that in view of the amendments to be made to the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 1999, I suggested the following provision be made –

“No person shall offer or supply any tobacco product, whether in return for any consideration or free of charge, to a minor or shall cause a minor to smoke, chew or sniff a tobacco product.”

Moreover, although enforcement of the law is actually being done at the level of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Police Department, my Ministry has been carrying out crackdown operations islandwide in collaboration with the National Children Council operating under the aegis of my Ministry, the *Brigade des Mineurs* and NGOs during

which actions have been taken against business operators for having sold cigarettes to minors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform my colleagues that the *Brigade des Mineurs* maintains close watch and vigilance near points of sales of cigarettes. Wherever a complaint has been received regarding the sale of cigarettes to minors, the information is immediately verified through surprise checks. In fact, since 2004 as at date, the *Brigade des Mineurs* issued 28 contraventions to business operators for selling cigarettes to minors.

The National Children Council has carried out sensitisation campaigns through the Kids and Teens Club islandwide on a regular basis on the harmful effects of cigarettes. So far some 1,680 children have been reached.

In addition, sensitisation campaigns have also been carried out by *Brigade des Mineurs* and the Police Family Protection Unit in schools, colleges, youth clubs with a view to inform students as well as parents on the ill effects of smoking and the consequences of selling cigarettes to minors. In addition to this, working sessions have been carried out with business operators to prevent them for selling cigarettes to minors. It is to be noted that from July 2005 to May 2008 some 43,500 persons (both minors and adults) have been reached.

Moreover, my Ministry has, in collaboration with the Mauritius College of the Air, prepared clips on the rights and responsibilities of the child which includes the ill effects of cigarettes. The MBC will be requested to broadcast same on a regular basis during peak time.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that the big sellers are the *tabagies* situated near secondary schools of the island and if yes, what the *Brigade des Mineurs* is doing to stop this? Concerning the advertisement of 'Tote le Pep' on the radio, it is mentioned that *mineurs* are not being allowed, but till now we are not in the presence of any information as to whether radios or television will issue the same communiqué as far as the sale of cigarettes to minors is concerned

**Mrs Seebun:** I take note of your concern and I shall work it out with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, to ensure that cigarettes are not sold near schools and colleges.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether she is aware that in a recent documentary broadcast on BBC2, Mr Duncan Bannatyne stated that out of two students between 11 and 14, one is a smoker? Is the hon. Minister agreeable to this statement?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member cannot ask the hon. Minister to agree with a statement which has been published in the press.

**Mrs Labelle:** Concerning this problem of sale of cigarettes to minors, in some shops we have the stickers "*Pas de cigarette aux mineurs*". But, unfortunately, in these *tabagies* near schools, we don't have it. Can we make it compulsory that every cigarette seller has the sticker "No cigarette to minors" and have it very well displayed?

**Mrs Seebun:** With the help of the Consumer Protection Unit, I shall personally ensure that this is done.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been reported that one out of two schoolchildren are actually smoking. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether this is correct?

**Mrs Seebun:** I wouldn't like such a feature be related to Mauritius. I shall ensure with the help of my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, that this does not happen in Mauritius, that it does not become a feature in our country.

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether time has not come for a survey to be made as to the impact of smoking amongst students?

**Mrs Seebun:** It is a very good suggestion and it is considered.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Varma:** The hon. Minister has just stated that she will liaise with the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life to see to it that cigarettes are not sold near secondary schools. What will happen to the shops which have got the permits? Will their permits be revoked?

**Mrs Seebun:** We shall ensure that cigarettes are not sold to minors. If a *tabagie* is very close to a school - why not - we shall ban the sale of cigarettes.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Comment les responsables des tabagies vont-ils distinguer si ces enfants sont des mineurs ou non s'ils sont des jeunes bien bâtis?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next Question!

### TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS – SCHOLARSHIPS

**(No. B/798) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students whose family income does not exceed Rs7,500 and who are attending or are admitted to courses at the tertiary institutions in Mauritius, he will state if they will be provided with full scholarships as from 2008-2009 and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the expenses that will be covered, and
- (b) the authority which will deal with the applications for such scholarships

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQs Nos. B/798 and B/829 together.

As I indicated in my reply to PQ No. B/721 on 17 June 2008, it is in line with Government policy to increase access to post secondary education

and to make it affordable to all socio-economic groups that several measures have been enunciated in the 2008/2009 Budget Speech.

Accordingly, a Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund has been set up to finance projects. The Fund will be managed and administered by a committee under the chairmanship of my Ministry. It will comprise representatives of three other Ministries, namely Arts and Culture,

Finance and Economic Development, Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, the Treasury Department, Tertiary Education Commission, European Union, the private sector and three other nominees including a Rodriguan.

One of the projects is the provision of a scholarship including full scholarships for all students attending or admitted in courses at post-secondary institutions in Mauritius, with household income not exceeding Rs7,500 per month who face severe hardship following the death or serious incapacity of a wage earner. This is contained in clause 4(c) of the relevant regulations made under section 24 of the Finance and Audit Act.

In determining the value of the scholarship, several elements will have to be considered including -

- (a) the duration and level of the programme;
- (b) fee structure and payment modalities, and
- (c) a stipend, as appropriate.

To administer the scholarship scheme, a committee will be set up under the chairmanship of my Ministry comprising *inter-alia* representatives of the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions to deal with applications for those scholarships and to make recommendations to the committee set up to manage the Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Fund.

One of the other objects of the Fund will be to finance student loan schemes, a measure also announced in the Budget Speech 2008/2009. I refer the House to PQ No. B/721 and would like to add that it will be the responsibility of that committee to come up with the mechanisms to be put

in place for the provision of loans to students. The committee has been constituted and the first meeting will be held shortly.

Mechanisms for the provision of loans generally include –

- (i) eligibility for the loan;
- (ii) amount of loan to be disbursed;
- (iii) conditions for the grant of loans;
- (iv) guarantees;
- (v) disbursements, and
- (vi) repayments.

These will be taken into consideration in operationalising the scheme.

The above measures for scholarships and student loans will become operational during academic year 2008/2009.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding scholarships for those coming from families whose income is less than Rs7,500, the hon. Minister has mentioned that these families would be those who face severe hardship following the death or serious incapacity of a wage earner. If a student whose family income is less than Rs7,500, and both parents are here and have not suffered from incapacity, what is the rationale behind this? They are making two categories.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, the rationale has already been discussed during Budget time. There is no use of coming back on the policy of Government. Your question has been set, it is very pertinent regarding the mechanism, the purpose or whatever, but the policy has already been canvassed during Budget time. So, there is no use of coming back to that now.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Since the hon. Minister has just mentioned that the scheme will be applicable this very year for the entry of

2008/2009, with the committee not yet sitting, may I know how is he going to inform the public about the possibilities and how the students will be called for interviews?

**Mr Gokhool:** I just informed that the HR, Knowledge and Arts Committee has been set up and is going to start its operations as soon as possible and, therefore, I believe that it will have to come up with the modalities for the implementation of the scheme for 2008/2009.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister the amount that has been earmarked for the loans and the scholarships to be awarded to the students?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fund is to the tune of Rs1 billion. There are different projects and depending upon the number of cases, the committee will have to process those cases. I do not think there is a ceiling on the issue of scholarships.

**Mr Guinness:** Can the Minister confirm who are those who will be eligible for the scholarships apart from the family income being Rs7,500? Last time when I put the question, the Minister of Finance, in a sitting position, replied 'no'. Can the Minister confirm that, at the same time, there must be a wage earner who faced severe hardship following death or incapacity? Will he confirm whether this forms part of the eligibility criteria?

**Mr Gokhool:** Yes, in fact, this is part of my answer and this is part of the regulation which has been made.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister, for this financial year, for the entry to be done in 2008/2009, what is the sum earmarked and what is the ceiling? Because I am sure that the sum of Rs1 billion will not all be used in this very year.

**Mr Gokhool:** There is a sum of Rs1 billion which has been earmarked for several projects including the issue of scholarships and the cases brought before the committee will be examined and processed. The funds will be made available for all those cases which will be recommended by the committee.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister what will be the criteria for the loan scheme?

**Mr Gokhool:** This has been laid out in the Budget Speech. I can refer the hon. Member to the appropriate paragraphs.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the committee will be sitting and will be deciding on the number of students eligible for the loan and who will be receiving it, may I know from the Minister the criteria that will be used by the Ministry to select the students? He has mentioned that there is a certain sum which has been earmarked for this financial year.

**Mr Gokhool:** The question of the hon. lady refers to the criteria. I have given some indications in the second part of my answer, but it is for the committee to examine those suggestions and even add to those which I have just mentioned. I cannot say exactly what will be the criteria. I have given an indication in my answer.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I ask the Minister who will be chairing that loan committee?

**Mr Gokhool:** For the Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund, the Chairperson will be the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry. The loan scheme will be handled at the level of my Ministry and I believe it will be the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Sir, the Minister mentioned the Budget. But in the Budget it is mentioned that no student will be debarred from tertiary education. If we have a sum earmarked, I am sure that the criteria of the Budget will not apply, that is why I was insisting on the criteria to be used for the selection of candidates to be given the loans.

**Mr Gokhool:** The hon. lady is right. Every effort will be done to enable students to have access to higher education, but there are modalities which have been worked by Government to facilitate this process. I do not think that we can go to the other extreme and say that everybody will be able to accede to the University irrespective of circumstances or conditions. That is why the scheme has been developed.

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

*On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

### **CEB – CHAIRPERSON – OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

**(No. B/799) Mr P. Jhugroo** (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to each of the overseas missions undertaken by the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Board, since his assumption of office todate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to –

- (a) the countries visited, the duration and the purpose;
- (b) the composition of the delegation, and
- (c) the amount of money spent in terms of airfares, per diem allowances and other fees.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly a document giving all the relevant information.

### **MOTHER’S DAY CELEBRATION – PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ**

**(No. B/800) Mr P. Jhugroo** (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the press communiqués issued by her Ministry in connection with the celebration of Mother’s Day, since July 2006 todate, she will state the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) the dates thereof;
- (b) the names of the newspapers in which they have been published, and
- (c) the cost thereof in each case.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 25 of May 2008, I did wish all women 'Happy Mother's Day' and the expenses for this single communiqué were incurred by me.

Moreover, I have been informed that this has been the usual practice for Mother's Day and Women's Day.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether her photograph has been published in the same communiqué?

**Mrs Seebun:** Yes, it has been and I see no problem with that.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it was herself or her Ministry who effected the payment for this communiqué and when?

**Mrs Seebun:** I had asked the Secretary of the Women's Council to do it and it was done on Friday 23 May. The office was closed, but on Saturday morning, the Secretary went there and did the needful.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister said 'by me', was it in her personal capacity or was it as Minister by the Ministry?

**Mrs Seebun:** It was done in my personal capacity as woman and as Minister of Women's Rights.

**Mr Bérenger:** How much was paid?

**Mrs Seebun:** I paid an amount of Rs1207.50 .

**Mr Bérenger:** Who did it? Is it the hon. Minister personally?

**Mrs Seebun:** I paid it personally.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can we know what was the mode of payment? Was it by cash or cheque?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Seebun:** The cheque was drawn on 26 June 2008. The hon. Member should confirm his information.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next question!

*(Interruptions)*

Order now, order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! I am giving a warning to both of you! Order, I have said!

**Mr Mohamed:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, what is your point of order?

**Mr Mohamed:** The hon. Member is saying that the hon. Minister uses public funds to pay when she made it clear that she used her personal funds. This is a blatant abuse of his position to impute motives. We insist that he withdraws it unless he substantiates it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. Member mean that hon. Jhugroo has been imputing motives?

**Mr Mohamed:** Yes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member can put a question; he might be wrong.

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Member can put a question, he might be wrong and the hon. Minister has said that she has footed the bill.

**Mr Mohamed:** The hon. Member is entitled to put a question, but what he has done is, in a sitting position, imputing motives without putting questions.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, I have said. Order! I have already ruled on that matter and I don't want it to be taken again. Next question, hon. Guimbeau!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Minister! Order, I have said! Order! That is the last time I am saying order. You will be out of the House!

**PALMAR – STATE LAND - INDUSTRIAL & TOWN  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**(No. B/801) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Minister of Housing and Lands whether, he will state if 250 arpents of State land at Palmar were initially vested with the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries for cow breeding and in respect of which, his Ministry later called for expressions of interest for industrial and tourism development projects and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the date on which the calls for expression of interest were made and the number thereof received and from whom.

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer to my reply to PQ No. B/322 on the 29 April 2008 wherein I indicated that my Ministry is currently proceeding with the closure of the Palmar Livestock Breeding Station. 250 arpents out of the 310.4 arpents have been earmarked for industrial and tourism related projects.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands would conduct a survey and prepare a Master Plan for the judicious utilisation of the State Land.

The Master plan would then be submitted to a Committee to be set up by Government to examine the credibility of the promoters and the viability of their projects. Thereafter, the names of the investors will be known.

My Ministry had at 31 May 2008 received 27 applications. Following requests made for a better transparent exercise applications were invited through the press.

A press communiqué inviting expressions of interest was published in local newspapers on 02 June 2008 and on 06 June 2008 respectively. The closing date was 30 June 2008. The Communiqué also mentioned that potential promoters who had already submitted applications were not required to re-apply.

The Departmental Procurement Committee of my Ministry met on 02 July 2008 and took note of proposals submitted. 51 applications from potential investors have been received and 5 late submissions.

I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that the Master Plan is presently under preparation for the site and caters for various development projects related to tourism, leisure and recreation. Several options will be considered and relevant authorities will be consulted regarding the provision of infrastructure and amenities on the site, prior to finalisation of the plan.

All applications will then be examined by a Committee to be set up by Government.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are 250 *arpents* in Belle Mare, 500 *arpents* in Riche Terre and 3,000 *arpents* in *Ebène*. *Cela fait 4000 arpents de meilleures terres agricoles* that have been converted.

*(Interruptions)*

I am putting my question now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister state whether in the context of rising food insecurity, release of prime agricultural land is in line with Government policy of mandating the Ministry of Agriculture of increasing food and milk production in Mauritius?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of food security, more than 1038 *arpents* of land has been released for agricultural purposes in the ex-tea belt. Bois Marchand and Arsenal have been earmarked to relocate the planters who occupied the land at Terre Rouge where now they have better security of tenure. I don't have to highlight the statement made in the press by Anerood Ramgoolam. Having said so, land at Richelieu will be leased to pig breeders and land at Mon Bois has been earmarked to be released to pig breeders also. I don't have to say that 1,000 *arpents* would be released for agricultural purposes. We have already set up the Committee to address the problem. Funds have been released by the Minister of Finance. The Committee comprising the public and private sector is working and they had their first meeting. I can say loud and clear that much

is being done by this Government to reinforce food security measures and, of course, to take on board those who are weak, vulnerable, that is, the metayers, other small planters, fishermen, pig breeders. Let me again make it quite clear that more than Rs125 m. have been earmarked to enable our friends, the pig breeders, to relaunch their activities.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 4,000 *arpents* of prime agricultural ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should come back to the original question.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to give the names of the applicants for the 250 *arpents* of land?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated, the applicants will submit their application to a Committee to be set up by Government. I don't think that it is fair to release the names of the applicants. We should give them a chance, allow the Committee to do its work and, of course, it will conduct its activity in a transparent, fair and equitable manner.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister makes reference to the answer he gave to PQ B/322. Can I know whether any time frame has been set for the preparation of the Master Plan?

**Dr. Boolell:** I can't say it off the cuff. I have to wait for my colleague to be back. But certainly there is a time frame and the Master Plan has to be prepared because the applicants are waiting for an outcome of their application. And all depends on how fast the Master Plan is going to be submitted.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same answer, at a point in time, the hon. Minister mentioned that the six *arpents* of land have been allocated to a company known by the name of "Aksay Company". I went to the Registrar ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the hon. Member referring to the same 250 *arpents*?

**Mr Guinness:** Yes, to the same answer given to PQ No. B/322. I went to the Registrar, unfortunately, no company is registered under this name. Can the hon. Minister state who are the Directors of this company?

**Dr. Boolell:** The land has been allocated to that company for agricultural purposes mainly. There is no problem of releasing the name. I will get the name and submit it to the hon. Member with pleasure.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was six *arpents* out of the 10 *arpents*. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the remaining four *arpents* has already been allocated, if yes, to whom?

**Dr. Boolell:** No, there have been applications made and, of course, we will release it to those who are keen to use the land for agricultural purposes.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just spoken about the Master Plan. Does it include diversion of the coastal road in that region?

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

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just said that he would submit the names to the hon. Member. Can he submit the names to the House?

**Dr. Boolell:** In respect of the specific question put to me by our good friend, I will do the needful. But in respect of those who submitted applications to have land for agricultural purposes, but not for industrial purposes, because I think this would go against the ethics.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said he received application for the four remaining *arpents*. Can I know how many applications he has received and what are the agricultural projects?

**Dr. Boolell:** The applications have been received in a more transparent manner than what it used to be before, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think the answer is more transparent. My question is: how many applications he has received and what are the agricultural projects?

**Dr. Boolell:** In a much more transparent manner than land was leased to St Félix, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

### **LUMPY SKIN DISEASE – PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

**(No. B/802) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the lumpy skin disease, he will state if any case has been reported and, if so –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the infected areas, and
- (c) the measures taken to prevent the spread thereof.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) was first reported in Mauritius in 1994. Since then, there have been two occurrences of the disease in the year 2000 and April 2008. The disease mainly affects cattle population. It is a contagious disease of viral origin. However, as compared to African Swine Fever, healthy animals can be vaccinated to avoid spread of the disease.

In April 2008, 14 cases were reported at Richelieu Prison Farm and 1 case at Petite Rivière. In May 2008, 1 case at Cap Malheureux and 1 case at Grand Gaube were reported.

The infected areas are Petite Rivière, Cap Malheureux and Grand Gaube.

Stamping out was carried out following clinical diagnosis in suspected areas. Skin biopsies and blood samples from suspect animals of Richelieu Prison were sent to the reference laboratory, Oenderdooste Veterinary Institute (OVI) of South Africa, for confirmation of Lumpy Skin Disease. The results were declared positive. Immediate vaccination of all cattle at

Richelieu Prison Farm was carried out, followed by a country wide vaccination which is presently ongoing. I am advised by the veterinary services of my Ministry that more than 2,605 heads in risk areas have been vaccinated as an immediate priority. Vaccination is currently ongoing in the outskirts. Close monitoring for any new case is being undertaken.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that recently beef with lumpy skin disease have been sent to the slaughter house and put on the market?

**Dr. Boolell:** This is a very serious allegation. Of course, if this has happened, corrective measures will be taken. And whatever measure has to be taken to ensure that this never occurs, will certainly be done. But let me reassure my friend that a lumpy skin disease does not mean that the animal is suffering from disviral disorder. There is a host of other conditions, but if the disease has been detected by the veterinary, I am sure the carcass will be set aside and burned in the incinerator.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister see to it that an inquiry be done? Because I got this information from his Ministry.

**Dr. Boolell:** I am not saying that what our friend is saying is right or wrong, but if this was the case, the matter would have been reported to me. But nevertheless, we will look into it.

## **AFRICAN SWINE FEVER – INFECTED AREAS**

**(No. B/803) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the African Swine Fever, he will state if the disease has been eradicated and, if not, indicate –

- (a) the infected areas, and
- (b) the number of reported cases thereof.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that the African Swine Fever has not been eradicated. However, all possible efforts are being made to mitigate any risk to a minimum possible level.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the infected areas known are—

- (i) St Martin
- (ii) Bassin Requin
- (iii) Roche Bois and its vicinity
- (iv) Belle Vue Phare
- (v) Henrietta
- (vi) Camp Carol
- (vii) Le Bouchon
- (viii) Petit Verger
- (ix) St Julien
- (x) Trou D'Eau Douce
- (xi) *16eme Mille*
- (xii) Fond du Sac
- (xiii) Cap Malheureux
- (xiv) Chamarel
- (xv) Bassin Carré
- (xvi) Case Noyale
- (xvii) Wolmar
- (xviii) Roche Brunès

As regards part (b), since the last major stamping out in January 2008, we have registered 530 cases of infection out of a present pig population of 7,338 heads. But I must say that the trend is on the decline.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the African Swine Disease is spreading. Will it be advisable for the hon. Minister to have all the pigs killed and start over again before it becomes endemic?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me make it quite clear that this matter is being addressed both by the Ministry and the FAO. In fact, we have the enlisted support of our friends from the FAO, there will be a team coming from the Peoples' Republic of China; there has been a tagging programme which has been ongoing.

Secondly, we are making sure that existing sites are being cleared and there will be sentinels placed in the sites which we consider to be cleaned. Of course, as has been stated, whenever an infection is detected at a specific site, it means that we have culled all the pigs. This is an ongoing exercise. What we have done other than the measures being taken to help our friends

to re-launch their activities, we have impressed upon them that the need to set up a proper *Jardin de Porcs* is of paramount importance, hence the visit of our friends to Reunion Island. Government has earmarked land which has to be released. We are inviting the private sector, as the need arises, to make a contribution and we want to set up a proper farm, Mr Deputy Speaker, because for far too long our friends have been inculcated with values which go against the very basic of good farming practices. I think one may: *un malheur qui fait probablement le bonheur*. But we have to grasp the opportunity and turn this challenge into an opportunity.

**Mr Bérenger:** I find that very disturbing. The hon. Minister gave us a long list of areas all over the island and also quoted figures. Can we have the number of animals that have been destroyed over the one, two or three last months?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated, the number of animals registered is 530...

*(Interruptions)*

This is the number that has been destroyed. But, as I have said, if we follow the trend, it is on the decline and we are taking no risk. In fact, as and when detected, we are doing away with all the animals. This is being monitored very strictly. There is a committee which has been set up. Our officers are on the fields doing what needs to be done. We meet on a regular basis and I can assure the House that all the precautionary measures are taken. Having said so, be it in Portugal or in Italy, you cannot do away with a virus which may remain dormant and latent. This is a fact that we have to live with, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister mentioned a committee, can he inform the House whether that committee has decided that in the medium-term the pig-breeders might be located in a single location?

**Dr. Boolell:** There are three sites that have been identified. In fact, one of the sites is Richelieu where there is the possibility – there are ongoing discussions - that we may, with the help of the private sector, set up a *Jardin de Porcs*. There are two sugar estates which have agreed to release land for

the construction of a *Jardin de Porcs*. But, we have to say loud and clear that they have to be confined in specific areas.

*(Interruptions)*

Land has been released by Fuel and Medine, but we are yet to entertain the request. As I have stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to make sure that everything is done according to norms and standards as set by our friends in Reunion. Reunion is a good example. True that we don't have the means that they have, but we have to make sure that it is done properly, that they are clustered in three specific areas where there can be good farming practices established.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Is the hon. Minister aware that many breeders are still selling infected pigs to the public?

**Dr. Boolell:** I'll ask my friend not to make a statement which has not been crosschecked and verified. I think it would be unfair of him to send the wrong signal to people who consume it.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to make it clear. May I know from the hon. Minister whether pigs in our farm today are still dying of African Swine Fever and, if so, what is the number in the recent weeks? Can the hon. Minister give the figures on a weekly or monthly basis so that we may know whether the trend is still ongoing?

**Dr. Boolell:** I stated that measures are being carried out to stamp out that disease, but there are still the sporadic cases. As and when detected, drastic measures are being taken and the situation is being monitored very closely. There have been cases, for example, at Belle Vue Phare and 16eme Mille. Hon. Guimbeau knows that 16ème Mille was spared from any infection, but there has been the sporadic case where there has been infection. Since then, we have culled all the pigs on that farm.

**Dr. Mungur:** May I ask the hon. Minister if Bassin Requin, which is near Belle Mare, is free from the African Swine Fever as at now ?

**Dr. Boolell:** As I have stated, there have been sporadic cases at Bassin Requin also, but corrective measures have been taken.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Minister to make sure that the problem at Belle Vue Phare is not a problem of water availability? The hon. Minister has just stated about good farming and so on, but water is one of the essential components. Will the hon. Minister see to it that water, at least, is made available to the breeders of Belle Vue Phare on a regular basis?

**Dr. Boolell:** In fact, not only water, but we provide them with feed also on a regular basis. But that message will be passed on.

**Dr. Bodha:** May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten the House as to the number of breeding sites in Mauritius? Are there breeding sites where the disease has been eradicated totally and the breeders have started again their activities?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have the exact reply, but as far as I know, there are two breeding sites. And, of course, we are relying upon our friends from Rodrigues, because we are going to import sentinels from there. But from information that I have there are two other locations. But, let me get the facts right and I'll certainly have no problem to submit the relevant information to our colleagues.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Minister has mentioned Rodrigues. Does the hon. Minister confirm that there have been no cases there? Secondly, what is the position as far as '*cochons marron*' are concerned? Because, I understand that they are more robust than ordinary pigs and, therefore, they can get that virus, keep it for years and then pollute others?

**Dr. Boolell:** In fact, this is one of the reasons why I am one of those who feel that we have to relocate our friends from St. Martin elsewhere, because it is on the way to *chassées* and, thanks God, the wild pigs are bred in enclosed areas. But there is still the risk that since they are wild, they can run all over the place. But, in respect of two *chassées*, where the disease had been detected, there has been complete elimination of all the animals. And, as I have stated, the virus can remain dormant, it can be a latent virus and we can know what the consequences can be.

As regards Rodrigues, there has been no case detected and God forbid. We have to make sure that all the sanitary precautions are taken to ensure that they remain clean because we need the sentinels for breeding purposes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand with regard to the plot of land which was identified for the pig breeders in the southern part of the island? I would like to know whether the necessary infrastructure has been set there.

**Dr. Boolell:** I don't recall of any site being identified in the southern part of the island.

*(Interruptions)*

I know that in constituency No. 12 and in Vieux Grand Port, there are farmers who carry out pig breeding in a manner unfit for proper breeding. But there are three sites which have been identified, where we are going to relocate the pig breeders and we'll encourage a clustering approach to ensure that we inculcate, as I have stated, good farming practices.

### ***L'ILE AUX BÉNITIERS - TOURIST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS***

**(No. B/804) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to l'île aux Bénitiers, he will state if he has received any proposal for tourist development projects thereat and, if so, will he –

- (a) state the nature thereof, and
- (b) give details of the projects.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to that question.

In regard to part (a) of the question, on 06 February 2006, the present lessee of l'île aux Bénitiers, Soolaman Nubheebucus Company Limited has applied for an industrial lease for the development of a Spa and Golf Resort on the islet.

Insofar as part (b) of the question is concerned, the proposed project consists, among others, of the construction of 170 guest pavilions, 30 villas, a spa and wellness centre and gym, 5 restaurants, a nine-hole golf course,

and public beach facilities for day visitors. According to the promoter, the development cost for the project will amount to some Rs2.4 billion.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can I know from the hon. Minister the annual rental of *l'île aux Bénitiers* and the number of *arpents*?

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not part of the question.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I know the extent of the public beach which has just been referred to by the hon. Minister?

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must add that this project is at its very initial stage. Nothing has moved since February 2006. The EIA has yet to be obtained. Conversion from agricultural to industrial has to be obtained and, in fact, there is a technical problem concerning the identification of an appropriate land base for facilitating connection between the mainland and the islet. I suppose these technical difficulties include as well part of the public beach. But I would like to just mention that it is at a very, very initial stage.

**Mr Bodha:** Can I know what is the extent of land which has been requested for the whole project?

**Dr. David:** The notes do not say anything about it. As I said, it is a project that is yet at its first step since February 2006; it has not moved far.

## **UTILITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY ACT 2004 - PROCLAMATION**

**(No. B/805) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether in regard to the Utility Regulatory Authority Act 2004, he will state if Government proposes to have it proclaimed and if so, when.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Utility Regulatory Authority Act was voted in November 2004. However, amendments are being brought to the Act and an Amendment Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly shortly in the next two or three weeks.

## ***PAS GÉOMÉTRIQUES – INDUSTRIAL LEASES***

**(No. B/806) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to industrial leases on *Pas Géométriques* for bungalow complexes, hotel complexes, guest houses and apartments, he will state the number thereof falling under each category, indicating in each case –

- (a) their terms and conditions;
- (b) the annual rental payable, and
- (c) the name of the beneficiaries.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to that question.

Sir, records at the Ministry of Housing and Lands indicate that there are 188 industrial site leases on *Pas Géométriques* around the Island out of which 96 concern bungalow complexes, including guest houses and apartments and 92 for hotel complexes.

In regard to parts (a), (b), and (c) of the question, the requested information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly once the exercise is completed.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can the hon. Minister give us an idea as to when the leases are going to be reconsidered for all those industrial sites?

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not part of the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, it is practically impossible.

## MORCELLEMENT MONT CALME, TAMARIN - PERMITS

(No. B/807) **Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to the Morcellement Mont Calme at La Mivoie, Tamarin, he will state if the promoters thereof have been granted with all the permits and, if so –

- (a) when and,
- (b) if all the plots of land have been sold.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to that question.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the following permits have been issued to the promoter in connection with the Morcellement Mont Calme Ltd at La Mivoie, Tamarin -

- (i) an EIA Licence on 31 January 2006, and
- (ii) a Morcellement Permit on 21 April 2008.

Insofar as part (b) of the question is concerned, the information requested for is not available at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, as sale of plots of land in any approved Morcellement is a private transaction which is carried out by the promoter.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what about the transfer of land? It should be made at the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question says –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if all the plots of land have been sold.

I have answered both questions.

## **CUREPIPE – PRIMARY SCHOOLS – WASTE PAPER COLLECTION**

**(No. B/808) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if it has distributed bins to the primary schools of Curepipe for the purpose of collecting waste paper and, if so, obtain details thereof.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that no bin has been distributed to the primary schools of the town for collection of waste paper.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Municipality has publicly announced that bins would be placed for collection of waste paper for recycling purposes?

**Dr. David:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Martin:** Can we then have an indication as to when this project will start?

**Dr. David:** I'll check with the Municipality.

## **CEB – MRS I. B. – RECRUITMENT**

**(No. B/809) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if one Mr I. B. was recently recruited as cleaner on a casual basis and has now been posted as administrative assistant at the meter laboratory of the Board and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the CEB that the question relates to one Mrs I. B. and not Mr I. B.

I am also informed by the CEB that the services of Mrs I. B. were enlisted as Handyperson on a daily basis as from 28 February 2008. In accordance with her employment contract, over and above her normal duties, Mrs I. B. was required to provide assistance for the dispatching of documents and replacing the Telephone Operator during his absence.

In March 2008, the post of Administrative Assistant was advertised internally - which is a form of a more than a glorified clerk - and Mrs I. B. along with 51 other candidates applied for the post. On the basis of her qualifications and work experience, she was called for an interview which was carried out on 14 May 2008.

In the light of the report of the interviewing panel, the CEB Board approved the appointment of Mrs I. B. as well as 14 other candidates for the post of Administrative Assistant. Mrs I. B. has assumed duty as Administrative Assistant on 16 June 2008 and has been posted in the first instance at the Meter Laboratory Section at Rose Hill.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the qualifications of Mrs I. B.?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think Mrs I. B. has got a School Certificate which she took in 1987. She has got 5 subjects including English. She was a Quantity Controller from 1991 to 1994 and Clerk Receptionist in 1994 to 2000 and from April 2007 to December 2007 she was a pre-run Coordinator. I must say that this lady, although she had the qualifications, accepted to work as a handyperson in the first instance.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that, for the post of administrative assistant, the qualifications and experience required were SC or equivalent with five credits, HSC & GCE Advance level or equivalent, a certificate in word processing, spreadsheet, power point, and ability to operate the standard Office IT tools? The desirable knowledge includes the ability to put data on the CEB computerised system.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have all the details, but it may well be true. This lady has got experience. The CEB Board interviewed all these people, and found her to be suitable.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inquire whether the said person does have the qualifications and experience I have mentioned?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think there has been a waiver as far as credit in English is concerned. She has got a 'pass'. I will check it. But, otherwise, she has got the experience.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated in his reply that she was recruited on a casual basis. Since it was advertised internally, I would like to know whether there were other candidates who were on a permanent basis at the CEB who did not apply for that post.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it may well be. If they don't apply, I can't do anything about it. There were 51 who applied. Those who elected not to apply were not convened for an interview.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether, amongst the 51 candidates who applied, none of them qualified for that post except Mrs I. B.?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have this information at hand, but I shall check. A waiver is given to people who serve and are found by the administration to be very good.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, among those who have not been chosen, are there some who needed no waiver and had what was required in the advertisement?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to check.

### **MRS M. V. – BUILDING PERMIT**

**(No. B/810) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to if one Mrs M. V. of Riche Mare was issued with a building permit for the extension of her residential building and, if so –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if complaints have been lodged with the Council by her neighbours in connection therewith.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NUCLEAR MEDICINE TECHNOLOGISTS – POST**

**(No. B/811) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the posts of Nuclear Medicine Technologists, he will state if they have been filled and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that arrangements have already been made by my Ministry with the Public Service Commission for the filling of four posts of Nuclear Medicine Technologists.

I am further informed that the four posts were created in the 2004/2005 Budget, and action was initiated in April 2005 for the prescription of the scheme of service. Usually, such exercise involves lengthy procedures, which are time consuming. The scheme of service for the posts was finally prescribed by the PSC in October 2007.

Subsequently, in November 2007, my Ministry submitted its recommendations to the PSC for the vacancies to be filled. Action is being taken at the level of the PSC for the filling of the four vacancies in that grade.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may we know when this arrangement has been made? Because the hon. Minister said that arrangements have already been made to fill in these vacancies.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, it is since November of last year. It is up to the PSC to advertise and fill in the vacancies.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that, in the 2003 PRB recommendations, there was a recommendation for the filling of this post? Since this post has not been filled, this recommendation has been rendered null and void for five years. Up to now, this post has not been filled. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication of how long it will take, as from now, to fill in this post?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot give any indication. As I said, the post has been reported to the PSC, and it is up to PSC to recruit.

## COURT USHERS - POST

**(No. B/812) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether he will state if Government is proposing to liberalise the posts of Court Ushers and, if so, where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

## FSC – OFFICE BUILDING

**(No. B/813) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Riviere)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Financial Services Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to if it has decided to move its offices from Port Louis to Ebene and, if so –

- (a) the reasons therefor;
- (b) if a tender exercise has been carried out in relation thereto, and
- (c) if the Commission has received representations from the Association of Offshore Management Companies in connection therewith.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated in reply to PQ B/921 of July 2007, the Financial Services Commission had obtained the approval of the Central Tender Board for the acquisition of an office building in Ebene, and the FSC has now relocated there.

The Board of the FSC decided to have its own office accommodation in view of the very high cost of rent being paid and the need to provide for adequate facilities for staff welfare.

The tender for the acquisition of a building was floated with the approval of the Central Tender Board on 11 January 2007, and the final approval of the Central Tender Board for the purchase of the office building was obtained in June 2007.

As regards part (c) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Financial Services Commission has received a request from the Association of Trust and Management Companies (AOMC) for

arrangements to be made for the collection of dispatches from certain Management Companies located in Port-Louis. The Commission is looking into the request.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, have they constructed a new building or have they bought one of the existing buildings?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think they bought one of the existing buildings under construction, but they followed the procedures of the CTB.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we have more details on this building?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did mention in the reply I gave to a question put by hon. Jhugroo that the CTB procedure has been followed, and that they have acquired a building that was under construction. But, all the procedures were followed.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are they presently hiring the building?

**Dr. Sithanen:** No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

***CALODYNE SUR MER HOTEL - LEASE***

**(No. B/814) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Riviere)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the *Calodyne Sur Mer* Hotel complex, owned by the Employees Welfare Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to if the complex has been leased and, if so –

- (a) the name of the operator;
- (b) the duration and terms and conditions of the lease, and
- (c) procedures followed for the selection of the operator.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Employees Welfare Fund as follows -

- (a) The hotel complex has been leased to “Alliance Hotels Ltd.”
- (b) The duration and main terms and conditions of the lease are as follows -
  - The lease is for an initial period of five consecutive years as from 20 July 2007.
  - An annual rent of Rs20 m. will be paid to the EWF in 12 equal monthly instalments by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.
  - An annual increase in rent, of not less than 3%, will be discussed and mutually agreed upon, at the beginning of each subsequent year.
  - The hotel operator will develop with the EWF schemes to accommodate at concessionary rates Mauritian guests at the hotel.
  - The hotel operator will pay the bills for all utility services. It will also pay for all permits and licences required for the operation of the complex.
  - The hotel operator will provide a 24-hour security service for the complex.
  - The lease may be renewed for a further period of five consecutive years subject to new terms and conditions.

As regards the procedures, tender notice was published on 07, 08 and 11 February 2007. The selection exercise was made by a Tender Committee and was approved by a special Board meeting on 20 July 2007.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that Alliance Hotels Ltd is not able to run this complex and is trying to sublease the contract? Is it provided that they can sublease the original contract?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I put the question to my officers, who submitted the reply this morning. They told me that they are paying what is provided for in the contract. Obviously, I asked a second question, namely whether they are doing well. I understand that, up to now, they have honoured the pledges contained in the contract. I will seek information and give it to the hon. Member.

#### **CLUB M – CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT – TRANSIT**

**(No. B/815) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he is aware of the problems faced by the players of Club M, who had proceeded to Cap Verde for the qualifying match, while in transit at the Charles de Gaulle airport, Paris, and if so, state if he has taken up the matter with the Mauritius Football Association.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 18 June 2008 at around noon the Secretary General of the Mauritius Football Association informed my Ministry by telephone of the problem faced by the Club M during its transit at Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris while it was proceeding to Cap Verde for the return leg match in the frame of the preliminary phase of the FIFA World Cup 2010 and African Cup of Nations.

My Ministry immediately established contact with the Mauritius Embassy in Paris and requested that all necessary assistance be provided to the Mauritian delegation. Our Embassy in Paris reacted promptly and within hours reported that –

- (i) the Club M were to have applied for the Schengen visa as the team was transiting on two separate occasions in the Schengen zone, that is one at Paris and the other at Lisbon airport;
- (ii) the French Immigration Authorities were willing to help in the matter and grant relevant entry visas provided arrangements were made for the team to fly directly to Cap Verde;
- (iii) the earliest available direct flight for Cap Verde was on 20 June 2008, and
- (iv) the *Chef d'Escale* of Air Mauritius at the Charles de Gaulle Airport was willing to make arrangements for accommodation in favour of the team until 20 June 2008.

My Ministry promptly relayed the information to the Mauritius Football Association and requested that it should make necessary arrangements for the rerouting of the team directly from Paris to Cap Verde on 20 June 2008.

The Mauritius Football Association through its travel agency arranged for the rerouting. The French Border Police issued a temporary *sauf conduit* to the Club M to leave the airport to enable them to move to the hotel identified by Air Mauritius.

After a stay of two days in Paris the Club M left for Cap Verde on Friday 20 June 2008.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the benefit of the House, I would like to highlight that explanation was sought from the Mauritius Football Association on this matter. I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association that it had enquired with its travel agency about the visa requirements prior to the Club M undertaking its travel. The travel agency had informed the Mauritius Football Association that according to the French Embassy in Mauritius no visa was required for the trip.

I must here point out that arrangements for travel bookings, visas and health clearances for sports delegation proceeding abroad are the responsibility of the Sports Federations concerned, except for participation

in events at State level such as the Indian Ocean Islands Games and the All Africa Games.

I would also like to highlight that it was a coincidence that during the return trip on 23 June 2008, the Club M had another misfortune. Its connecting flight from Paris to Mauritius was delayed due to technical problem of the aeroplane. The Air Mauritius flight which was initially scheduled to depart at 10.15 hours finally took off the following day at 13.00 hours after repairs of the aeroplane.

Air Mauritius made all necessary arrangements to transfer the passengers to a hotel nearby the Charles de Gaulle Airport. However, the formalities for the transit passengers, including the Club M took longer than normal passengers.

As regards the second part of the question, let me reassure the House that I have taken up the matter with the Mauritius Football Association. I have impressed that, henceforth, as a precautionary measure, it should, as far as possible, arrange for visa for transit even if it is not mandatory so as to avoid hassles in the event the members of the delegation eventually would have to move out of the airport for any reason, whatsoever.

**Mr Bhagwan:** M. le président, après une lourde défaite qui est devenue une habitude de notre sélection nationale pour notre entraîneur bien-aimé, M. Ashok Chundunsing, le carton rouge à un joueur de Cap Verde, le vol raté vers Lisbon, la sélection bloquée pendant dix heures à l'aéroport de Charles de Gaulle et un chef de délégation qui, au lieu de rester avec ses joueurs, les abandonne et vole directement vers New York ou Londres, est-ce que le ministre est d'accord que ce voyage de notre sélection nationale ressemble beaucoup plus à un mauvais film, avec des acteurs qui n'ont pas assumé leurs responsabilités? Est-ce qu'il y avait un *briefing* avant le départ? Est-ce que le ministre est au courant que l'entraîneur en question a même eu un carton rouge, il ne devait même pas participer et il a assisté au match à Cap Verde dans les gradins? Est-ce que le ministre peut informer la Chambre s'il est d'accord avec cet état de choses?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** M. le président, je suis d'accord en partie avec l'honorable membre, mais il n'est pas vrai de dire que c'est l'entraîneur qui est en compte en ce qui concerne la technicité d'une équipe qui participe à une compétition, bien souvent. Je suis d'accord avec lui en ce qui concerne

le carton rouge qu'a reçu le sélectionneur national, c'est-à-dire, M. Chundunsing. Pour moi ce n'est vraiment pas une fierté. Définitivement, je ne suis pas vraiment d'accord avec cela. En ce qui concerne les autres joueurs, bien souvent, je pense que c'est la responsabilité de l'entraîneur national.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Est-ce que le ministre peut nous donner le montant de l'amende du carton rouge? Est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'il y a une communication de la FIFA où notre entraîneur national a été sanctionné pour une longue durée? Quelles sont les mesures qu'il compte prendre pour faire nommer aussi rapidement que possible un DTN dans l'intérêt national?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** M. le président, en ce qui concerne l'amende qui doit être payée, il n'y a qu'une seule indication à ce jour. Pour un joueur, qui a été déjà sanctionné, c'est 3,000 francs suisse d'amende qui devraient être payés par la fédération. En ce qui concerne les autres cartons rouge, jaune, je ne peux affirmer à la Chambre parce qu'il n'y a eu aucune communication de la décision de la FIFA.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Le ministre n'a pas répondu à la question concernant notre entraîneur. Qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire pour rétablir notre crédibilité?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire? Il ne va pas entraîner l'équipe lui-même.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** M. le président, je peux rassurer la Chambre qu'effectivement j'ai mon idée là-dessus, que d'ici quelque temps, je vais dévoiler...

*(Interruptions)*

Je vais prendre de bonnes décisions en ce qui concerne cette situation. Effectivement, comme le peuple Mauricien a son opinion en ce qui concerne le Club M, je pense qu'il est grand temps de réagir. D'ici quelque temps, je prendrai les décisions nécessaires.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Il y a quelque temps de cela, après la grande victoire, le ministre ou le Cabinet avais mis sur pied *a Ministerial Committee* pour revoir notre football. Depuis cela, il n'y a eu que des défaites. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire où on en est avec le rapport de ce *Ministerial*

*Committee*? Si c'est officiel, est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait déposer ce fameux rapport à la Chambre?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** M. le président, en ce qui concerne cet état de choses, je peux assurer à la Chambre qu'effectivement le *Ministerial Committee* va se réunir d'ici quelque temps. J'ai déjà fait une déclaration à la presse.

*(Interruptions)*

L'honorable Bhagwan est en train de faire de la politique!

*(Interruptions)*

Il rigole mais, je suis sûr, qu'il ne réagirait pas ainsi en présence des joueurs.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a most serious note, from the exchange between hon. Bhagwan and the hon. Minister - I hope I have heard correctly - that the head of the delegation of the national football team left the delegation, stranded and decided to make his own way to another destination, if that is correct and if this information is true, can I ask the hon. Minister to please communicate to us the name of this head of delegation? If that is true, what steps has he taken against that member of the delegation? When I use the word 'against' I choose it especially because one cannot sit down and do nothing to the head of a delegation who acts in such a way. What will the hon. Minister do to even consider firing him?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just had a verbal note concerning this matter. Of course, the Mauritius Football Association, through its Secretary General, Mr Vuddamalay, has sent me an official letter. He said, in the first paragraph: "It is not normal for the head of the delegation to break away."

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the hon. Minister responding to what the hon. Member has asked, that is, the name of the head of the delegation?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I am going to give the name. It is Mr Vinod Busviah who was the head of the delegation. I am laying the letter on the

Table of the Assembly. He said that he got the permission from the president of the federation to go to Paris and the airfare from Paris to London and London to Paris was borne by the Chief of the delegation.

**Mr Mohamed:** The issue that I am trying to make is whether the hon. Minister has confirmation from Mr Vuddamalay that the head of the delegation left when the team stranded when he was supposed to be heading that delegation, not from a distance, but from where they are. If this is what Mr Vuddamalay said, is it not strange therefore that Mr Vuddamalay himself only is making statements of facts, was sitting down, not doing anything to correct such measures and therefore disciplinary action should be taken against the head of that delegation. Would not the hon. Minister intervene and get involved here to correct that matter? Because we cannot keep on tolerating incompetency.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me assure the House that concerning this matter, *la fédération est suprême et c'est la chose la plus importante. Le gouvernement a offert des facilités...*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister! Mr **Busgeet** is a member of the MFA and the hon. Minister will not be able to indulge into details. He can, by way of suggestion, pass on the message of the hon. Member.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what action does the Minister of Youth and Sports contemplate to take to redress the situation as far as football is concerned? Recently in a Parliamentary Question, the Minister states on a series of measures. Is the Minister ready to inform the House later on, through a statement, what immediate action he contemplates to take to redress our football?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Sir, the matter does not arise. However, I can assure the hon. Member that within days he will be able to see the measures that we will be implementing.

## MAURITIUS-RODRIGUES ROUTE – AIR FARES

**(No. B/816) Mr J.R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritius-Rodrigues route, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if the Company will consider –

- (a) reviewing
  - (i) the air fare downward, and
  - (ii) the pack lunch offers, and
- (b) reintroducing off peak season air fares.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X.L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question relates to an operational matter of Air Mauritius Ltd. on which I have no control. I am, however, purely as a matter of general information, providing some details and facts as communicated to me by the company.

I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd. that the company is not contemplating any downward review of fares on the Rodrigues route. Nor does it propose to bring changes to the sandwich service presently provided thereon.

I am further informed that the company has no plans to re-introduce off peak air fares on that route.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will surely appreciate that issues relating to air fares are dedicated by commercial considerations and that with the recent surge in fuel prices, the company would not be in a position to lower its fares on any route.

Furthermore, it is high time to give some serious thought to the construction of a 2000 metre runway. This project would allow some more economical flights on the route.

So far, a local consultancy firm has worked out a cost estimate of the project. Also, an expert from *Aéroport de Paris* is presently in Rodrigues to undertake an update of the Rodrigues Master Plan. This project is being pursued.

**Mr Spéville:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that Government has got shares in Air Mauritius and I have just read that there has been a profit of Rs720 m. What about the corporate and social responsibility towards an inter-island?

**Mr X.L. Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you know, the situation is much more difficult this year and it is already quite a heavily subsidised route. It is making a heavy loss as far as this route is concerned. They are not considering reducing the air fare. As Minister of Tourism I am conscious of the need to support the Rodrigues industry and, as you know, we do not charge any airport fees for travel to Rodrigues. This is the situation as far as Air Mauritius is concerned.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether we still have the two-tier policy with one fare for Mauritian nationals and another fare for visitors?

**Mr Duval:** There is no two-tier for Mauritian nationals and for visitors, but there is a lower fare if you are departing from Rodrigues.

**Mr Bérenger:** Sir, I heard the hon. Minister say that it is highly subsidised, it is a way of saying that Air Mauritius loses money on the Rodrigues route. Although the Minister says that it is a private company and so on, Government is the majority share owner and Rodrigues is a special case. Air Mauritius is the only company serving Rodrigues and the tourism industry is vital for the welfare of Rodrigues. We are getting into more dangerous zones generally as far as Air Mauritius is concerned. Will the hon. Minister give us the guarantee that in cutting cost left, right and centre, Air Mauritius will not leave Rodrigues on its own?

**Mr Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is no question that Air Mauritius will cease its operations. It is part and parcel of the deal that Air Mauritius has with Mauritius that it subsidises the route. But when we look at the amount of the subsidy and the very difficult situation that we have this year, it is obviously under threat.

**Mr Jhugroo:** M. le président, avec le prix du billet qui a augmenté considérablement, est-ce que je peux savoir si le nombre de touristes a augmenté ou diminué pendant ces deux dernières années ?

**Mr Duval :** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have the latest figures, but the last time I looked at them, the number of tourists coming from Mauritius to Rodrigues had fallen a little bit, but the number of foreign tourists had increased.

### **PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME - IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/817) Mr J.R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the implementation of the pre-primary education programme, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the Elimination of Absolute Poverty Programme (EAP), it is provided that at the initial phase, the EAP could focus on some 25 to 30 pockets/clusters of poverty. However, with respect to support to children from absolutely poor families not attending pre-primary schools, the actions to be taken would have to touch all the pockets. In this respect, urgent action should be taken to identify those children not going to pre-primary schools and to map them with the nearest school or arrange for transport facilities where schools do not exist. A committee to implement the objectives of the EAP programme has now been set up, and it will work out its implementation plan.

With regard to the implementation of an *ad hoc* measure taken by the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues to subsidise the school fees for pre primary students aged 3+ whose families are in receipt of social aid or unemployment relief or basic pension, I need to remind the House that in terms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues is statutorily responsible for the administration of education and as such it takes decisions without reference to my Ministry.

I am informed by the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues that the decision to subsidise the fees for pre-primary schools students aged 3+ whose families are in hardship situation was meant to increase access to pre-primary schools and to alleviate the burden of needy parents and would be implemented in the weeks to come and will take effect as from 01 July 2008.

**Mr Spéville:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. out of 1,076 pre-primary schools, 826 are private institutions and Government caters for only 17% of pre-primary schools. Can I ask the hon. Minister how does he envisage to ensure that these private institutions cope and respond to the new implementation process?

**Mr Gokhool:** I think the pre-primary sector has always been in partnership with the private and public sector, be it in Mauritius or Rodrigues. The private schools receive a certain support and it is not envisaged to change this policy which is working well. However, as it has been announced in the EAP programme, there will be access of children to both schools in the Government sector as well as the private sector.

**Mr Spéville:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister as regards the SIWF teachers who were private teachers and have been converted as permanent, how can he envisage for the preprimary schools in Rodrigues to have these preprimary school teachers posted as same as the SIWF teachers?

**Mr Gokhool:** I don't think this is correct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There was a group of employers working in the pre-school sector in the Government schools and with regard to these employees, the situation was regularized. But it is not envisaged to regularize the situation of teachers in the private sector.

### **DBM – DEBTS – LIQUIDATION**

**(No. B/818) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floréal)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the measures announced in the Budget Speech 2008-2009 relating to the relief for payment of arrears for unpaid loans at the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., information as to if the Bank will consider publishing a list of the debtors who are eligible thereto as per the set criteria.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd as follows -

- steps have already been taken to establish the full list of borrowers meeting the specified criteria for the scheme;
- since last week, individual letters are being sent to eligible customers, inviting them to take advantage of the one-off special scheme;
- a special cell has been set up for the timely processing of applications and liquidation of such debts;
- since a loan contract between a client and the Bank is governed by the confidentiality clauses of the Banking Act 2004, it would not be in order for the Development Bank of Mauritius to publish the name of an eligible borrower under the scheme unless he has given his consent.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for the answer. In fact, my question related to what has been done in India where all the institutions had been requested to make a list of eligible small farmers who were highly indebted and who could benefit from the relief programme. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many small borrowers have been concerned with this scheme so far?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't have the exact number of those to whom the DBM has written, but the information we have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that there are approximately 6000 eligible borrowers up to Rs50,000 - 5218 in Mauritius, 769 in Rodrigues - and from Rs50,000 to Rs200,000 there are about 1200 cases. In all there are about 7200 cases.

### **ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS – SHARES, FUNDS, ETC.**

**(No. B/819) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to Enterprise Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the distribution of shares between the private and public sectors;
- (b) the assets and liabilities taken over from the Mauritius Industrial Development Authority, the Export Processing Zones Development Authority and the SUBEX-M;
- (c) the annual grants received, as at todate, and
- (d) the percentage of self financing, achieved in each of the last three years.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the request of the former Government, Mr Lorne Dyke, Consultant of the Commonwealth Secretariat, submitted his report on 24 October 2003 regarding the setting up of an integrated support framework for the industrial sector through the merging of the Export Processing Zone Development Authority (EPZDA), Mauritius Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Small and Medium Industries Development Organisation (SMIDO), Sub-Contracting & Partnership Exchange of Mauritius (SUBEX-M).

However, the previous Government decided to exclude SMIDO from the scope of the merger. Enterprise Mauritius was thus incorporated as a public company under the Companies Act 2001 on 22 October 2004.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the distribution of shares between the private and public sectors in Enterprise Mauritius stands at 0.4% and 99.6% respectively. The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Mauritius Exports Association (formerly Mauritius Export Processing Zones Association) and the Joint Economic Council each holds 100 shares of unit worth Rs1,000 totalling Rs300,000 of share ownership for the private sector. The Government of Mauritius holds shares amounting to Rs79,782,000.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, information pertaining to parts (b) and (c) of the question has been placed in the Library of the National Assembly. All movable and immovable assets from EPZDA, MIDA and SUBEX-M have been vested into Enterprise Mauritius as per the EPZDA, MIDA and SUBEX-M (Transfer of Undertaking) Act 2005. It should be noted that no liability has been taken over by Enterprise Mauritius.

As regards part (d) of the question, Enterprise Mauritius has been able to generate 22.08% of revenue during financial year 2006/2007, as compared to 15.68% in 2005/2006 and 0.77% during 2004/2005.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must inform the House that disbursement of funds is made by my Ministry in accordance with an Output Agreement signed between Enterprise Mauritius and my Ministry. A Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, has also been set up to monitor release and utilization of funds by Enterprise Mauritius, in line with set performance indicators.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Enterprise Mauritius was set up on the understanding that it will self-sustainable. On this trend, has any forecast been made by the Ministry? When will Enterprise Mauritius reach that self-sustainable status?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, in the first year, admittedly it was in an embryonic stage; it achieved 0.77% in 2004/2005; now it has reached 22.08%. I have myself been pushing Enterprise Mauritius to be self-sufficient in terms of its expenditure. But we have to understand that Enterprise Mauritius has got a big responsibility to ensure the well-being of industry at large and I can assure the hon. Member that this is one of our priorities as well.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether the mode of financing of the Enterprise Mauritius from public funds has always been adhered to?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been comments made from the Director of Audit regarding the financing and monitoring of Enterprise Mauritius. Subsequently, we have taken action to remedy the situation.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether Enterprise Mauritius has so far tabled any audited accounts?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I will have to look into the matter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** I have a last question, if you will allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Minister how does his Ministry exercise control on the projects and activities of Enterprise Mauritius?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when Enterprise Mauritius was formed by the then Government, the idea was to have an institution that would be controlled by the private sector. There were enough good reasons to go on that way. Somehow, because of the way it operates, Government has very little say in its day-to-day decisions. Further to the report of the Director of Audit, we have made sure, through our management meetings every Monday morning, to follow the work carried out by Enterprise Mauritius from my Ministry. Over and above, there is a representative of the Ministry of Industry on the Board who follows the work which is being carried out. I have a lot of information about what has been done, but I am sure there can always be improvement.

### **CENTRAL SLAUGHTER HOUSE - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/820) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a Central Slaughter House, he will state –

- (a) the date since when this project has been conceptualised;
- (b) the estimated initial cost and the estimated actual cost thereof;
- (c) the amount of money disbursed, as at to date, and
- (d) the present status thereof.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Meat Authority that a project for the rehabilitation of the existing Central Slaughter House was conceptualised in 1997 by a Belgian consultancy firm, namely, International Montage and Maintenance (IMM).

The initial project was estimated at Rs83 m. in 1997. The project value was revised to Rs125 m. in 2004 by a South African firm namely CES Consultant Pty Ltd. No revision of project value has been made since.

The Mauritius Meat Authority has so far spent an amount of Rs40 m. on this project. The scope of the project has been revised recently to enable the slaughter house to operate under optimum hygienic conditions. In this context, the MMA proposes to spend some Rs39 m. over the next two financial years, with the technical assistance for the preparation of tender documents and supervision of works, of the Architect and Quantity Surveying Divisions of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, which have been involved since the very start of the rehabilitation project.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that the MMA has spent Rs40 m. up to now. I understand that it is not meant for the construction or anything linked with the construction of the Central Slaughter House. May I know from him how this money has been spent?

**Dr. Boolell:** I can circulate it. I have the relevant information in respect of capital expenditure, infrastructure, waste water pretreatment, computer software, abattoir equipment, meat vans etc. In respect of the sum Rs39 m. earmarked, as to the projects identified, this information is available and I can circulate it.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether for the construction of this Central Slaughter House, the services of a consultant has been retained?

**Dr. Boolell:** In respect of the Rs40 m. spent, or the Rs39 m. to be spent for completion of the rehabilitation project, I don't have the information, but I take it for granted that it should be so. Otherwise, we would not have enlisted the services of officers from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether in 2006/2007 a sum of Rs5 m. was disbursed by the MMA and can we know the reasons thereof?

**Dr. Boolell:** I have given the amount spent in respect of capital expenditure and I have the breakdown of the sum spent per project identified. I will table it.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Can the hon. Minister state whether the MMA has proceeded with the purchase of 10 insulated truck bodies during the financial year 2006/2007?

**Dr. Boolell:** I presume they have bought meat vans because Rs11, 785,689 have been spent for the acquisition of meat vans.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Therefore, can the hon. Minister state - if he has the information - whether there was a tender exercise done?

**Dr. Boolell:** There should have been a tender exercise carried out.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether there has been one tender exercise or three tender exercises undertaken?

**Dr. Boolell:** I don't have the relevant information to satisfy the whims and caprices of my hon. friend.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is just that one of you has got the information which he intends to pass on.

**Dr. Boolell:** Of course, by all means, if the hon. Member has the information, he can give it to me.

## **WMA – TREATMENT PLANTS**

**(No. B/821) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the waste water treatment plants, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of money disbursed thereon, as at to date, and
- (b) if his Ministry is fully satisfied with the overall operation and maintenance operation thereof.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, approximately Rs2.249 billion have been disbursed as at to date for the construction and the

operation and maintenance of the waste water treatment plants owned by the Government.

I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly a breakdown of the amount disbursed to date.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am, to a certain extent, satisfied with the operation and maintenance of the waste water treatment plants, but there is still room for improvement.

The operation and maintenance of all waste water infrastructure owned by the Government, including, the waste water treatment plants is delegated to the Waste Water Management Authority under a “*Contrat de Délégation*”. The WMA is, therefore, responsible to operate and maintain the waste water infrastructure in such a way so as to ensure a reliable, safe and cost-effective delivery of services.

The WMA which became operational on 01 September 2001 has taken over the former Waste Water Authority. As a consequence of this take over exercise, the WMA has inherited some of the constraints that are still to date hindering its smooth running. These are lack of skilled human resources, the inability to attract and retain qualified personnel and lack of contract management competences.

The WMA has, therefore, embarked on a reform programme that would allow it to improve its effectiveness so as to ensure its level of service delivery.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don’t know if the hon. Minister has the details of the main treatment plants. If he does not, then I will come with a substantive question. Anyway, I will put one question. Regarding the St Martin treatment plant, is the hon. Minister aware that there has been a delay in starting the operation of that treatment plant?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I don’t quite get the question of the hon. Member. Does he mean a delay? When and how?

*(Interruptions)*

Once the treatment plant was commissioned, it was in the contract for the construction management to carry on with the operation and maintenance for two years. Unfortunately, at the end of the two years, we had to extend the

contract and there was another tender issued. I am glad to say that after two months of extension by the Central Procurement Board, a new contractor has been selected and he is going to start in the weeks to come and the contractor's operation cost will be substantially less than the present one.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Is the hon. Minister aware that because of that particular delay, which is a question of mismanagement, the Waste Water Authority has paid escalation cost of more than Rs100 m. just from January 2005 to June 2007?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I don't understand what the hon. Member means by escalation cost due to extension. It is just for the last three months that it has paid the same fees that it was paying to the former contractor who will go away. But Rs100 m. will be a bit too much. As I said, I have been paying particular attention to the WMA. Because of their "*Contrat de Délégation*" they think they have a certain independence and can spend money as they wish. But I have clamped down on that with the blessing of my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance. They have been informed that every cent which is spent has to be well spent, otherwise, they don't spend it.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** A last question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to know whether the hon. Minister find it fair that consumers living in housing estates are being issued with legal notices for unpaid bills up to an amount of Rs5,000 while people responsible for so much mismanagement, costing the Wastewater Authority more than Rs100 m., are left unsanctioned. I just want to know what actions the hon. Minister intends to take in that direction.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said it costs Rs2.249 billion for building and operation and maintenance. Somewhere we have to find the money and, therefore, each and every person who is connected to the wastewater system will have to pay his due, whether it is a hotel or even the *cités*. In fact, a lot of these housing estates have been provided with free connection, which each costs the Government about Rs90,000 to Rs100,000. Of course, I'll not, in any way, condone wastage which the hon. Member is mentioning; I'll have to look into it. But, I must say that before I assumed office as Minister, there had been a lot of waste all the way through. My colleague and I, have been trying to set up a performance management objective. They have to perform and we have set up certain criteria and they

have to be watched carefully, not only the wastewater, but all the other utilities.

## OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME

(No. B/822) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the persons benefiting from the old age pension and earning more than Rs20,000 monthly, she will state, on an annual basis, since 2005 to date –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the total amount of money spent therefor, and
- (c) if Government is proposing to review the old age pension scheme for the future.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the basic retirement pension has been reinstated by Government on a universal basis since July 2005 and since then my Ministry does not keep any record in respect of beneficiary revenues.

According to data collected before July 2005, the number of beneficiaries earning more than Rs20,000 monthly, whose basic retirement pension was disallowed for the period of January 2005 to July 2005 by the previous Government stands at 664.

In view thereof, no reply can be provided to parts (a) and (b) of the question. And in regard to part (c), the answer is 'no'.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the reply that has been given by the hon. Minister, will she therefore see to it that this information be compiled and placed in the Library? It is not very difficult to compile this information.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think we are going to burden our beneficiaries now to know what are their monthly revenues as it was done in 2004. I am very sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

## **BOIS MARCHAND CEMETERY – PRAYER ROOM**

**(No. B/823) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Bois Marchand cemetery, he will state if he will consider –

- (a) providing for a prayer room thereat, and
- (b) the cleaning thereof.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that a prayer room already exists near the “Dargah” at the Bois Marchand cemetery.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the cleaning of the prayer room is carried out by the Council on a regular basis.

**Dr. Husnoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you are aware, nowadays, we can have funeral service done in the evening. Is it possible for the hon. Minister to look into the possibility of providing lighting in the cemetery to help people who do their funeral service in the evening?

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have approved that burial be done in Muslim cemeteries until quite late at night and I shall certainly provide lighting there.

## STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - 'MANSON' CULTURE -

(No. B/824) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the spread of the 'manson' culture in the State secondary schools, and if so, will he state where matters stand as to –

- (a) the tightening of disciplinary measures, and
- (b) if additional psychologist and career guidance officers will be recruited, with a view to address the issue.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question and I refer him to the request made by the hon. Prime Minister to my Ministry to carry out a survey.

At this point, I am informed that there is no widespread observance and practice of the 'manson' culture in the State secondary schools, but I'll agree with the hon. Member that if we have only one case, it is one too much.

In fact, as from June 2004, a few isolated cases of students mildly observing and practicing the 'manson' culture were noted in some State secondary schools. Such observance was characterised by a liking for heavy metal rock, recourse to the colour black for dressing and make up, the wearing of an inverted cross as necklace, heavy consumption of alcoholic drinks and other drugs as well as a *penchant* for evil practices, violence and auto mutilation bordering on suicide.

As soon as these cases were observed, preventive action was taken at the level of my Ministry to curb the spreading of such culture in schools. Accordingly, all rectors of State secondary schools were convened to a meeting where they were apprised of the situation and were requested to be vigilant and to report such suspected cases.

As soon as these cases were observed, preventive action was taken at the level of my Ministry to curb the spreading of such culture in schools.

Having said this, there are a few cases of reported abnormal behaviour and auto mutilation, mainly through the use of cutters which happen from time to time in the private college and such a situation dates back to prior to 2004 when the 'manson' culture was first noted in Mauritius.

I am informed that such students who are few and far apart are normally those who have personal problems and who suffer from depression. However, there is no obvious link between these cases and the 'manson' culture, although some cannot be excluded altogether. In each reported case, a school psychologist normally follows the patient for diagnosis and remedial action. It is also important for parents to be on the alert and to rise up to their responsibilities, because if there are indeed cases or adherence to 'manson' culture, they cannot be exclusively at school. However, the Heads of schools and teachers will require to exercise extra vigilance, enforce discipline and make better use of the pastoral care committee and morning assembly time to encourage students to make better use of the opportunities being provided to them and to stay clear of negative influences.

However, in order not to leave any stone unturned in our endeavour to eradicate this culture in our schools, and as already agreed by the Prime Minister in reply to PQ No. B/737 at our sitting of 01 July 2008, my Ministry will be carrying out a detailed survey to gauge the extent of the problem.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can only hope that this survey won't take long. According to information reaching me, even the star State secondary schools have not been spared; this culture has even permeated there. Doesn't the hon. Minister consider it appropriate that all the stakeholders, that is, rectors, deputy rectors, teachers, parents, PTAs and officers of his Ministry be made conversant with the side effect of this 'manson' culture so as to be able to detect rapidly and fight efficiently against it?

**Mr Gokhool:** I think I need to mention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is not a good thing to exaggerate a phenomenon which, I said, is isolated and there are a few cases far apart. But when the hon. Member is mentioning that it has permeated the star colleges, I don't think that I'll agree with him, because we have a daily reporting of incidents in all our

schools, primary and secondary. And from the records which are being analysed by the psychologist of my Ministry, it is not evident that the culture is spreading as the hon. Member is trying to suggest. I don't know what is his source of information, but we are compiling statistics and the first report on incidents in schools has been prepared by the psychologist of my Ministry. It does say that there are a few cases, but not to the extent that the hon. Member is trying to suggest.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not at all exaggerating. I have been in the teaching field for a quarter of a century and I know what I am talking about. I should like to refer the hon. Minister to PQ No. B/104 which I put to this House on 04 April 2006. I am not going to revisit it. I put several questions to which I have not yet got the full answers. I am going to refer the hon. Minister to that PQ. But then, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider the advisability of reinforcing sections 152, 153 and 154 of the 1945 Regulations in order to reinforce disciplines in Government secondary schools, because the hands of the Rectors are tied and this delays the implementation and reinforcement of disciplines. By amending or making it go in the direction which I have requested the hon. Minister, will perhaps make the enforcement of disciplines more timely and effective.

**Mr Gokhool:** In fact, I thank the hon. Member for his suggestion. We are already strengthening the disciplinary committees, and also there is a strategy. We are finalising a report in which we are suggesting the empowerment of rectors to deal with problems at source. But we are going even further. We are also ensuring that parents and PTAs play an active role and whenever there are incidents, we are making sure that parents are convened to the schools and the problems are exposed to them, so as they are partners in solving the problems to which the students are being exposed.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree with me that since the promulgation of the present Regulation 1953, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Government Secondary Schools and that it is practically impossible for rectors of such institutions to enforce discipline in cases of serious misconduct because this requires ministerial power. Even to suspend a student, the approval of the Minister is sought.

**Mr Gokhool:** The Ministry exercises overall supervision because there are cases where the sanction is excessive, for example, there has been a

case of a student being suspended or rusticated for three weeks by the disciplinary committee. I don't think this is on because we have other ways and means of tackling this situation. The overall supervision of the Ministry will be retained, but empowerment of rectors and heads of schools is being envisaged.

**Mr Dayal:** The core object of the school, side by side, is catering for the academic development and character development of a child, that is, a balance has to be created. What is his Ministry doing in this regard?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree entirely with the hon. Member that education should be balanced. That is why together with the formal curriculum, we have a strategy of co-curricular projects and activities which we are implementing. I'll just give you an example. Right now, in the PBB, all schools will be required - because there are some schools which do not engage in co-curricular projects and activities - to engage in, at least, four co-curricular and extra curricular activities which will provide opportunities for students to engage in activities which can help personality development and character building. Besides, we have reintroduced the morning assemblies in all our schools. There are a number of steps which we are taking to bring about the balancing of the education that is provided to the children.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have cautiously moved away from mention to morning assemblies. Now, hon. Members realise!

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the last part of the question with regard to additional psychologists and career guidance officers, according to my information, some eight to ten years ago, teachers were trained as career guidance officers. Can the hon. Minister say whether the number is sufficient and whether they are simply teaching or are they really guiding in career orientation? With regard to psychologists, is the number sufficient? Is his Ministry envisaging to have, in each secondary school, a psychologist or a career guidance officer?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have, at the level of the Ministry, taken steps to reinforce the psychology services and, right now, we have one Senior Educational Psychologist and ten Educational Psychologists together with the support...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, for all the schools. And we have 19 Educational Social Workers working together. Besides, we also have the National Educational Counseling Service which has been provided and there are 23 Counseling Units which have been set up in the schools. We are coping with the situation. Of course, if we can recruit more psychologists, more social workers, that will be most welcome, that we will have to envisage, but, right now, we have a team of psychologists and social workers who are addressing the issues raised by the hon. Member.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/831, B/834 and B/835 have been withdrawn. Time is over!