

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## TIANLI PROJECT

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked Dr. the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Tianli Project, he will –

- (a) table copy of the Framework Agreement, including the two Schedules, between Tianli and the Government of Mauritius, represented by himself;
- (b) state the cost to Government in terms of road infrastructure and provision for electricity, water and telephone facilities;
- (c) list the concessions granted to Tianli, and
- (d) state whether only companies incorporated in China will be authorised to operate in the economic and trade zone thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, ever since the father of the nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, had the vision to establish diplomatic relations with China and supported consistently the one China policy, we have benefited from long standing economic, cultural and political ties between our two countries. Over the years, China has been a strong supporter of our development with both words and deeds.

China, Mr Speaker, Sir, is today playing an increasingly important role in sustaining high growth in Africa which is expected to keep growing despite the threats of recession in the West. China is an increasingly important development partner for Africa and has set up three windows with US\$10 billion to finance equity, concessional trade credits and infrastructure via preferential loans. As part of this commitment to Africa, China is setting up 3 to 4 Economic and Trade Cooperation zones in Africa. There were 25 strong contenders for these 3 to 4 zones, all on the mainland. Mauritius was not on the initial list.

During the Sino-Africa Forum in Beijing in November 2006, our Prime Minister engaged the President and Prime Minister of China to request that Mauritius also be considered. This request was acceded to in view of our extremely very close relationship with China. However, the subsequent negotiations proved very tough since we did not meet any of the basic requirements of the Chinese, namely oil and other strategic mineral resources and a large domestic market. However, we convinced them of a good fit between our economic strategy and the Chinese approach to African development, which is part of a wider emergence of the BRIC countries, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China support to Africa.

The basis of our proposal, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been what we call soft infrastructure that very few countries in the region could offer: political stability, economic freedom including a totally open capital account and a rapid move to Free Trade; a diverse population living in harmony; strong links with China including a diaspora; a friendly business environment with a clear policy to become the business bridge to Africa, a pleasant climate and a welcoming social setting for foreigners to work, stay and live.

We had to actively compete against three other countries that were willing to be extremely generous in relation to the large list of concessions that Tianli was seeking. In particular, our competitors offered land free of charge, free provision or part financing of infrastructure both off-site and on-site; tax holidays. i.e. 0 tax for at least 10 years for duties and income taxes and unlimited issue of passports for Chinese investors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am unable, unfortunately, to table the Framework Agreement as it contains a confidentiality clause. However, I will provide all the essential information in relation to the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

We succeeded in convincing Tianli to choose Mauritius whilst offering a more limited package that includes provision of off-site infrastructure with a contribution of Rs100 m. from Tianli; same tax treatment, i.e. 15% corporate tax for all investors; leased land at concessional rates on a similar basis to what has traditionally been offered to investors in new sectors including on *Pas Geometriques* and industrial zones; and passports for a limited number of investors, namely one passport for every US\$500,000 of investment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, of the Rs750 m. of off-site infrastructure paid by Mauritius, only Rs85 m. is paid for by Government for road infrastructure after taking account of the Rs100 m. exceptionally contributed by Tianli for financing off-site infrastructure. CEB, CWA and WWA are investing the rest as part of their normal expansion of network to cover not only Tianli but also benefit the residents and businesses in the region. Moreover, these utility companies will recover their investment from the very large bills to be expected from the companies operating in the zone. As regards, telephone facilities, Tianli is dealing directly with service providers.

In return, Mr Speaker, Sir, Tianli is investing fully in the on-site infrastructure and within five years will develop the whole 211 Ha of land with a total investment of Rs20 billion and the creation of an expected 40,000 direct, indirect, induced and multiplier jobs. Initially, the agreement was focused on a Free Port Zone that would have created some 5,000 local jobs in light manufacturing and trading. Tianli has since revised its plans to align more closely with our emergence as a business platform between Asia and Africa. In fact, with Tianli, Mauritius is realizing its ambitions and becoming a bridge between Asia and Africa. In the new vision, Tianli is setting up an integrated industrial and service zone that will include almost 400,000 square meters of industrial buildings; over 700,000 square meters for commercial complexes; almost 200,000 square meters for community services including training establishments and a 300 bed hospital. The zone

will bustle with activities related to Conventions and Exhibitions, international hospitality; international vocational training, Headquarter and administration of firms operating in Africa and a variety of business services. Mr Speaker, Sir, it will be a new town in line with our objective of a modern Mauritius. Indeed, the zone will comprise two distinct components namely a living zone and a business zone. The living zone will comprise a residential area for employees working in the zone and three international hotels for business travellers dealing with China and Africa and visitors to the exhibitions and conventions. It will also include a modern three hundred beds hospital with high tech care and an international training centre including language training and general upgrading of skills. The business centre will consist of a state-of-the-art convention centre and an exhibition hall, an industrial zone and a commercial zone. In the industrial zone, Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be more than forty companies including in garments and knitting, pharmaceuticals, building materials, packaging materials, assembly of domestic electrical appliances and mobile phones, electrical light equipment, sea food processing, toys manufacture and several other activities. The Rs20 billion Tianli investment represents, Mr Speaker, Sir, the largest ever FDI in Mauritius for a single project in our whole history. Moreover, this is the first investment in an emerging sector we are trying to develop. Under similar circumstances, Mr Speaker, Sir, previous Governments have always provided a generous package of incentives. Indeed, for much, much smaller amounts of FDI, Mauritius has in the past provided relatively more generous incentives for hotels, EPZ and recently for the ICT sector. Provision of off-site infrastructure has typically been a Government responsibility for most of these past projects, often with one hundred percent financing, whereas in this specific case they are providing Rs100 m. to finance the off -site infrastructure.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, we should be cautious in not sending the signal to our Chinese friends that we are joining hands with some that are indulging in China bashing for its engagement in Africa, similar to the India bashing we are also witnessing for its economic policies in Africa as attempts to defend well established vested interests. In line with our longstanding friendship with China, we should clearly dissociate ourselves from such unwarranted criticism of China's development policy in Africa.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is a friend and will remain a friend of everyone and open to all. It is uncalled for to unfairly attack any of our friends and supporters, all of whom have stood by us through hard and good times. We should also be careful not to give an impression that FDI from some countries is being questioned. This is especially so in relation to the most important FDI project we have ever received that will make our bridge to Africa strategy a reality. The Tianli project has been secured through immense diplomatic efforts led by the Prime Minister in the face of fierce competition; the concessions made to Tianli must be viewed in that context. Indeed, it is only because of the goodwill that the Prime Minister has generated with the Chinese leadership and their recognition of our early one China policy, that despite the fierce competition we have succeeded in attracting the project with concessions essentially in line with past practice.

It is important, Mr Speaker, Sir, to take account of the strong assistance being provided by China to Mauritius. In addition to considering concessional financing for the

airport extension amounting to Rs7 billion, China has already committed Rs3 billion of concessional financing for major infrastructure projects since 2005, including the Terre-Rouge Verdun link road and the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project.

Initially, Tianli wanted to open the zone to non-Chinese companies. However, if we had acceded to this proposal, we would have less certainty that Tianli was bringing in new investment. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government of Mauritius requested and Tianli agreed to focus on bringing new Chinese companies. This approach will ensure that the Tianli project maximizes what we call Trade Creation and mobilizes additional FDI focused on Africa instead of merely repositioning investment and trade that we would have anyway received. However, as the project takes hold and once we can ensure additionality of FDI and trade, we will be more open to allowing non-Chinese companies to also operate in the zone.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, there is no question of putting in doubt a one China policy and no question of China bashing. We are dealing with a very serious issue of handing over 500 arpents to Tianli and that raises very serious security, strategic, economic and social issues. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance why Government has agreed to sign an Agreement with Tianli which provides itself that the Agreement will stay secret and confidential, whereas in next-door Zambia the same kind of Agreement has been signed and made public?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to the second question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we have no problem on our side to make it public; however, the Chinese have insisted during all the negotiations that the contents are kept confidential.

*(Interruptions)*

I would have no problem to request the Chinese if they would agree to the proposal made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

With respect to the first point made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned, this is the single most important FDI that this country has ever received. Rs20 billion....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, on both sides of the House, especially hon. Jhugroo!  
*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Jhugroo, order! Carry on!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Jhugroo! Order! Order! I am calling both hon. Members to order, including the hon. Minister of Local Government and hon. Jhugroo! This is my last call for order!

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, I have called both of them to order! Order, now! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order, I said! I am not going to tolerate any provocative remarks from any side of the House!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Dr. Burty David, you cannot make remarks from a sitting position! I am asking you to keep quiet! Hon. Jhugroo! Order! Sit down!

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to the first point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, some of these issues have been raised and are being tackled. But I think we must also be realistic. This is the first time in the history of this country that we are having an investment of that scale. And, as I said, in my reply, Mr Speaker, Sir, there were more than 25 countries that were competing for such investment. We have been able to secure it through the initiative of the Prime Minister and now we will discuss with the Tianli operators with a view to mitigating some of the issues raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Bérenger:** The same kind of agreement in Zambia has been made public; the Chinese have agreed to that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

Therefore, I find it shocking...

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

**Mr Bérenger:** ... that both the agreements and the two schedules will not be made public, will be kept secret and confidential. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether the second schedule does deal with the construction schedule, and that already we are outside the construction schedule? Already, the second schedule, which is the construction, is not being abided by.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, again, let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition of what I have said. We have no problem on our side, but when there is an agreement with two signatures, I have to respect - there is also *la permanence de l'Etat* - the wish of our Chinese friends.

With respect to the second one, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is ironical that....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Perrier, order! If you want to speak, you stand up and do so.

*(Interruptions)*

Not now, but later! I am not going to allow you to make any remark from a sitting position.

**Dr. Sithanen:** With respect to the second point, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is ironical that the very people who tried to delay the Tianli project for reasons which we all know are now coming to tell us that we are outside the time framework.

*(Interruptions)*

There has been delay for reasons that are outside our control, but there has also been delay for reasons that we all know, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am not going to *mettre le couteau dans la plaie*.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Sithanen:** But what I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that because of circumstances that are outside our control and also because of the many attempts to boycott this project, we are outside the time of what has been agreed on and I have been given to understand this morning that they will start the project as from August or September of this year, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister correctly, Mauritius will be footing the bill for Rs750 m. Can we have a breakdown of that: roads, electricity, water and telephone also? Because Mauritius Telecom belongs to Mauritius, the name itself implies that. Can I know, therefore, the breakdown of the Rs750 m.? The agreement provided that by 31 December 2007, Tianli would have paid that Rs100 m. out of Rs750 m. Has it been paid?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me repeat again for the information of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we have to make the distinction between the incremental investment in infrastructure that is happening because of Tianli and what all these providers of utilities have to do to support the development of the country. Let me give the hon. Leader of the Opposition one example. I have said that the only additional investment that we are making is for road. But where this new town will be, it will service the entire northern Port Louis and the region of Roche Bois, it will give a help to the region of Plaine Verte.

*(Interruptions)*

What is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that Rs85 m. will be spent by Government, Rs100 m. will be paid by Tianli.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Dulull, do you want to talk to somebody on this side of the House? You should tell him to go outside and you should go too, otherwise you keep quiet!

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Sithanen:** Rs85 m. are being spent by Government, Rs100 m. will be funded by Tianli, but because we have taken a delay in the implementation of the project for reasons that I have stated, we are outside the deadline of December 2007. But I can assure the House that whatever has been contained in the agreement and has been agreed between the two parties will be honoured. There are many other projects in this country that have been implemented by various Governments where all the offsite infrastructure have been funded by public money. In this particular case, Rs100 m. are being paid by Tianli.

With respect to the other three points, Mr Speaker, Sir, the information I have is that the CEB will invest Rs250 m., but this is not being spent by Government. If tomorrow there is a major project implemented in Mauritius, we have to provide electricity; the CEB has to invest and it will collect money once these people start operating. This is true for a house, for a hotel, for an industry, for a commercial activity. This is normal business and this is the business of the CEB. The CEB will collect fees from these clients.

It is the same thing for the CWA. The CWA is going to upgrade La Nicolière Treatment Plant which will serve most of these regions and it will collect money by providing water to Tianli just like it will collect money by providing water to all other industries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is the business of Mauritius Telecom? The business of Mauritius Telecom is to provide fixed lines, mobile and Internet and to collect money. They have to provide the service and this is part of their responsibilities. They are providing these services and they will make money, they will make profit from the services they give to all these activities.

**Mr Bérenger:** Am I right in saying that amongst the concessions given to Tianli is freeport status and they will not pay customs duty and VAT on construction and other materials?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we said very clearly...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Does the hon. Member want to answer the question?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we said very clearly that the main objective of the economic and trade zone is to export to Africa and elsewhere. They are going to build these two zones that I have mentioned and they will export to Africa. Even for textile and garments, there is no import duty and there are no other taxes. There is nothing new that we are giving to Tianli with respect to the exports that they carry out from Mauritius. The same facilities are given to the EPZ today. The EPZ does not pay any import duty and the EPZ is reimbursed its VAT, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** In fact, this question was answered on 17 April 2007. I have got a copy of the answer.

**Dr. Sithanen:** There is nothing magical about it.

**Mr Bérenger:** Amongst the other concessions, the Deputy Prime Minister said himself that there are concessional lease conditions, indeed Rs100 per hectare at the beginning of the adventure. Can I ask whether Government has taken care to place a value on the 500 arpents of land converted from agricultural use to industrial and commercial use which will run into billions of rupees? Has Government placed a value on that?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to take a very holistic approach to this. As I mentioned, there were 25 countries on mainland Africa that were competing with us. We don't have oil, we don't have gold, we don't have commodities, we don't have primary products, we are not Nigeria with a large domestic market. We were not on the list initially and we had to negotiate very hard. They wanted to have zero corporate tax, we refused, and we told them that they will have to accept 15% corporate tax. I am the Chairman of the Committee of Finance of COMESA. Many of my friends, Ministers of Finance, have told me: young man – I don't know why they call me young man, I am no more young – how did you do it?

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, in life, you must create an environment which is win-win and the Chinese are exceptionally good negotiators. What the hon. Leader of the Opposition has not said is that we have divided the land into two plots: an initial plot of 120 acres and a subsequent plot of 380 acres. On the 380 acres, there is hardly any concession given and the agreement ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Chief Whip, do you want to talk to somebody on the other side of the House? Otherwise, you walk out! Do you understand me? Have you understood me now?

**Dr. Sithanen:** The agreement, Mr Speaker, Sir, makes provision for a 50% increase in the rental after 20 years initially and after every 10 years the rental is going to increase by 50%. Let me, for the enlightenment of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, give two examples where we have done more for less. There are hotels today, Mr Speaker, Sir - and I am not criticising, I am just giving an example - that are paying only Rs750,000 for 75 acres of land. This was given in the olden days where unemployment was high, where we had to create the environment for sustaining economic growth. We are left with this; we are trying to change it. The ICT sector at Ebène is a good thing that we have done, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is in a financial mess. We are paying for it. There are prices that a small country like Mauritius that does not have gold, that does not have oil, has to pay and all Governments, including the Government in which the hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Prime Minister of the country. We have had to do it in order to overcome some of the natural disadvantages that we have, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have done it for the hotels, the EPZ and for the ICT.

Who does not remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the EPZ when we started? The DBM was constructing industrial sites and we were giving it almost free in order to attract investors. And I will end on that, Mr Speaker, Sir. You know someone told me in New York once: Mauritius should not believe that it is the only beautiful girl in town; there are many other countries that are competing for such investments. We must bless our fortune that through the diplomatic effort of the Prime Minister, through the hard work that I put in and the BOI, we have been able to secure the single most important FDI ever in this country.

**Mr Bérenger:** Amongst the other concessions is an undertaking by the Government to facilitate the recruitment of an unlimited number of Chinese workers. Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what kind of figure we have in mind? 10, 20, 30,000 Chinese workers. Will they be allowed also to employ Chinese architects? And how many passports have been granted - one of the concessions is Mauritian passports - and how many are expected to be granted?

**Dr. Sithanen:** With respect to the third question, I have just mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is one passport for every US\$500,000 of investment. Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not different from what we are giving for IRS project. You know that they have a permanent residence if they invest US\$500,000. There was a lot of discussions. We all know the difficulties people with Chinese passport have in some countries. They discussed with us, they said that Mauritius will become a business bridge between Africa and Asia. Often, if you have a Chinese passport, it is difficult to travel in Africa. And they told us that it is easier if you have a passport from Mauritius, especially in SADC and COMESA countries. We can't say that we want their business and yet we don't want to help them to bring the business to Mauritius. We have agreed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, for every US\$500,000 of investment, we shall provide one passport, which is not very different from what is happening for the IRS. With respect to the Chinese workers, again, here, we have to be realistic. With the Tianli project, we will need around 40,000 people - direct, indirect, induced and multiplier effects. We are having problems to find

people to work in our country. Currently, there are 10,000 vacancies in the country, and we are struggling to find people. The hon. Minister of Labour knows it. Everyday, we are putting advertisement on TV to recruit workers. We have agreed that priority must be given to locals. But, we know fully well that, in terms of technology being brought in, we will need people from outside. There is enough flexibility in the agreement, and the Chinese are very understanding people. If we can find people in Mauritius, we will employ them. But, it is abundantly clear that we need a mix of Chinese and Mauritian employees.

With respect to architects, Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall be very candid. The Chinese came to see me and said that some of the local suppliers of services are trying to exaggerate with their fees. I make an appeal to architects. This is big business. They must also be reasonable. They are putting a lot of pressure on us, saying that they should be able to do it themselves. Some of the best architects of the world are from China, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is no reason why our local architects should unduly overcharge for the services rendered to Tianli. We all know that architectural fees can be a significant share of the total cost of setting up this project.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been told that the agreement will be kept secret and confidential. Does the hon. Minister find it normal that Mauritian firms – it's Mauritian land given away to Tianli for a period of time – will not be allowed to be present in that zone, whereas in Zambia, Zambian firms and other firms are allowed?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this was part of the negotiation. They wanted to open it to everybody. I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition - he has been in politics for a very long time - would appreciate that I was very concerned about trade diversion. In WTO languages, they make the difference between trade creation, investment creation and investment diversion and trade diversion. Our apprehension was that, if we had opened it to all, even those businesses that we would have got outside Tianli would have gone there. So, there would have been what we call a cannibalisation of trade and investment. In fact, it is at our insistence that we said: let's bring additional investment, additional jobs, additional trade. In my reply I even said that, once we get a very clear picture of what is this additional investment, we shall open up to others. But, in the initial stages, we wanted to take the precaution to ensure that the additional investment, the additional trade, the additional export earnings would come from China, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information, another concession that the secret agreement has handed over is that Tianli will be allowed - and I did not hear an answer to the value placed by Government on the 500 *arpents*; billions – to pledge that land to foreign banks to obtain financing. In the agreement, the name of the bank towards which the land can be pledged is even mentioned. Has this already been done, and can we have the name of the bank?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is clause (h). We have taken exceptional precaution so that they don't use the leveraging of the leasing to pledge what does not belong to them. We all know how business is carried out. I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would know that, once a lease is given to a particular organisation, they can leverage that lease in order to secure funding. But, this does not mean that the lease

is transferred to the company or to the bank taking that pledge. This is extremely clear, and we have taken all the precaution to make sure that our interests are safeguarded.

Let me inform the hon. Leader of the Opposition that all governments have given leases on State land. We know some of the saga of State land, Mr Speaker, Sir, how people use it to leverage, to get things that, under normal circumstances, they would not get. We have taken the precaution.

With regard to the first point made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition - this is the history of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir - when we started the EPZ, there were lots spare land. The value was huge. But, as I said, land on its own is worth nothing. It is the developmental value of land that is important. We had to negotiate very hard, to attract this single most important foreign direct investment, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware of trouble outside? Mauritius like China has very good firms, less good and awful firms. In every country also, this is the case. Is he aware of the problems, including death of workers, that have arisen, amongst other places, Equatorial Guinea, Zambia, Papua New Guinea, because of environmental and labour problems? Is he also aware that in the Philippines, the President, after evidence of kickbacks, has had to cancel a 300 million dollar contract with one Chinese firm, and that there is a Senate inquiry going on after the contract has been cancelled? Is he prepared to advise the hon. Prime Minister to set up a Select Committee of the House to look at this whole issue?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

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

**Dr. Sithanen:** In my introductory remark, I said that we should not give the signal that we are doing China bashing. I am glad that the hon. Leader of the Opposition...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Address the Chair!

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad the hon. Leader of the Opposition said that he is not going to be party to China bashing. And, yet, what he just said resembles it very much.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, we will take all the precautions. This is part of a campaign being led against China and India in Africa. We know that there are vested interests...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. This is, indeed, imputing motives.

**Mr Speaker:** I think so. Hon. Minister, better be clear in your answer, and do not impute motives.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I withdraw what I said, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks it is him. It is not him!

**Mr Speaker:** The way the hon. Minister said it is as if he was imputing motives to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we know what are the vested interests in Africa. I don't want to go into a chronicle of exploitation by the West in Africa; how many people lost their lives in countries in Africa, where they had to dig in mines. Does the hon. Member want me to go into this? We need to be fair to China. We need to be fair to India. We should stop this China bashing, just because China is offering an alternative. It is proposing an alternative to the development process of Africa. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we welcome all partners, just like Africa welcomes all partners. But, we should not give the signal that if investment comes from one particular country, we are very happy, whereas if it comes from another country, we try to find lame excuses in order to criticise it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that PQs No. B/623 and No. B/625 have been withdrawn.

## **MAURITIAN PASSPORT – RENEWAL – PROCEDURES**

**(No. B/611) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** 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 Mauritian passport, he will state if Government is proposing to amend the procedures laid down for the renewal thereof and, if so, where matters stand.

**The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that passports are issued to Mauritian citizens in accordance with the Passport Act and the Passports Regulations 1969. Passports are issued for a period of ten years to those above sixteen and for a period of five years to those under sixteen. Upon its expiry or if the space provided for visas is covered or if it has been damaged, lost or stolen, a new passport is issued upon application.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has taken note of the proposal from the hon. Member regarding the procedures for renewal of passport.

In line with Government policy to streamline procedures and a reduced red tape, the processing of applications for renewal of passports is being reviewed and the Passports Regulations will be amended accordingly.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister say whether, with the new procedures, it is proposed to reduce the time lag between the application for renewal of a passport and delivering the passport?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that the answer is yes to both parts of the question: to simplify and to shorten the

procedures. But, at the same time, Government is introducing the computerised border of control system and also the new biometric passport. It will all come together, but procedures will be shortened and simplified.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister say whether with the new procedures there will no longer be the hassle for somebody who has already a passport to produce once again all the documents - we can understand for the photograph after 10 years, because of the appearance person - as the birth and marriage certificates?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** The hon. Member argued that case last year; it will be taken into account.

**PQ No. B/612 – see “Written Answers to Questions”**

**LA BASTILLE PRISON - INCIDENT – 22.05.08**

**(No. B/613) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** 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 any violent incident occurred at the La Bastille Prison, on 22 May 2008 and, if so –

- (a) the reasons therefor;
- (b) the number of persons injured, and
- (c) the measures he proposes to take, in addition to those already taken, to prevent such recurrence.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that the Phoenix Prison is a high security facility designed to accommodate the most difficult and dangerous detainees. The prison was temporarily closed as from October last year for renovation works.

It is planned to undertake the improvement works at Phoenix Prison in three phases. Phase I comprises the construction of three association yards to provide outdoor activities to detainees, Phase II the construction of a new gate lodge and Phase III additional accommodation for detainees.

The first Phase, that is, the construction of the association yards and the renovation of the residential blocks were completed in the first week of May of this year. After various inspections by senior officials of the Prisons Service and a visit of a member of the National Human Rights Commission on 07 May 2008, the Commissioner of Prisons was satisfied that the Phoenix Prison could be opened for re-use as the second and third phase of the improvement works would not hinder in any way the smooth running of the Phoenix Prison. These works are away from the blocks where detainees are confined and would not affect the security of detainees in the prison itself.

The Prison has been re-opened as from 16 May 2008. 13 detainees were transferred to the Phoenix Prison in three batches. There are currently eight detainees housed at the Phoenix Prison.

It was reported that on 22 May 2008 at about 12.25 hours, five detainees whilst they were in the newly-constructed Association Yard 2 for recreational activities, broke the iron bar supporting the TV stand found thereat and used it to break the padlock of the metal door. They then proceeded to the adjoining Association Yard 3 and broke the padlock giving access to that yard and assaulted three detainees. These three detainees were seriously injured and were admitted to the Detainees' Ward at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for medical treatment. On 05 June 2008, two of the victims were discharged from the hospital and they returned to Beau Bassin Central Prison for further medical treatment.

I am also informed that the matter was reported to the Police on 26 May 2008, the five assailants have been provisionally charged of "Assault with premeditation" before the Curepipe District Court. The Police enquiry is in progress.

I am further informed that on the basis of the preliminary investigation, the Officer-in-Charge of the Phoenix Prison was interdicted for gross neglect of duty with effect from 27 May 2008.

Moreover, an independent Enquiry Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of an Assistant Commissioner of Police and comprising an Assistant Commissioner of Prisons and an Assistant Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office to carry out a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident and to submit a report at the earliest.

A security audit has also been carried out at the Phoenix Prison with the aim of reviewing the security arrangements there. Immediate steps were taken to accommodate the five detainees involved in the assault in the punishment cells to ensure the safety of other detainees and they were also placed under the direct supervision of the Prisons Security Guard. On 04 June 2008, two of them were temporarily transferred to the punishment cells of Beau Bassin Central Prison as they broke the locks of their cell doors. They would be transferred back again once the cell doors are replaced.

Other additional measures are being envisaged by the Prisons authorities to further tighten security at the Phoenix Prison. These include the installation of security cameras in the corridor of the association yards for monitoring the movement of detainees, the replacement of the metal-framed television stands in the association yards by concrete ones, the replacement of padlocks in the association yards by other sophisticated locks, more searches of the detainees as well as the detainees' cells and the regular rotation of staff at the prison. Efforts are also being made to enhance the capabilities of the Prisons' staff.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the situation in the prisons is now well under control and is closely monitored. Furthermore, the security measures in place are being kept under constant review.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether there was a request, verbal or written, from some of the detainees who expressed the fear when being transferred to La Bastille with the other co-detainees, knowing full well of the animosities existing between them?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I am not aware of this particular request, but I am aware that there were investigations and some of the detainees expressed fear about reprisals.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** In a reply by the Prime Minister to my question on 06 November 2007, he stated, I quote –

“Once the renovation works are completed, the Phoenix Prison would be opened for reuse.”

Could the hon. Ag. Prime Minister please explain to the House how come that La Bastille Prison, which is a prison of high security where dangerous and difficult detainees are supposed to be kept, has been reopened without the renovation works completely terminated?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** As I have said in my reply, Mr Speaker, Sir, renovation work parts 2 and 3 do not impact on the safety side of the prison.

**Mr Naidu:** Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether, after the works had been carried out, the officer in charge of La Bastille or the SP responsible for works had given clearance to the Commissioner of Police for the transfer of the prisoners from Beau Bassin Prison to La Bastille?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** As I have underlined, there have been visits by different officers of different grades and also from the Human Rights Commission. They were all satisfied - that's my information - that it could be re-opened.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the Ag. Prime Minister say that the prison was re-opened after a visit – I missed the reference. Is it by the Human Rights Commission or somebody else?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** There have been various inspections by senior officials, as I mentioned, and also a visit by a member of the National Human Rights Commission on 07 May 2008.

**Mr Lesjongard:** The Ag. Prime Minister stated that the works were completed and a visit was effected. Do they have a handing over certificate when works are completed?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** The works are in three parts, parts 1, 2 and 3, as I have already underlined in my answer. The first part was completed to the satisfaction of one and all, especially in terms of the security, but more in terms of the human rights aspect, that they were provided with facilities in the yard to be able to indulge in activities outside their cell.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell the House as to why, in spite of the fact that the Special Mobile Force is next door, and there are so many Police stations in the surrounding, yet, to reinforce security when incidents occur, they took ages to come to the prison? Can I also ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the very outbreak of the incident does not in itself show that the prison was not yet ready for the transfer of the prisoners?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already given the answer to the question. After investigation the officer-in-charge of the Phoenix Prison was interdicted for gross neglect of duty. I think there has been more neglect than physical infrastructure weakness.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Will the Ag. Prime Minister say whether any CCTV camera has been installed within the premises of the La Bastille Prison?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** They have been installed and there are more being installed.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Since the Ag. Prime Minister has just mentioned that a security audit is being carried out, can we know who is carrying out this security audit and whether there is a time frame for the completion of the report?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** There is no information as to who is carrying it out, but it is being done and I will certainly provide the information.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Has there been any further incident after the particular one which we are referring to today?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I am not aware about this particular prison.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** At La Bastille Prison.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## VEHICLES - ALLEGED THEFT - NUMBER

**(No. B/614) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** 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 reported cases of alleged theft of vehicles, since January 2006 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto, and if so, if they have been completed and the outcome thereof.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to PQ No. B/760 on 17 July, 2007.

I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that since January 2006 to date, 1,817 cases of alleged theft of vehicles have been reported. Out of these, 957 cases have been classified: in 25 cases, accused parties have been prosecuted and sentenced by Court; 15 cases are before Court; in 3 cases, the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions is awaited, and 817 cases are still under inquiry.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ag. Prime Minister has used a word which I would like to understand. He has said that out of 1,817 stolen vehicles – which is huge – I heard him say that there are some 900 cases which have been classified. What is meant by that? Is it no case, no inquiry, no follow-up and so on?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I am glad that this question has been asked. It means in the jargon that the Police has not got any more information that will help it.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Can the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House among the vehicles that have been lost, how many reported cases concern tourists and foreigners living in Mauritius?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Unfortunately, I have no information, Sir.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the practice to have road blocks by the Police is a normal feature to address such a problem?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we are a small island and the main *échappatoire* as in South Africa, for example, people steal vehicles and go in the country next to it. Here, we cannot do that and probably this huge number of stolen vehicles that cannot be traced is probably due to what the hon. Ag. Prime Minister called *cannibalisme* elsewhere. The vehicles are split up and sold bits and pieces. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the Police is aware of that and whether special effort is carried out by the Police to combat *cannibalisme* in stolen vehicles?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. In fact, the recent case of Chuttoo confirms what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has just said.

**Mrs Martin:** Sir, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether in cases of stolen cars, there has been a study to see whether there is a specific make that is being targeted?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Not to my knowledge.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether stolen cars have been involved in other offences?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the Ag. Prime Minister how many persons have been arrested with regard to stolen cars?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** It is in the reply that I have given.

#### **CUSTOMS OFFICERS – ALLEGED FORGERY**

**(No. B/615) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** 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 reported cases of alleged fraud and corruption involving Customs Officers, since January 2006 to date, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof, in each case.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that from January 2006 to date, one case of alleged forgery involving a Customs Officer has been reported to the Police Department.

The case was referred to the Police by the Mauritius Revenue Authority on 08 January 2008, following which an inquiry was instituted by the Central Criminal Investigation Division.

I am informed that the case is still under inquiry.

**SCHOOLS (PRIMARY/SECONDARY) –  
ALLEGED ASSAULT ON PUPILS**

**(No. B/616) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** 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 reported cases of alleged assaults on pupils of the primary and secondary levels, perpetrated by their teachers, since August 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, indicating the measures he proposes to take, in addition to those already taken, to prevent such recurrence.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that since August 2005 to date 72 cases of alleged assaults on pupils by teachers of primary and secondary schools have been reported to the Police.

Thirty-two cases have been classified and two cases are under prosecution. Police is still inquiring into 31 cases and the remaining seven cases have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

I am further informed by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources that section 13(4) of the Education Regulations stipulates that “no corporal punishment shall be inflicted on any pupil in any school”. Corporal punishment is also a criminal offence punishable under the penal code.

If a case of corporal punishment is reported, a full investigation is carried out by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources and the case is reported to Police when it is established that corporal punishment has taken place. Necessary action is taken against the officer in line with existing Public Service Commission Regulations.

All teachers are instructed by way of circulars that no corporal punishment is to be inflicted on a pupil.

Mr Speaker, Sir, violence on school-children is totally unacceptable. Physical punishment is an insult to the dignity of the child and it is vital that a more pedagogical approach be adopted to deal with this problem.

The Ministry of Education & Human Resources is already working on measures proposed by the Ombudsperson for Children with regard to corporal punishment. These measures include amendment to existing laws and regulations, sensitization of children, parents and teachers, and reviewing the mechanisms for a more effective inquiry into cases of violence on school-children. Moreover, a strategy would be evolved with a view to providing counselling, guidance and support to teachers in the context of the setting up of a National Psychological and Counselling Service for the education sector.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we all agree that one case of aggression by a teacher on a student is one too many. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, over the same period, there have been any cases of assault on teachers by pupils?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I replied to a question in that sense last year and there were not many cases. I gave all details in that answer to the question. But the answer is yes, there is!

**Mr Guinness:** Out of the 72 cases, can we know how many concern primary and secondary schools?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I have the information; it is mostly secondary.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when an inquiry is being conducted on those teachers who have been involved in corporal punishment, what happen to them in the meantime? Are they transferred or do they remain in post?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I have no details, but I am sure the Minister of Education will reply to that.

**Mr Guinness:** True it is that we are dealing with cases where teachers inflict corporal punishment on students! Do we have cases where rector's inflict corporal punishment on teachers?

*(Interruptions)*

## PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY – SCHEME OF SERVICE

**(No. B/617) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the post of Principal Assistant Secretary, he will state if the scheme of service thereof is being amended and, if so, the changes that are being brought thereto, indicating the reasons therefor.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, action has indeed been initiated for the scheme of service for the post of Principal Assistant Secretary (PAS) to be amended.

The scheme of service is being reviewed to change the mode of appointment to the post of PAS.

According to the existing scheme, appointment to the post of PAS is made by selection from among officers in the grade of Senior Assistant Secretary (SAS), a grade which was recommended by the PRB in its 2003 Report. However, this post of SAS has proved to be superfluous as explained by the Prime Minister in his reply to PQ No. B/1095. Moreover, the Association of Public Administrators has also been asking for the abolition of the post for the same reason. The grade of SAS has therefore been made evanescent. In fact, in its 2008 Report, the PRB has, in line with its policy for flatter structures, equally recommended that the grade of SAS be made evanescent.

Consequently, the scheme of service for the post of PAS is being amended so that in future, appointment thereto would be made by selection from among officers in the grade of Assistant Secretary reckoning at least eight years service in the grade.

Initially, it was proposed that the length of service required from an Assistant Secretary to be eligible for consideration for appointment to the grade of PAS should be five years. However, the Public Service Commission has now proposed that this should be increased to eight years in order to ensure that experienced officers are selected for this high level post. This proposal of the Public Service Commission has been approved. The Union is being consulted on the new revised scheme, in accordance with existing rules.

### **ROAD ACCIDENTS – NUMBER**

**(No. B/618) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the road accidents during the past three years, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, indicating the number of lives lost, with a breakdown as to the number of pedestrians who have lost their life as a result thereof, and
- (b) state if an assessment of the financial impact thereof on the country has been carried out.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that since the year 2005 to date, 23,755 cases of road accidents have been reported to the Police and 469 persons have lost their lives. Among the deceased, there are 166 pedestrians.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am also informed by the Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping that the last assessment for road accident costs was carried out in 1999, and amounted to 1.4% of the GNP representing Rs1.5 billion. On the basis of the 1999 assessment, the figure for the year 2007 would turn around Rs3.2 billion.

I am further informed that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) is in the process of carrying out an exercise to assess the accidental costs this year, which will consist of the following assessment, using the following criteria –

- loss of output
- costs of medical treatment
- costs of damage to vehicles and other property
- administrative costs
- social costs.

I would like to stress, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the loss of dear ones endured by the families of the victims cannot be entirely quantified in financial terms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is conscious of the need to enhance road safety and sensitise road users and pedestrians on the issue.

In this connection, throughout the year the TRMSU carries out sensitisation campaigns targeting speeding, reckless driving, drink driving, use of mobile phones while driving, pedestrian safety, and road safety education for different categories of road users including young adults and the elderly.

The Police on their side are very active in the enforcement of road traffic laws. Two mobile speed cameras will also be shortly procured to help them to track down speed limit violations with a view to enhancing road safety.

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether, in the breakdown, we can have the number of children and old-aged persons who were killed?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I do not have the age group here. I can certainly provide it. The information that I have is mostly for the adolescents.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Ag. Prime Minister told us that over the last three years 166 pedestrians have lost their life. I am sure he will agree with me that the most shocking part of that is people who are struck down on ‘Cross Here’. Can we have a figure – whether he has it – of the number of people who were knocked down on ‘Cross Here’ and whether he will advise the Prime Minister and the Ag. Commissioner of Police that action needs to be taken because when one goes all over the place, the sign warning the automobilists that there is a ‘Cross Here’ is right on it, therefore, the driver has no chance of doing anything. Can I appeal to the Ag. Prime Minister - if he does not have the figure - that action needs to be taken to put those signs at a distance?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, I take note of that. It has already been underlined; we will go ahead with it.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister how many sensitisation campaigns have been carried out over the past three years?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I would say throughout the year. We have sensitised at the level of schools, especially - I have been there myself on many occasions - at the level of District and Village Councils and also on television and radio. It is there all the time, with billboards helping as well. Since the question has not been asked, I would like to draw the attention that, out of those 22 pedestrians who unfortunately died in 2008, 8 of them had alcohol levels very high. We are still faced with the problem of alcohol.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Almost everyday we hear about accidents involving cars and bicycles, does Government have the intention of creating a bicycle lane in places where there is the possibility?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we are thinking about it.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that it is a matter of great concern, because we have one of the highest per capita rate as far as accidents are concerned in the world and one of the reasons is the narrowness of the road, can the Ag. Prime Minister consider the possibility of having a national programme to have pavements along narrow roads to address this issue?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I have no problem with that. Did I hear it right that the hon. Member said we are the highest in the African region?

**Mr Bodha:** Yes.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** This was predicted many years ago that as a country develops we are going to get worse and then get better. We are in this stage, unfortunately. It has more or less been static for the past five to seven years. It has not improved. The answer is yes.

**Mr Jhugroo:** May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister how many road accidents happened on the pedestrian crossings at night?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I have the information about the accident rate during the day and night, but I don't think it makes much sense. Half of it occurred between 6 o'clock morning and 6 o'clock in the evening and the other between 6 o'clock evening and 6 o'clock in the morning.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that certain private radios advise drivers that there are road blocks and what happens is that those who are doing excès de vitesse know that they should not speed and then they start all over again? Does the Ag. Prime Minister agree with this or does he think that this should be stopped right away?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** We have to put a stop to that.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the road from Wootun to Valetta towards Quartier Militaire is very narrow and accident-prone. It is a very important link road between the Plaines Wilhems and the East. Will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister consider the possibility of having same enlarged?

**Mr Speaker:** Even the road where I live - Camp Fouquereau Branch Road!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will relay this request to the Deputy Prime Minister.

### **HOLD UP, LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE – ALLEGED CASES**

**(No. B/619) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** 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 alleged cases of hold up and larceny with violence, since the beginning of this year to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the remedial measures taken, in addition to the ones already taken.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Police that since January 2008, 15 cases of hold up and 617 cases of other types of larceny with violence have been reported.

I am further informed that with a view to curbing down crimes and maintaining a high level of security, the Police Department normally ensures round the clock Police presence in residential and commercial areas through regular patrols by the Regular Force, the CID, the ERS and in certain regions, the SSU and the SMF. Focus is also being put on Police/Community partnership through the use of Police Public Partnership Policing and “Neighbourhood Watch” Schemes.

Furthermore, the Crime Prevention Unit is embarking on sensitisation campaigns on crime prevention issues and the enhancement of public awareness against crimes. In this context, a security week was organised by the Police Department at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre from 02 to 08 June, 2008. Activities carried out during that security week included interactions with different target groups such as salesmen, the bank sector, tourists, elderly persons and school-children.

In addition, in order to ensure that Police officers are adequately equipped to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective way, a procurement exercise has recently been initiated for the acquisition of new vehicles. These vehicles will be posted to

different divisions so as to improve policing on ground. Besides, modern equipment such as Facial Composite (*Portrait Robot*) and improved techniques of investigation have recently been introduced for tracing of culprits and recovery of evidence.

With a view to increasing coordination between the different Police Units, a project for the modernisation of the Police Radio Communication System has also been initiated.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he can give us the breakdown of cases where the elderly and women were involved?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no such information, but I can provide it.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that it seems now -when we have the figures, that is, 600 per six months - three offences a day - will he agree that we have the perception that there is no safe haven in the country?

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I would not put it like that.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he has the details of the number of cases regionwise?

**Ag. Prime Minister:** I can provide that; there is no problem.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/622, B/627 and B/630 have been withdrawn. Before I call the questions addressed to hon. Ministers, I must inform the House that the Table has again been advised that PQ Nos. B/643, B/660, B/661, B/662, B/663, B/666, B/668 and B/673 have been withdrawn.

### STC - ARSENAL - SHED

(No. B/631) **Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the Corporation has rented a shed at Arsenal and, if so –

- (a) since when;
- (b) the name of the owner thereof;
- (c) the amount of money paid monthly as rental, and
- (d) if the Corporation is now being requested to vacate the premises and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the required information is being tabled.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister the name of the owner?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the name of the owner is Mauritius Free Zone Logistics Ltd.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the STC has to vacate the said building in the near future, if yes, when?

**Dr. Jeetah:** If the hon. Member so wishes, I will have to read the answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is as regards part ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Part (d) of the question refers as to whether the Corporation is now being requested to vacate the premises. It is in the answer and it is being circulated. I am sorry!

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the same building was under receivership when it was rented?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister for how long has the shed at Arsenal been rented and for what purpose?

**Dr. Jeetah:** The STC rented the shed since 01 February 2008 for the storage of commodities.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Senior Adviser, Mr Ah Fat, has been involved in negotiations concerning the renting of this building, if yes, in what way?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the STC went through all the procedures to do the procurement.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that because the STC will have to vacate the building, actually flour is being sold at Rs3 less than the normal price to shopkeepers?

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

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table copy of the Minutes of proceedings of the Board Meeting when the decision was taken to rent the shed at Arsenal?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**STC - MR C. – PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER - APPOINTMENT**

**(No. B/632) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if one Mr C. has been appointed as Public Relations Officer thereat and, if so –

- (a) since when;
- (b) his terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) if any complaint has been lodged against him at his Ministry.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr C. has been appointed as Public Relations Officer since 23 October 2006.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the terms and conditions of appointment of Mr C.

In reply to part (c) of the question, no complaint has been lodged against him at my Ministry.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know what is the duty of that gentleman, Mr C., at the State Trading Corporation?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I will have to read it, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, I am tabling it, and there are nine items with regards to his duties which are linked to public relations.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the gentleman has been given the assignment to control attendance registers at Shed A?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not look into the day-to-day running of the STC.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether Mr C. is still working at the STC?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the gentleman is paid an allowance just to check attendance registers?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have already answered. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am willing to answer questions concerning policy matters. I am tabling all the information. I do not have information as regards the day-to-day running of the Corporation.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I asked the hon. Minister whether there is any complaint which has been received and he answered in the negative. I have in my possession several letters which have been written to the General Manager whereby workers have complained about the way this gentleman is harassing the supervisors and other workers at Shed A. Can the hon. Minister look into it?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to mention that I am not in possession of any letter. And if there is any complaint, there are authorities that should be able to take care thereof.

*(Interruptions)*

We have the Ministry of Labour. If he has certain serious concerns, I think he will have to take it further.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Mr C. is also working as Public Relations Officer in a private company called Capital Security which belongs to the Minister's relatives?

*(Interruptions)*

It is a fact.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member can put his question, but the other part ...

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, you actually see what is happening. This is just a mud-slinging exercise against this gentleman. That is all what they are doing.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I cannot force the hon. Minister to answer.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether it is normal for the General Manager to issue two circular letters - Nos. 15 and 16 - whereby the General Manager informed the employees at Shed A that this gentleman will now be responsible for attendance registers when this is not according to his schedule of duties?

**Dr. Jeetah:** If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will give him the answer.

### STC – MR C – SUSPENSION

**(No. B/633) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the Secretary of the State Trading Corporation, one Mr C., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if

the latter has been suspended from duty, on or about 26 March 2008, and if so, the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr C., holding appointment as Administrative Secretary was suspended from duty since 27 March 2008 for gross misconduct.

I am also informed that the same officer has made a request for his early retirement and the Board of the STC has already acceded to the request made.

**Mr Guinness:** Can we know from the Minister what is that gross misconduct?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did discuss with the Permanent Secretary and I was advised that it would be inappropriate to reveal the details thereof as it may jeopardize the career of the person concerned. Moreover, the Board of the STC has already approved the request of the officer for his retirement.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order now!

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Mr C. was suspended on 26 March. The General Manager found that the decision was not correct and he was asked to resume his job. Because of this harassment, Mr C is now going on pre-retirement. Is it because on 26 March, when there was flooding in Mauritius, the Secretary of the Board took the decision to release the workers earlier? Is the Minister aware?

**Dr. Jeetha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did look into the details, but I don't want go into ..  
*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I can't hear!

**Dr. Jeetah:** I would not like to go through a *procès d'intention of Mr C.* I have given the reply that I had to give.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister whether the Board took cognizance of the decision of suspending this officer?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I will have to look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

#### **STC – MR G, SENIOR TECHNICAL OFFICER – SUSPENSION**

**(No. B/634) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to one Mr G., Senior Technical Officer at the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation,

information as to if the latter has been suspended from duty, on or about 04 April 2008, and if so, the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr G. holding appointment as Senior Technical Officer ...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister, can you reply to the question so that I can hear! I cannot hear what you are saying!

*(Interruptions)*

Order, now!

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr G.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Can the hon. Minister stop laughing and answer the question and look at the Chair?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Are you talking to me?

**Mr Speaker:** Yes! You are turning back and laughing. You should answer the question and look at the Chair.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, would you allow me to read my answer? I am informed that Mr G...

**Mr Speaker:** I have asked the Minister to answer the question and he should not ask me the permission to read the answer. I have said that Question Time is very precious to this House.

**Dr. Jeetah:** This is what I am doing, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am informed that Mr G. .

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan! I have said that I have difficulty to hear the hon. Minister. Could you please help me in keeping quiet so that I can hear what he is saying?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am informed that Mr G., holding appointment as Senior Technical and Facilities Officer has been suspended from duty since 04 April 2008 for alleged gross insubordination.

I am further informed that a Disciplinary Committee has been appointed to look into the matter. The officer will have all opportunities to rebut charges made against him.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the case of Mr C it was gross misconduct and for Mr G it is gross insubordination. Can we know what the charges are? Because he was suspended immediately on 04 April.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have a copy of the charges, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I am willing to give the information.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister is willing to do what? I did not hear.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am willing to table the information.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on 04 April 2008, at 15.38 hrs, the General Manager wrote a letter to the officer suspending him immediately. Did the General Manager give him a chance for an explanation before taking such a decision?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that there is a Disciplinary Committee and the officer will have ample opportunity to give his side of the story.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister give us the composition of the Disciplinary Committee and who is chairing this Committee?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have to look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not have the information.

**Mr Jhugroo:** I wanted to know who the members of this Disciplinary Committee are.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister has already answered. He needs notice.

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Soodhun, do you have a question?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is ready to initiate a departmental inquiry?

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

**Mr Gunness:** Is the Minister aware that this gentleman has been suspended because of the same PRO?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Minister talked about insubordination. Can he, therefore, specify insubordination towards whom?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I suspect it is towards his superior ..

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when the General Manager took this decision, did he get the approval of the Board afterwards?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether he has personally been involved in that particular case?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not even know this officer, Mr Speaker, Sir.

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

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/650, B/651, B/652, B/653, B/655, B/656, B/657, B/664 and B/665 have been withdrawn.

### **MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE – LEGISLATION – REVIEW**

**(No. B/635) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to medical negligence, he will state if he will consider reviewing the existing legislation in respect thereof, in view of the recent reported cases.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very briefly, our law of medical negligence is articulated around *Article 1382* and *Article 1384* of the *Code Civil* or alternatively, as in the case of a medical practitioner practicing in private practice, on the Law of Contract. We have a well established jurisprudence on the matter, inasmuch as that the number of people having recourse to our courts has been on the increase in matters of medical or professional negligence, as judged by the number of pronouncement by the Supreme Court.

The basic principles upon which the Courts have acted so far have been the principles as laid down in the French jurisprudence, as modified with time by the development of our own jurisprudence. In essence, the “*obligation d’un médecin est non une obligation déterminée de guérir le malade, mais seulement une obligation générale de prudence et de diligence (...)*». In other words, as is known in French law, “*une obligation de moyens et non une obligation de résultat*”. This can be reconciled with the basic tenets of the law of negligence prevailing in the United Kingdom where the plaintiff has to prove that the medical practitioner has failed to exercise the ordinary skill of an ordinary competent man exercising that particular profession.

However, you may wish to note that we do also have the concept of professional negligence and code of ethics which is entrenched in our legislation, namely the Medical Council Act, which has recently been amended in 2007 to provide for delegation of powers of inquiry in relation to public officers (i.e. doctors employed in the public service) to the Medical Council. Hon. Members may wish to note that my office together with the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life are actively putting the final touch to the implementing regulations.

This aspect does englobe a somewhat wider perspective given that not only the Medical Council is empowered to see if a medical practitioner (public or private) has made a professional mistake, but also to look at the ethical aspects of the case. In that respect, Members will note that section 14 of the Medical Council Act provides that disciplinary action may be considered where there has been –

- (a) a breach of the Code of Practice;
- (b) an act of fraud, dishonesty or negligence;
- (c) an act of professional misconduct or malpractice, or
- (d) an act which may bring the medical profession into disrepute.

It is to be noted that the ultimate sanction is the deregistration of the medical practitioner, hence no right to practice as such.

In addition to the above, medical practitioners practicing as public officers, that is, in a Government hospital, are also subject to the rules and regulations prevailing in the public service, in particular as far as disciplinary actions are concerned, Part IV of the Public Service Commission Regulations, and the ultimate sanction being dismissal from the public service.

As hon. Members would have noted, we have quite a few rules and regulations that are applicable to the issue of medical negligence, the general principles of which, as far as civil law is concerned, are encompassed in our law relating to negligence.

Furthermore, I am discussing same with my friend, hon. Faugoo, before we decide on any further course of action following different cases.

Notwithstanding, should the hon. Members have specific suggestions to make, I will certainly look into any proposition, with the assistance of the Law Reform Commission if so required, and I thank my friend for that matter.

**Mr Bodha:** I thank the hon. Attorney-General for the answer. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is related, in fact, to more and more cases where people have, I would say, the courage to come to Court. The fact that this is a new area of the law and there have been recent developments in the UK and France, may I ask the hon. Attorney-General whether he is aware that, for example, in France the *établissement*, that is, the clinic, can be taken to task?

L'établissement a un devoir de prodiguer un certain niveau de soin et l'établissement doit répondre des fautes de ses agents et cet agent peut être de toute la hiérarchie, du personnel infirmier jusqu'aux professeurs agrégés. En France, il y a une provision légale spécifique concernant, par exemple, la responsabilité de l'établissement, que ce soit l'établissement public ou privé. Est-ce que le ministre de la justice pourrait tenir compte de cet aspect de chose?

**Mr Valayden:** Of course, we will take on board all the different cases and any development that has been made in any other country. My hon. friend will recall that the first case in the field of medical negligence was in 1932 if we follow the English jurisprudence, that is, the case of Donoghue & Stevenson and since then – it is not yet hundred years - setting the basic tenets of the medical negligence. In Mauritius, we have l'Article 1382 and l'Article 1384; in the recent cases we will study to see if there is any new development. On the other hand, we must also take that on board whenever we will have to make improvements in our law and I believe it is a good suggestion, but still we will have to see if it is not *au diapason avec l'Article 1384* which speaks about *délits et quasi-délits*.

**Mr Bodha:** Sans aller dans la jurisprudence au niveau du droit civil, l'Article 1382 du Code Civil - nous sommes d'accord - relève des dommages d'ordre civil. Je souhaiterais aussi apporter la proposition à l'honorable ministre, qu'en France, il y a la responsabilité pénale, c'est-à-dire, un médecin peut être impliqué dans un cas où il y aurait eu un chef d'accusation de coups et de blessures involontaires, donc d'homicide involontaire avec trois possibilités, c'est-à-dire, où le manquement ou la négligence a causé une incapacité totale de travail de plus de trois mois ;ou encore, il y a eu une incapacité de travail d'une durée de moins de trois mois ; ou encore, la négligence, la maladresse, l'imprudence ou l'inattention a causé la mort d'autrui. Dans ce cas-là, il y a la possibilité d'une peine de prison de trois ans et des dégâts d'ordre civil. Ma suggestion était : est-ce qu'on pourrait justement revoir la loi pour qu'il y ait une responsabilité pénale et non pas une responsabilité avec la faute d'ordre général telle que cette responsabilité qu'évoquée par l'Article 1382 ?

**Mr Valayden :** Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, we have to deepen our law if need be to protect the patients, more particularly those who are poor. Therefore, I invite my friend to have a cup of tea at my office and we will discuss any other suggestion.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has the intention to amend the law in order that the Public Service Commission may delegate some of its powers to the Medical Council so that the latter may take action against negligent doctors?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if I have understood the question of the hon. Member correctly, we already have these powers. What we need to do is to get these regulations on line and these should also be in conjunction with the Constitution. We will have to look at the different sections.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, n'est-il pas normal que lorsqu'on admet un patient dans une clinique privée qui coûte une fortune, que la clinique soit responsable de la surveillance du patient? Est-ce que le ministre va amender la loi afin que la clinique soit responsable en cas de décès d'un patient?

**Mr Valayden:** M. le président, je crois que cette question va dans le même sens que celle qui a été posée par l'honorable Bodha.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, often we see articles in the press and the parents of victims come to the press as a last recourse because they want people to know what has happened and they don't have the possibility to ask questions to the right person through the right authority. May I ask him to see whether he can take on board the difficulties parents of victims face to be able to put up a case against the authority, the clinic or a doctor?

**Mr Valayden:** Same has been taken on board with the reforms of the Legal Aid Act.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister knows that the issue becomes more complicated when death arises out of an alleged medical negligence. Has the hon. Minister ever given thought to the coroner system which obtains in England? That is, after death, there is the question of determining responsibility? Because the body is at the clinic or the hospital, the doctors are still around and there can be a possibility of cover up. Whereas if the coroner, like it obtains in the British system, takes control of everything, I think there is more justice and opportunities for transparency.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if my memory serves me right, the system of coroner existed in our system before 1960s, before the introduction of the Intermediate Court, but, in fact, now we have a judicial inquiry. The same is done in cases where there is suspicion of death occurring on certain basis, but what we must do is, I believe, to look again at the issue of coroners with a modern perspective, that is, how we can include, in certain areas, a coroner that will inquire into cases of not only medical negligence, but perhaps also *accidents de travail* and things like that. We'll have to look at it on a different perspective again. Maybe my friend also can join us for a cup of tea.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, en ce qui concerne les cas de négligences médicales en Cour, est-ce que le ministre peut faire de sorte que les cas soient pris dans le plus bref délai?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not responsible for the administration of justice, but the suggestion of my hon. friend may be communicated to the Chief Justice.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Attorney-General whether there are any cases presently where victims have presented a case in Court against a medical doctor of the public service?

**Mr Valayden:** I believe we have a case. In fact, the last case which we had – the case of Kaudeer – where judgment was delivered this year and which judgment can be found at SCJ113.

**MARKET ROAD, LONG MOUNTAIN –  
STATE LAND – BENEFICIARY**

**(No. B/636) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if a plot of State land has been allocated, at/or in the vicinity of Market Road, in the region of Long Mountain, and, if so, -

- (a) the date thereof, and
- (b) the name of the beneficiary thereof.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a plot of land has been allocated in the vicinity of Market Road in the region of Long Mountain.

In regard to part (b) of the question, a building site lease over a plot of State land of an extent of 303m<sup>2</sup> within the ex-CHA Estate at Long Mountain was granted to one Mr L.F.G.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell the House when was the land initially given and where was it initially situated?

**Mr Dulull:** The land was initially given on the eve of the last general election around May 2005 and it was at La Briquetterie, Ste Croix.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that the lease is going to be transferred to Long Mountain, has it been given for residential purpose or agricultural purpose?

**Mr Dulull:** The land was given for residential purpose.

## NOTRE DAME – MAIN ROAD – ACCIDENTS

(No. B/637) **Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he has received any complaint from the inhabitants of Notre Dame, in regard to various accidents that have taken place on the main road of Notre Dame, more specifically near the bakery and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that have been or will be taken.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQ B/637 and B/667 together.

The main road at Notre Dame forms part of the Montagne Longue-Crève Coeur Road, which is a classified one. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has taken several measures to improve safety of road users, namely –

- (i) painting of single and double yellow lines at the Notre Dame Bridge;
- (ii) construction of a humped pedestrian crossing at Notre Dame Government School;
- (iii) painting of edge markings on both sides of the road from the start of the village to the NHDC complexes, and
- (iv) installation of 135m of guard rails at the start of the village.

The RDA has constructed footpaths along the right side of the road towards Montagne Longue, except at Pont La Chainé bridge, where a bridge enlargement is needed. The RDA will design and implement the bridge enlargement during the next financial year.

As I mentioned in my reply to PQ B/1191 in November last, my Ministry has also approved the installation of 35m of handrails, the construction of 28m footpath along the stretch of Notre Dame bridge to link the existing footpaths and the painting of 1.4 km of edge markings on both sides of the road from the NHDC complexes to Pont La Chainé including the construction of covered drains. These works will be carried out during the coming financial year.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has not recommended the construction of a traffic island near Pont La Chainé, but is proposing an inter visibility splay and painting of hatch markings, which would require land acquisition.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will also set up relevant speed signs and convert an existing zebra crossing near the junction of Church Road and B19 roads into a humped pedestrian crossing.

**Mrs Juggoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he could consider having the work started as soon as possible? Because between

the bakery and the main road of Notre Dame, there is no space for pedestrians and that has caused a lot of accidents causing the death of people actually.

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** I will certainly consider this request, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

***FERME MARINE DE MAHEBOURG – FISHERMEN -  
REPRESENTATION***

**(No. B/641) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the extension of the existing *Ferme marine de Mahebourg*, he will state if –

- (a) he is aware that it is causing prejudice to the public, including the artisanal fishermen, in view of the fact that they have been asked not to swim or operate in the vicinity of the floating cages, and
- (b) part of the lagoon has been leased.

**The Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives (Dr. R. Jeetah):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

With regard to part (a), I am advised that a representation was made in the beginning of October 2007 by the fishermen in the region of Bambous Virieux region with regard to the installation of buoys in relation to fish cage culture by *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg Ltd.* Subsequently, on 16 October 2007, a site visit was effected in the lagoon of Bambous Virieux by officers in the Fisheries Division and the Ministry of Housing & Lands and Fishermen to take cognizance of the complaints made by the fishermen. Essentially the fishermen were of the view that the demarcated zone by the buoys would hinder their fishing activities.

The fishermen present at the site meeting explained that they were not against the fish farming project. However, they were willing to a “trade off” agreement with the promoters. Consultations are ongoing with the fishermen in this regard. However, it is to be noted that fishermen normally fish in the vicinity of the fish farm.

The site is situated more than one kilometre from the coast and is not normally used for swimming. I am informed that there is no swimming zone in the area.

As regards part (b), I am advised that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has informed the *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg* that it has no objection with regard to the use of the new area of an extent of 13463 m<sup>2</sup> for fish culture subject to the rent being reassessed by the Chief Government Valuer.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell the House under which specific legislation in force in Mauritius has the Government leased a portion of the lagoon at Mahebourg to the *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg*?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I will have to pass on the question to the substantive Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that there is a *prolifération de requins* around the fish farm?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I am aware of is that this farm has brought in the technology to breed *reddrum*, *cobia* and *seabream*. Moreover, with regard to *cordonnier*, which is not yet in production, there are culture techniques acquired. I think it would be good to know that the projected production of this farm in 2008 is 550 tons of fish, and in 2009/2010 they are expecting to get up to 2,000 tons.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is talking of *cordonnier*, while I am talking about sharks which have attacked the nets. Recently, over 90 sharks have been killed around this farm, causing big problems to fishermen and the public. Is the hon. Minister aware of this situation?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware of production of fish. These people are not in the business or production of sharks.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what measures does the hon. Minister intend to take with regard to the security of fishermen around this farm, which attracts a lot of sharks?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister said that he was not aware. Maybe, the hon. Member should put the question to the substantive Minister when he comes back. It is no use hitting on the same nail again and again.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the report, the promoter talks about positive pollution. Can we know what is meant by that?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know anything positive with pollution.

**GRAND' BAIE CRUISE LTD V/S OCEAN BLUE ISLAND CO. LTD -  
JUDGEMENT**

(No. B/642) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, he has taken cognizance of the judgement of the Supreme Court in the case of Grand' Baie Cruise Ltd v/s Ocean Blue Island Co. Ltd, confirming that the public domain cannot be subject to alienation or prescription and, if so, indicate the stand that will be taken by his Ministry in regard to the projects for the purpose of carrying out aqua business activities in our lagoon and sea.

**The Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives (Dr. R. Jeetah):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question as well.

I am informed by the Attorney-General's Office that the judgement in the case of Grand' Baie Cruise Ltd v/s Ocean Blue Island Co. Ltd was, in fact, an interlocutory judgement delivered by a Judge sitting in Chambers.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant du dernier jugement de la cour Suprême, où il est dit que tous ceux qui oseraient empiéter sur le domaine public causeront préjudice et seront sanctionnés par le code pénal ?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am not aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**CHEBEL TEMPORARY CENTRE, BEAU BASSIN**

(No. B/643) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the Chebel temporary shelter, Beau Bassin, commonly known as Kosovo, he will state if families are still staying threat and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) if it is proposed to give them alternative accommodation and, if not, the other alternatives that are being offered to them.

*(Withdrawn)*

**PAS GEOMÉTRIQUES & STATE LAND LEASES – TERMS & CONDITIONS -  
REVIEW**

(No. B/644) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the Inter-ministerial Committee, which was set up to examine and review the terms and conditions of the industrial site leases on *Pas Géométriques* and State land, he will state –

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) the date of the meetings;

- (c) the outcome thereof, and
- (d) the name of the stakeholders who are attending the meetings thereof.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, the Inter-ministerial Committee comprised representatives of my Ministry and the following Ministries/Departments/Institutions –

- (i) Prime Minister's Office;
- (ii) Ministry of Finance & Economic Development;
- (ii) Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communication;
- (iii) Ministry of Local Government;
- (iv) Ministry of Arts & Culture;
- (v) Attorney-General's Office;
- (vi) Registrar General's Department;
- (vii) Valuation Department, and
- (viii) Board of Investment

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Committee met on four occasions namely 08 and 22 June 2007, 24 August 2007 and 12 October 2007.

In regard to part (c) of the question, a report of the Committee was submitted to the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development in January 2008. The report took into account the concerns of various stakeholders and recommended a zoning system for rental to be at par with that of the *campement* site leases, given that the issue was directly linked with an evaluation exercise at the level of the Valuation Office. The review exercise was pursued further at the level of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development. I am advised that the latter had several meetings with relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate the review of rental for industrial leases.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance & Economic Development has already announced in the 2008-2009 Budget Speech that policies on industrial sites and *campement* sites will henceforth be aligned. The Ministry of Finance & Economic Development is currently finalising the new terms and conditions to be applied to those leases.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the representatives of the Joint Economic Council (JEC) and the *Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice (AHRIM)* attended the meetings at the level of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development.

**Mr Allet:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state when the inter-ministerial committee will be set up to examine and review terms and conditions of agricultural, residential and commercial leases on *Pas Géométriques*?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I mentioned in one of my replies that we have a policy to review all leases, so that the rent reflects the reality of the market.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards industrial lease, is the review of rent going to be done at the end of the actual lease or whether, as in the case of *campements*, a new lease is now going to be proposed?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the terms and conditions are being finalised by the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development. I hope all the conditions will be satisfied.

### **MAURITIUS PORT AUTHORITY – LAND LEASES - BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/645) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to land owned by the Mauritius Port Authority in the port area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to if any land has been leased out and, if so, the name of the beneficiaries, indicating the purpose thereof, in each case.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question, as put, relates to all land leased by the Mauritius Port Authority since its inception. This information is still being compiled, as it is quite time-consuming.

However, with your permission, I am tabling a list of all beneficiaries of land leases in the port area since July 2005, when we took over. I am also providing information regarding outstanding applications, but in respect of which the lease agreement has not yet been finalised.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how is it that land owned by the Port Authority is being leased to a third party? Is it proper practice?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been like this over the last 30 years.

### **LA GAULETTE - CORNICHE BAY GULF IRS PROJECT**

**(No. B/646) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Corniche Bay Gulf Integrated Resort Scheme Project at La Gaulette, he will state if he has received any representation from the inhabitants of La Gaulette regarding the environmental aspect thereof and, if so, if any other Ministry has been involved therein, indicating the extent of the involvement.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, representations were made to my Ministry. As is the practice, the concerns were fully considered by all relevant Ministries and authorities which form part of the EIA Committee.

In this particular case, the environmental and heritage concerns were fully addressed by a Technical Committee along with representatives of the Ministry of Arts & Culture, National Heritage Fund and Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund. The conditions attached to the EIA licence issued take care of the concerns raised.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that, further to the issue of the EIA licence, an appeal has been lodged at the Environment Appeal Tribunal. The appeal is still under consideration.

**Mr Allet:** M. le président, le ministre peut-il dire si la plateforme patriotique pour la sauvegarde du Morne a fait appel au tribunal de l'environnement au sujet du *slave trail* ?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the appeal has been made against the EIA licence which has been issued.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state whether this IRS project has an effect on the proclamation of the Morne mountain *comme patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO*?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not in a position to answer this question, because this matter is before the tribunal. I will request the hon. Member to bear with me and let the findings be out.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what about the involvement of another ministry in the said project?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, in the EIA committee, there are, at least, eight Ministries involved. Representatives of all the eight Ministries sit on the committee.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it proper practice that the Minister of Finance has got exchange of correspondence with the promoter? I am going to table the letter.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't find any problem with the Ministry of Finance exchanging correspondence with the promoter.

#### **NESC –DELEGATION TO CHINA - EXPENDITURE**

**(No. B/647) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Economic and Social Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to –

- (a) the number of overseas missions undertaken by the Chairperson and the Assistant Secretary thereof, since their appointment to date, and
- (b) the composition of the delegation, which recently proceeded to China, following an invitation from the Chinese Government.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development Dr. R. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the NESC is a member of *l'Association Internationale des Conseils Economiques et Sociaux et Institutions Similaires (AICESIS)*, which is an international body regrouping economic and social councils.

It is also a member of *l'Union Economique des Conseils Economiques et Sociaux et Institutions Similaires d'Afrique*.

Furthermore, NESC is an elected member of the “*Conseil d'administration*” of AICESIS. In fact, the participation of the NESC has always been valued at the international and regional level, and this explains its election in the quota of five countries allocated to the African continent in the AICESIS. As such, the NESC regularly participates in the meeting of these organisations.

Insofar as part (a) of the question is concerned, I am informed that there is no post of Assistant Secretary at the NESC, but there is one Secretary to the Secretary-General. I presume that the hon. Member is referring to that officer.

The information being sought by the hon. Member to the question is being tabled.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the delegation which proceeded to China recently, can the hon. Minister state the number of persons who were invited by China, and who paid for the tickets? Was it China or the NESC?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know how many were invited. But, as regards who went there, my information is that it was the Chairman, the Commissioner for Economic Affairs, the Commissioner for Infrastructure, Physical Resources, Environment and the Assistant to the Secretary-General. I understand that only the cost of air tickets for the mission to China was met by the NESC. All hospitality costs in China were borne by the host. This is the information I have.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Minister say as to why no NGO formed part of that delegation?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have no idea. I see that there is the Chairman, Mr Vayid; the Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Mr Cheeroo; the Commissioner for Infrastructure, Physical Resources, Environment and Sustainable, Mr Rashid Imrith and the Assistant to the Secretary-General. I understand that some did not want to go, because they had to meet some of the costs. This is the information that has been given to me.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Minister confirm that those who travel to China wanted, in fact, to travel by business class and that's why the number of persons in the delegation was limited to only four whereas eight members, in fact, were invited by China?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't know. I leave it to the wisdom of the Board to decide. When too many go, we are criticised; when too few go, we are criticised.

## **BEL OMBRE - HOTEL PROJECTS**

**(No. B/648) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the hotel projects at Bel Ombre, he will state –

- (a) the amount of money disbursed by the promoters thereof as social component for the development of the Bel Ombre Village, and
- (b) if the money disbursed has already been used and if so, for which projects and, if not, why not.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/690 at the sitting of the House on 19 June 2007.

In the reply, I explained that the promoters of the hotel projects at Bel Ombre, had contributed Rs73.88 m. to the Tourism Fund. The then Government had decided to make use of the funds to meet the cost of the realignment of part of Black River/Savanne Coast Road at Bel Ombre. Accordingly, the community development projects identified in that region could not be implemented.

However, following representations made by the “*forces vives*” in respect of lack of social amenities in the region, a site visit was carried out with all stakeholders, to take cognizance of the requirements of the inhabitants.

Subsequent to that visit, a consensus was reached and it was agreed that, as a matter of priority, the Tourism Fund will finance the construction of a multipurpose complex for women entrepreneurs to the tune of Rs10 m. That project will be implemented by the Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection.

The purpose of the multipurpose complex is to enable women entrepreneurs to manufacture, exhibit and market their products.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the preliminary working designs of the project have been finalised by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping. The tender documents are expected to be finalised by end of August 2008 and are scheduled to be floated in around mid-October 2008. The work is expected to start in early November 2008 and the construction is scheduled to be completed in May 2009.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, four hotels are operating in Bel Ombre and up to now the inhabitants have not had any opportunity to go into any economic activity. Can the hon. Minister say whether this state of affairs would last long or whether there is something which the hon. Minister can do so that there are, at least, short terms projects in the pipeline for the inhabitants in Bel Ombre?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** As I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unfortunately the amount that has been paid to the Tourism Fund was used for the construction of the roads. So, there was a lack of funds. However, we are going ahead with the project for

women entrepreneurs. I am also talking to the Minister of Arts and Culture with regard to Le Batelage in Bel Ombre which is a very nice building and which we think we can use, maybe not as a museum, but as a place where locals can interact with tourists.

### **CENTRAL PROCUREMENT - BOARD MEMBER**

**(No. B/649) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the members of the Central Procurement Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if any one of them had been arrested in the past in connection with the fixing of horse races.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that none of the members of the Central Procurement Board has been arrested in the past in connection with the fixing of horse races.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether members of the Central Procurement Board should have a clean record with regard to their personal integrity just as officers of the MRA?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I should think so.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Minister say who is the Deputy Chairman of the Central Procurement Board?

**Dr. Sithanen:** If my understanding is correct, it is one Michel Wan Bok Nale.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Is the hon. Minister aware that the Deputy Chairman was the Manager of a company named Gammy who used to tender for the provision of medical equipment and tools to Government in the past? Can the hon. Minister confirm that the same member of the Central Procurement Board could not at one point in time justify the sources of his revenue and had finally to pay Rs5 m. to Income Tax?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I am not aware.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Will the hon. Minister agree to scrutinize the past dealings of that person and, if need be, try to see whether he should be removed from office?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I will certainly look into the matter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

### **DBM LTD. - CASES OF ALLEGED MISMANAGEMENT**

**(No. B/650) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius information as to if it has recently highlighted cases of alleged mismanagement at the DBM Ltd., and if so, the corrective measures if any, that have been taken as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **WORLD BANK - “NEW DEAL FOR GLOBAL FOOD POLICY”**

**(No. B/651) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he is aware of the “New Deal for Global Food Policy” formulated by the World Bank and, if so, will he state the stand taken by his Ministry in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **CASTING OF SLABS SCHEME – AMOUNT DISBURSED**

**(No. B/652) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the Casting of Slabs Scheme, he will state –

- (a) amount of money disbursed since November 2007 to date, and
- (b) the proposed duration of the scheme.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **LE BOUCHON - COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**(No. B/653) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a community centre at Le Bouchon, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

## AIR MAURITIUS – OPERATIONS – STRUCTURAL REVIEW

(No. B/654) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether, in regard to the rising cost of jet fuel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if the Board thereof has taken any measures to address the issue in relation to its impact on the number of flights and destinations in the near future.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, the rising cost of jet fuel in the international market has brought about an unprecedented crisis in aviation industry.

I understand that the recent spike in fuel prices has substantially disturbed the cost structure of airlines worldwide. The cost of fuel now accounts for 40% of total cost from an average of 15% just two years ago.

I am informed by Air Mauritius that jet fuel will cost the company an additional amount of Euro 50 m. in the financial year 2008/2009. In the face of this situation, Air Mauritius has had to undertake an urgent structural review of the company's operations so as to be able to cope with the fuel crisis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that over and above the company's fuel hedging activities and fuel adjustments surcharges, the following steps have been taken –

- a critical review of all routes across the network to adjust frequencies and seat capacity in line with demand;
- the cancellation of weak flights where costs have become too large to justify continued services at the frequencies operated;
- the operation of flights in combination with other complementary points in order to better serve the markets in the changed operating environment;
- review of aircraft fleet to match productive demand with seat capacity and to ensure better use of aircraft available;
- in addition, to the change in configuration of classes from three to two already being implemented;
- review of cost structures in all areas, to achieve efficiencies and reductions in line with projected revenues for the year, and
- implementation of a fuel management programme in the flight operation department. This programme is aimed at saving fuel through better flight

planning, and flying procedures on taxi, take-off, cruise and landing practices.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that despite reviews of the network and fleet and the projected reduced demand for air travel, Air Mauritius still expects to grow the number of seats from last year by 1% as opposed to an initial projected growth of 4%.

Moreover, the personnel has been sensitised to the major challenges confronting the company so that the need to uphold quality services and to cut cost at all levels are adhered to at all times.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether there are specific routes which are going to be affected in the near future?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the London route, for instance and there is a number of other routes also, I must say, such as Milan, Switzerland, India, South Africa and Nairobi, where, in fact, Air Mauritius is looking at either cancelling flights which are not profitable or merging these with other flights in the region.

#### **EBENE BUSINESS PARK – BUS SERVICE**

**(No. B/655) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the review of the bus services provided at the Ebène Business Park, in view of the irregular working hours of the people working thereat.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **ELECTRIC BICYCLES – LEGISLATION**

**(No. B/656) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the electric bicycles, he will state if Government proposes to amend the law with a view to bringing it at par with motorcycles, in as much as the legal age for driving and the wearing of helmets are concerned and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **FOIRE DA PATTEN, ROSE HILL – STALLS**

**(No. B/657) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if he has received copy of a letter addressed to the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin Rose Hill by the *Association*

*Marchands de la Foire Da Patten*, Rose Hill in regard to the arrears for the rental of stalls in the foire Da Patten and if so, the measure he proposes to take, if any.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **BUILDING/LAND USE PERMITS – MONEY COLLECTED**

**(No. B/658) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Building and Land Use permits, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the local authorities, information as to the amount of money collected by the authorities –

- (a) for the periods 2006-2007 and July 2007 to date in respect of applications therefor, and
- (b) for the periods 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and July 2007 to date in respect of the licences issued under the Eighth Schedule.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly as soon as available.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can confirm to the House whether there has been a decrease in the revenue collected under those two items, that is, the building and land use permits and the Eighth Schedule?

**Dr. David:** Surprisingly, there is a decrease.

#### **CEB – COMPACT FLUORESCENT LAMPS – PURCHASE**

**(No. B/659) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the low energy consumption lamps purchased by the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to –

- (a) the number and cost thereof;
- (b) if a tender was launched and if so, the name of the successful tenderer;
- (c) the estimated amount of energy that will be saved, and
- (d) the power factor thereof.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I indicated in my reply to PQ No. B/469 on this subject, my Ministry with the collaboration of CEB is conducting an energy savings campaign. In this context, the CEB is implementing a project which involves the procurement and sales of one million low energy compact fluorescent lamps, commonly known as CFL.

The tender for a first batch of 200,000 lamps was floated on 04 March 2008 with an upward or downward revision of 20% in quantity. Following the tender exercise,

222,455 lamps have been ordered at the CIF price of USD 341,551. The cost of the lamp will, therefore, be around Rs41.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the successful tenderer is Philips Lighting of France.

As regards part (c) of the question, I would like to point out that compared to incandescent lamps of the same luminous flux, CFLs use less energy, that is, one fifth of an incandescent bulb and have a longer rated life of around eight years or 10,000 hours. For each incandescent lamp of 60 w which is replaced by a CFL of 12-14 watt, the current drawn by the CFL is reduced by 40% of the original current consumed. Thus, it is estimated that this project will lead to a reduction of energy consumption of about 60 GWh per year.

As regards part (d) of the question, the power factor of the CFL which has been purchased by CEB is 0.6.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister about the lifetime and the mercury contents of the bulbs?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I think I have mentioned the lifetime. It is about 10,000 hours. As far as the mercury content of the CFL is concerned, I am advised by the technical people of the CEB that it is significantly lower than that of incandescent lamp. And over and above that, the CEB is arranging that all incandescent lamps which they are collecting when they are selling will be disposed of as safely as possible.

I am also urging even though it is of a small mercury content to ask the CEB together with my colleague of the Ministry of Environment to collect all these bulbs and dispose of them in a way which will not cause harm to our environment and aquifer.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the lifetime and also with the mercury content, may I know what were the values specified in the tender documents that the CEB has issued? In the Budget, it is mentioned: "the CEB in association with Pioneer Carbon". May we have some indication on Pioneer Carbon? Can the Minister also inform the House whether Pioneer Carbon has benefited from the clean development mechanism and whether the project that has been launched by CEB is a validated CDM project?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Sir, as far as the mercury content as specified in the tender document is concerned, I am not aware of it, but I shall seek the information and, if available, I will certainly communicate it to the hon. Member. As far as power care is concerned, I think this is a well calculated project which the technical people of the CEB have validated and as far as the CDM mechanism is concerned, it is also well validated. Actually there is an ongoing discussion with the power care as to how to share the CDM. The distribution and use of CFL lamps is a well-known project to reduce the amount of electricity we use and, in fact, it saves a lot of energy and it is because of the amount of

energy we save that we can get the CDM. As far as the CEB is concerned, we have noticed that with the distribution of these lamps, there has been a slight decrease – although small, but significant – in the peak load of the CEB. The project mentioned in the Budget will involve Rs2 m and we hope to significantly shave off these peaks and flatten the curve of consumption. This is what we are calling *la maîtrise de l'énergie*.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to the mechanism by which the CEB will distribute or sell these lamps to the public? Will he see to it that there will be no profiteering along the way?

**Dr. Kasenally:** We thought about that and I think we will not have any profiteering because these lamps will be sold through the chain of customer service centres of the CEB unless there are some people in the CEB who have got other ideas, but I do not think so.

*(Interruptions)*

I hope not! We are setting checks and balances to ensure that we do sell these and this programme was effective. We do not want any hanky-panky. This House will not accept it and I will certainly not accept it.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether all these lamps purchased are in perfect condition?

**Dr. Kasenally:** As far as this project is concerned, everything will have to be validated. We do not want any of these lamps which are of questionable efficacy.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the disposal of those lamps, I am not convinced at all. That is the reason I asked the question with regard to the mercury content of those lamps and if we multiply it with the million of those bulbs, you can imagine the amount of mercury that will be deposited in our landfill. We know that we do not have a hazardous landfill in the country at present. May I know from the Minister where those lamps will be disposed of?

**Dr. Kasenally:** In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far all these incandescent lamps have been thrown around in the country; they contain much more mercury and no attention was paid to it. In fact, all these incandescent lamps had much a higher content of mercury and it is to the credit of my Ministry and the CEB that they have gone around and investigated and they found it to be much less. Even then we are deciding to take some steps as we are much more environmentally conscious than we were 10 or 20 years ago.

**ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS**  
- **SHARES DISTRIBUTION, ANNUAL GRANTS, ETC**

(No. B/660) Mr S. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the 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.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CENTRAL SLAUGHTER HOUSE – CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

(No. B/661) Mr S. 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 conceptualized;
- (b) the estimated initial cost and the estimated actual cost thereof;
- (c) the amount of money disbursed, as at todate and
- (d) the present status thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (WWMA)**  
– **TREATMENT PLANTS**

(No. B/662) Mr S. 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 todate and
- (b) if his Ministry is fully satisfied with the overall operation and maintenance operation thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### OLD AGE PENSION – BENEFICIARIES

**(No. B/663) Mr S. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister 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 todate –

- (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 in the future.

*(Withdrawn)*

### CAMP THOREL - BUS PARK

**(No. B/664) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the new Bus Park at Camp Thorel, he will state if he will consider –

- (a) the resurfacing of the access leading thereto and
- (b) the construction of drains in the vicinity thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### BONNE VEINE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE – HANDRAILS & DRAINS

**(No. B/665) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the village of Bonne Veine, Quartier Militaire, he will state if he will consider –

- (a) reinstating the damaged handrails along Community Road and
- (b) covering the existing drains with concrete slabs.

*(Withdrawn)*

### BICYCLES – TRANSPORT MEANS

**(No. B/666) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, he will state if he will consider proposing measures to make –

- (a) bicycles become a popular form of transport and
- (b) cycling a recreation sport and lifestyle option, in view of the rise in the price of petrol and the growing awareness of environmental issues.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **PORT LOUIS NORTH/MONTAGE LONGUE – DRAINS, HUMPS, ETC.**

**(No. B/667) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North and Montage Longue, he will state if it is proposed to –

- (a) construct covered drains;
- (b) provide humps, traffic signs and handrails along the main road of Notre Dame, and
- (c) construct a traffic island near Pont La Chainé, Notre Dame.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/637)*

### **WASTE WATER TAX – RELIGIOUS & CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS**

**(No. B/668) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the waste water tax, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if any religious or charitable institutions are in arrears thereof and, if so
  - (i) the amount thereof, in each case and
  - (ii) the number of religious or charitable institutions which have been issued with a formal notice and
- (b) if he will consider exempting the registered religious and charitable institutions from the payment thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **FOREIGN WORKERS – NUMBER**

**(No. B/669) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

whether, in regard to the male and female foreign workers, he will state the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) sectors where they are employed, and
- (b) their country of origin.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to record available in my Ministry, as at 31 May 2008, there were 24,408 male and 12,369 female foreign workers holding a valid work permit authorizing them to take up employment in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, with your permission, I am tabling the information sought for and I wish to indicate that around 75% of the foreign workers are employed in the manufacturing sector. Moreover, the majority of foreign workers come from India and China.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the Minister whether he can give us an indication of the number of foreign workers in the construction sector.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** It is in the paper that I am going to table.

#### **MHC – LOANS**

**(No. B/670) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the housing loans disbursed by the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd. for each of the calendar years 2003 to 2008, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to –

- (a) the number of beneficiaries thereof and
- (b) the amount of loans disbursed.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Housing Company Limited currently provides two types of housing loans namely, the Government Sponsored Loan meant for those households earning less than Rs8,500 per month and normal loans to those earning above that threshold.

Furthermore, NHDC provides mortgage finance for the sale of the housing units built by the company as well as Government grant for the casting of roofs slabs. It also provides sites and services to eligible beneficiaries. On the other hand, the Trust Fund is providing funding for sheltering eligible beneficiaries in the low-income group.

Additionally, banks and other financial institutions are also major players in the provision of housing finance.

The House will thus note that the housing finance market has become very competitive and lately the Mauritius Housing Company has been carrying out an aggressive marketing campaign to promote its products. Information with respect to the number of beneficiaries and the amounts of loan disbursed by the MHC for each of the calendar years 2003 to 2008 is being tabled.

**Mr Ganoo:** May we know the progress in the number of beneficiaries as far as the MHC is concerned?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Again, I would give the term that I used this morning and it was taken by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. There is some cannibalization in the system because there are many providers of such services. In fact, if you look at the MHC itself, it has started to decline since 2005. Basically what is happening is that there are some that are transferring to the NHDC because the NHDC is providing its own housing facilities, whereas before it was just constructing houses and sending all people to the MHC for loans. To have a global picture, you must look at what the NHDC is financing and what the MHC is financing in terms of casting of slabs and to what is being done by the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups for low cost housing. There is another issue also, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mauritius is one of the countries where ownership of home is very high. In fact, hon. Varma has withdrawn his question and it is a very interesting one because the question asked is: how is it that so much was given? We have 87% home ownership and we are still giving more. We are looking into this also. Let me say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a hard core where we need to help and this is what we are going to address through eradication of absolute poverty. Mauritius has one of the highest percentage of house owners in the world even if we compare with advanced developed countries.

**Mr Ganoo:** The interest offered by the Mauritius Housing is YET still more attractive than the commercial banks!

**Dr. Sithanen:** It depends. This is what I said: there is the MHC, there is also the NHDC and we give various grants. We are looking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, into basically the hard core that does not have probably the financial means to access to a housing. As I said, I have checked the figures and, in fact, we are very close, to above 82%-83% of home ownership.

**Mr Ganoo:** In fact, this is what people say: *les mauriciens de la petite et moyenne bourgeoisie* are building less because of the budget measures imposed in the past two budgets, that is, deductions from their income tax. Does not the hon. Minister think that, in fact, people do not have any interest now to borrow and build because no deduction is given to them?

**Dr. Sithanen:** These are the popular fallacies, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Saving was supposed to come down. Saving has increased from 16% to 20%. The number of houses has increased considerably. But there are popular fallacies that are extremely difficult to withdraw from the mind of people and in the course of my summing up on the

Budget, I am preparing a list of these fallacies. If I have time I will publish a book on that.

**Mr Barbier:** Is the hon. Minister aware that actually at the MHC unsecured loan to the tune of Rs100,000 to Rs200,000 is at 15% interest?

**Dr. Sithanen:** As I said, there are different schemes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There are schemes that give preferential rates of interest, that give an upfront subsidy depending on your income and after that, obviously, you have to pay the commercial rate notwithstanding the fact that at the MHC, even for this commercial rate, it is slightly lower than the rate offered by commercial banks. Let me tell my hon. friend that we need to be cautious there. We give subsidy through the budget, but I cannot force also the NPF which manages the pension of all of us in this country. I cannot force the NPF to lend money at 3% or 4% interest to the MHC and they will lose in terms of investment income. Basically we try to find a solution where the investment decision of the NPF is a viable one in the long term. We give subsidy through the Ministry of Finance and we try to have the MHC not to lose too much money.

**LE MORNE HERITAGE SITE  
– INTEGRATED RESORTS SHCEME PROJECTS**

(No. B/671) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of the protests made by the private land owners and the promoters of the Integrated Resorts Scheme Project within the buffer or core zone of the Le Morne Heritage site and, if so, indicate the stand of his Ministry thereon.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are three major private land owners within the Le Morne Heritage site: Tatorio Holdings Limited, Mauritian Property Partnerships and Rogers Company Limited.

A fourth company – *Société du Morne Brabant* occupies State land within the core zone.

Initially the first three land owners proposed Integrated Resorts Scheme Projects which were not approved by Government as they did not satisfy the planning policy guidance 2 for the Le Morne Cultural landscape. They expressed concern on the scaling down of their projects.

However, all the land owners informed that they are fully supportive of the process for the inscription of Le Morne on the World Heritage List.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministerial committee in charge of the nomination dossier is looking into the land issue.

Tatorio Holdings Limited submitted a revised project with only part falling within the buffer zone and in conformity with the planning policy guideline of the Le Morne Cultural Heritage. This revised project was approved.

Part of the land of the Mauritian Property Partnerships and Rogers Company Limited falls within the core zone and part within the buffer zone. *Société du Morne Brabant* occupies State land within the core zone only. Government has agreed to compensate them; they have signified their agreement in principle thereto. The details of the compensation are being finalized.

Government and the landowners are working towards a win-win situation.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I heard the hon. Minister right, he said that the owners of the land have agreed to be compensated. Can I know whether there is any case in Court since things have not been finalized and, if so, whether this can impact negatively on what is going to take place in Canada?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware there is any case in Court on this particular issue.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether on this very Friday that the Prime Minister announced on the news that Le Morne Heritage was going to be qualified for inscription, the MPP served a notice on his Ministry and Government concerning the compensation issue?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a Ministerial committee which is looking into that matter to find a solution. They are supportive for this project as it is a national project, a world project.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned the World Heritage Committee. Can he enlighten the House whether the remarks made by ICOMOS in the report to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee with regard to the weaknesses of the management plan that has been submitted by the Government of Mauritius is in relation with the problems that Government is having with the private owners there?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Let me explain to the hon. Member that ICOMOS has recommended our nomination dossier of Le Morne landscape to UNESCO. The World Heritage committee, where out of the 21 members, we are one of the members, is going to approve...

*(Interruptions)*

We form part of that committee. Then it will be inscribed.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is not making things clear. I understand that the promoter is totally in favour of the *demarche* of Mauritius to have this Le Morne on the *patrimoine de l'UNESCO*. They are opened, I understand, to dialogue also. The question from my hon. colleague was in a way the same as the one I put. The question was: on the day that it was announced wrongly that it is done, a *mise-en-demeure* was served by that promoter, not for the pleasure because he is in favour, but he had to serve a *mise-en-demeure*. Is that true and, if yes, what has followed?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the hon. Minister aware of that fact.

**Mr Gowressoo:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister is not aware.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to get back to my question in a different way. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the land issue, which is still pending, has been highlighted as a weakness in the management plan submitted by the Government of Mauritius?

**Mr Gowressoo:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order, I said! I have said, order! Order!

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House, when he talks of compensation, whether Government is envisaging monetary compensation or compensation in some other forms and, if so, what range of money compensation are we talking about?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be both swapping and monetary compensation.

### **VRS 1 – SUGAR SECTOR EMPLOYEES – TITLE DEEDS**

**(No. B/672) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme 1, he will state the number of the ex-employees of the sugar sector who have obtained their title deed as at todate.

**The Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives (Dr. R. Jeetah):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this question.

I am informed that 7,317 ex-employees of the sugar sector, that is, around 90% of those who have opted for VRS 1 have obtained their title deeds in respect of land compensation.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House what will happen to the rest of the workers?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that infrastructural works on other sites, namely Souillac, Beau Champ, Trois Boutiques and St. Aubin concerning 649 employees remained to be completed. 449 of them are expected to obtain their title deeds this year.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House when the infrastructural work started?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have this information. I suspect it is when VRS 1 was declared.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House when the infrastructural works will be completed and the workers are going to receive their due?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have just replied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that 90% of the employees have already obtained their land and now it is a question of time. 449 are expected to obtain their title deeds this year.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am asking the hon. Minister how long it will take for the remaining 10% - not the 90% - to get their title deed. I think I have been very clear.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have replied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

## WIND & SOLAR ENERGY

**(No. B/673) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the use of wind and solar energy, he will state the outcome of his official visit to Reunion Island at the head of a delegation in relation thereto, indicating if he will consider reviewing his policy thereon.

*(Withdrawn)*

## CHILD PROTECTION UNIT – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE – 27.04.08

**(No. B/674) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, she will state if a complaint of a case of a child

having been the victim of domestic violence has been reported to the Child Protection Unit, on 27 April 2008, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, no such case has been reported at the Child Development Unit of my Ministry on 27 April last.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she would confirm if she had intervened on a radio stating that she condemned officers of her Ministry for not having taken actions in the case of a child against whom domestic violence was perpetrated and which was reported both to the CDU and to the Police Station of the vicinity, that is, where he lives?

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't really understand which case the hon. Member is referring to. If she would come with a proper question in due course ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question has been set already.

**Mrs Seebun:** I would like the hon. Member to mention which case.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister to confirm whether or not on 27 April 2008 a complaint was lodged at the Child Development Unit of the Ministry informing the latter about the case of a child who was being ill-treated by the parents?

**Mrs Seebun:** I normally take to task where there has been slight negligence. In most cases there has never been. I don't know which specific case the hon. Member is referring to.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she would confirm to the House that on 27 or 28 April she intervened on radio stating that on that particular case she really condemned officers who did not take action. They stated that they did not take any action because they considered the information given to them not to be a formal one?

**Mrs Seebun:** If, at least, the hon. Member could give me the initials of the victim.

*(Interruptions)*

I don't want unpleasant remarks, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I am not sparing information. I am never evasive as far as information on my Ministry is concerned.

**Mr Bérenger:** The question is simple: whether the hon. Minister went public, on the radio, on that day to blame certain officers. It is either "yes" or "no".

**Dr. David:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Paragraph 22 (i) –

“A question shall not contain any arguments, expressions of opinion, inferences, imputations, quotations and extracts from newspapers and periodicals (...)”

We must add “radio” as well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** A point of order has been raised to the effect that there have been quotations from the radio and the hon. Minister who has raised the point of order says that in this particular Standing Order it is stated that –

“A question shall not contain any arguments, expressions of opinion, inferences, imputations, quotations and extracts from newspapers and periodicals (...)”

The hon. Minister is telling me that I should add radio as well.

*(Interruptions)*

I am not the House itself. If there is any suggestion or predicament that this should be added, there is a proper way for it to be done.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not even referring to the content of the radio; I am just asking the hon. Minister. It is a simple case. On that given date, did she go public or not? If she went, she has just to say “yes”. We are not blaming her, we are just asking.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister has to answer whether she did go on the radio or not. A simple “yes” or “no” would suffice.

**Mrs Seebun:** I agree, whether it concerns my Ministry or other. Whenever an officer fails, I always have the courage to get him or her to task.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, as a point of information, I personally listened to the statement made by the hon. Minister. Our question is very simple: did she go on radio concerning a complaint about a child who was beaten and that case was reported at the CPU and at the school? She said in a statement on the radio: “yes” and she took to task one of the officers. We want to know what has happened to that case.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question is about whether any case was reported to CPU on 27 April. The answer is no. At a later stage, the hon. Members asked me if I had said on radio that I have taken to task an officer, yes, I had intended!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next Question!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

### **GARDEN TOWER BUILDING – HAWKERS**

**(No. B/675) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Garden Tower Building, he will state if the hawkers will be allocated space therein and if so, when the exercise for the allocation of space will be carried out.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that no space will be allocated to hawkers in the Garden Tower Building.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether there are any plans from the Municipality of Port Louis to allocate space to the hawkers as was promised earlier?

**Dr. David:** I suppose so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the Municipal Council.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I know when, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. David:** I will liaise with the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – LORD MAYOR AND  
COUNCILLORS – OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

**(No. B/676) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to each of the overseas missions undertaken by the Lord Mayor and the Councillors of the Municipal Council of Port Louis, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information, in each case, as to –

- (a) the countries visited,
- (b) the composition of the delegations,
- (c) the amount of money spent in terms of air fares and *per diem* allowances, and
- (d) the purpose thereof.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a long question and the answer is a short one. The information asked for by the hon. Member is being compiled.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le ministre serait d'accord avec moi que le slogan utilisé pendant la dernière campagne municipale « *Conseillers, manger, boire* » s'applique très bien aux conseillers qu'on a dans toutes les municipalités et qu'ils sont aussi des pigeons voyageurs ?

**Dr. David :** M le président, l'honorable membre ..

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let the hon. Minister reply to this question!

**Dr. David:** M le président, l'honorable membre me demande si je suis d'accord avec lui. Non, je ne suis pas d'accord avec lui !

**WATER SUPPLY – CUTS**

**(No. B/677) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the supply of water to the consumers for domestic purposes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) a list of the regions where cuts have been effected since January 2008, indicating –
  - (i) the time, and
  - (ii) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the measures that are being taken to improve the regular supply of water.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), I have been informed by the Central Water Authority that since January 2008 until the heavy rainfall event of 26 March 2008, drastic cuts were effected in the regions serviced by the six CWA Water Supply Systems. For the information of the House, the CWA operates District Water Supply Systems which cover the whole island.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can I be made to listen to the hon. Minister, please?

**Dr. Kasenally:** These water cuts were imperative and allowed for the proper management of the deficient water storage situation that the country was facing at that time. However, the situation improved after the rainfall event of 26 March 2008. Most regions are now being provided with water round-the-clock except for the northern coastal regions and other regions which are situated on a high elevation and which suffer from lack of water pressure. These regions are being supplied with water for a period of 18 to 20 hours daily.

As regards the regions serviced by the Mare aux Vacoas system, the CWA has increased the hours of supply in order to alleviate the problems created by frequent and prolonged water cuts. I wish to point out that compared to the other regions, the catchment area of the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir received a relatively deficient amount of rainfall during that heavy rainfall period at that time, that is, 26 April 2008. I am placing in the library of the National Assembly the hours of supply in each of the six CWA Water Supply Systems since January 2008 until the rainfall event of 26 March 2008 and subsequently to date because the House may know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have recently been gratified by some heavy rainfall over the weekends and currently Mare aux Vacoas is standing at 85.4% full. I wish to reiterate that there is no leakage at Mare aux Vacoas reservoir.

**Mr Jhugroo :** Est-ce que le ministre pourrait confirmer qu'il n'y a pas de problème d'eau à Congomah, Lower and Upper Vallée des Prêtres, et aussi bien qu'à Cité La Cure ?

**Dr. Kasenally :** Of course, there were some serious problems during that period, but it is now being improved and it will be improved further once we re-establish the link between Nicolière via Calebasse to Priest Peak Reservoir. There is a technical problem in this new line which is being rectified in the weeks to come.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Is the Minister aware that some households in Congomah get only two hours water supply per day?

**Dr. Kasenally:** This was the case before, but since the heavy rainfall the aquifers have been replenished and I am given to understand by the CWA that water supply has been improved, but, however, we have to have double check.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that the hon. Minister is investing much money on the Tianli project and I hope that in the same line he will look also after the water supply in constituency No. 4

**Dr. Kasenally:** I am not going to do any demagogy, but we look after all areas to the best of our ability.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I kindly ask the hon. Minister if he will consider the possibility to look into the water supply, particularly in the railway road in Bel Air where at present there are cuts in the water supply between 9 to 4 o'clock? In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the CWA has just changed the pipes and still cuts are persisting. Could the hon. Minister look into this matter?

**Dr. Kasenally:** These cuts should not happen, as the hon. Member has said. I have to check it. I cannot be responsible for each and every region. However, they gave me an answer where they say it was 24 hrs. I did not believe them. I sent it back because I personally know where the problems are. The pipes have been changed, there should be no problem in the East because there has been a lot of rainfall there and all the aquifers should be full.

**Mr Gunness:** Can the hon. Minister check mainly at Montée Bastille, Trou d'Eau Douce, because the people complain – I don't know what is the technicality – that water is diverted to hotels which are given priority and they have water cuts in the region?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think water should be diverted to the detriment of the population. If need be, I'll go and see for myself. I will also have an enquiry carried out to see whether there is any foundation to this allegation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will allow a last supplementary question because it concerns our Constituency as well.

**Mr Soodhun:** Thank you, Sir. I am sure the hon. Minister is fully aware that two days back at Highlands there was a water cut from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. I would suggest that the hon. Minister, together with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and all the other colleagues of the Constituency, pay a visit in order to bring a solution to the problem.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as Highlands is concerned, it is at a higher level and the water supply there will be from 5 o'clock till 10 o'clock and over the weekend it is until 12 o'clock. It is not 24-hour round the clock, but they get significant amount of water for at least 18 hours per day. There was also a problem at Mesnil recently and they nearly caused a riot there...

*(Interruptions)*

But there was one guy who did not do his job properly and I think he will be sacked soon.

## MINORS – SHELTERS

**(No. B/678) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the minors presently living in shelters, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Child Development Unit –

- (a) a list thereof, and
- (b) information as to the cases in which the parents are being prosecuted.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two shelters which operate under the aegis of this Ministry, one is at Albion and the other one is at Forest Side.

As regards part (a) of the question, in the interest of minors the list cannot be made public.

As regards part (b) of the question, 16 cases have been referred to the Police for prosecution.

**Mrs Martin:** May I know from the hon. Minister how many minors are actually living in those two shelters?

**Mrs Seebun:** There are 28 at Forest Side and 85 at Albion.

**Mrs Martin:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether all those minors are actually attending school?

**Mrs Seebun:** There are 22 babies. Concerning those eligible for school, all of them are attending school and those who are above 12 are getting the IT facilities.

**Mrs Martin:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether those children are attending the school to which they had been admitted or in new schools?

**Mrs Seebun:** Most of them are admitted to new schools which are very near to the shelter, but not to the one they had been attending before the problem arose.

**Mrs Martin:** In that case, can the hon. Minister say whether the former school is being informed because this creates a lot of problems?

**Mrs Seebun:** Of course, the school must have been informed. I suppose so, because normally it should be like that.

**Mrs Perrier:** The hon. Minister said that there are 85 minors in Albion. I would like to know how many girls and boys there are and also the number of bedrooms to accommodate these 85 children?

**Mrs Seebun:** There are 33 boys and 24 girls. I must be very frank, the shelter is overcrowded and we are very shortly moving to the shelter at Pointe-aux-Sables. According to the contract, additional works were supposed to be completed on 08 June.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the hon. Minister confirm that some of the minors are in the shelters, at least at Forest Side, for at least 10 years and nothing has been done at the level of her Ministry to place them elsewhere?

**Mrs Seebun:** I don't think the hon. Member is right. But, as far as I know, the inmates get the necessary training so that they can stand on their own feet. They are encouraged to get training, to earn their living and even to get married later.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** The minors are placed there temporarily; they are not supposed to stay there all the time. What is being done at the level of her Ministry to place them elsewhere after that temporary period is over?

**Mrs Seebun:** We monitor the situation and deal it on a case to case basis.

**Mrs Martin:** Can the hon. Minister say whether she is aware that some former schools phone the parents to ask where their children are causing a lot of embarrassment for the parents to answer them? Does she have any official mechanism to monitor if the former school has been made aware that the student has gone to another school?

**Mrs Seebun:** I shall inquire and do the needful so that all schools are informed where the children are.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a particular security service for these children to attend schools?

**Mrs Seebun:** We normally have proper security and transport facilities to ensure the security of these children.

**Mrs Perrier:** Can the hon. Minister tell us if the foster care project has been cancelled or is still ongoing?

**Mrs Seebun:** The foster care project is on. On the contrary, we used to pay Rs1,400 per month and we have increased it to Rs1,500. Instead of children being sent to shelters, we prefer them to be adopted by foster parents where they get a family atmosphere and can grow up properly.

**Mr Jhugroo:** The hon. Minister mentioned earlier on that the shelter at Albion is overcrowded. Can I know how many beds there are in this shelter?

**Mrs Seebun:** We have adequate beds; at least the beds are not overcrowded.  
(*Interruptions*)

**Mrs Martin:** With regard to part (b) of the question, in cases where the prosecution is over, the parents are proved innocent and the children go back to their families, may we know what is made to ensure that these children reintegrate the former schools?

**Mrs Seebun:** This is a very long exercise. We operate in the interest of the child. When we feel that the house has a conducive environment for the child, then we introduce the child back to the house. And even after the child goes back home, we do a monitoring to ensure the safety of the child.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!

**Mrs Labelle:** The hon. Minister has mentioned that the children in these centres are encouraged to get married. Can the hon. Minister give us some details? Do the centres arrange for meetings with prospective partners?

**Mrs Seebun:** The hon. Member being a woman, she must understand that all girls have got a legitimate right to dream of marriage, get married and have a home.  
(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** And boys also! The hon. Minister meant boys and girls, not only girls. Next question!

### CONSTITUENCY NO. 17 – NHDC COMPLEXES

(No. B/679) **Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the NHDC complexes in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to, in each case -
  - (i) the date of construction, and
  - (ii) the number of inhabitants living thereat, and
- (b) state if he is aware of the infrastructural problems which the inhabitants are facing and, if so, indicate the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the requested pieces of information will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, I am not aware at the level of my Ministry, of any reported infrastructural problems being faced by the inhabitants of NHDC complexes in the Constituency No. 17. However, I am informed that inhabitants of La Colombie Housing Estate, Cité Atlee, have complained to the NHDC of the deplorable state of the water reticulation network, and have requested individual metres from the CWA.

I am further informed that there is an ongoing court case between NHDC and the CWA on this issue.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) (i) and (a) (ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the requested pieces of information will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am not aware at the level of my Ministry, of any reported infrastructural problems being faced by the inhabitants of NHDC complexes in the Constituency No. 17.

However, I am informed that the inhabitants of La Colombie Housing Estate, Cité Atlee, have complained to the NHDC of the deplorable state of the water reticulation network, and have requested individual meters from the CWA.

I am further informed there is an ongoing court case between NHDC and the CWA on this issue.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that he was not aware that there were infrastructural problems in the NHDC complexes. May I ask him whether he would look into the problem? Because there are actually a number of different problems in the NHDC complexes, including the water system and the environment.

**Mr Dulull:** I did mention in my answer that we have problems in the water reticulation system. As for the environment, we mentioned that they should have the syndic to look after the well-being of the estate and it is for the inhabitants to maintain a sound environment.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that the Minister is a caring Minister. Can I know whether he has visited the NHDC complexes in Curepipe, and if yes, when?

**Mr Dulull:** I don't know what the remarks of the hon. Member were meant for. I think he should know when to speak and when not to speak. Silence is golden for some!

## ARTISTS – FINANCIAL SCHEME

**(No. B/680) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if his Ministry has a financial scheme to promote artistic creativity and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the categories of artists targeted, and
- (b) the number of artists who have benefited from same, since January 2008 to date.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a financial scheme to promote artistic creativity and cultural products exists at the Ministry of Arts and Culture. The scheme is meant to help artists, creators and performers.

A financial assistance of up to a maximum of Rs15,000 is provided according to the following criteria of eligibility –

- (a) artists should be registered with the Ministry of Arts and Culture;
- (b) artists should show originality and creativity in their projects;
- (c) the projects should be relevant to local context and themes;
- (d) the project should aim at promoting and preserving our cultural heritage, and
- (e) promote art and culture in general.

They are also eligible for a loan of up to a maximum of Rs25,000 from the Development Bank of Mauritius at a preferential rate of interest of 5% per annum per project.

Since January 2008, 41 artists have benefited from the scheme. Twenty (20) applications will be evaluated at the next meeting of the Committee on Assistance Scheme.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister how many artists are actually registered at the Ministry?

**Mr Gowressoo:** I don't know the exact number, but there are many artists.

**Mrs Martin:** May I know from the hon. Minister how many artists have actually submitted projects to the Ministry?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just replied that 41 artists have already benefited from the scheme and 20 applications will be evaluated at the next meeting of the committee on Assistance Scheme.

**Mrs Martin:** May I know from the hon. Minister what are the different requirements, apart from those he mentioned, which make a project eligible?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already explained that it is according to the criteria.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a set of criteria.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question was: what were the other measures apart from the measures which the hon. Minister mentioned. May I ask him whether in the set of criteria that are asked of the artists, it is also asked of them how much their wife earns as a salary?

**Mr Gowressoo:** I am not aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Martin:** Can I ask the Minister to look into that matter because many artists have actually experienced this problem?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is: whether the salaries of the spouses also are to be taken into consideration, if I may put it like that. Is it yes or no?

**Mr Gowressoo:** I have to check, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Martin:** Can the hon. Minister, therefore, inquire into this?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Yes.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE – PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

(No. B/681) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the pre-primary schools under the aegis of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to –

- (a) the number of children who have been admitted in January 2008 in each establishment;
- (b) the number of children in each school;
- (c) the number of pre-primary teachers per school, and
- (d) if any of those pre-primary schools are in need of repair works.

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Municipality of Curepipe that there are two Pre-primary schools...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, I said!

**Dr. David:** ...under the aegis of the Council, namely the Malherbes Pre-primary school and the Casernes Pre-primary school.

With regard to parts (a) to (c) of the question, ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I said order!

**Dr. David:** ... I am informed that 12 children...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon Soodhun!

*(Interruptions)*

You withdraw what you have said just now.

**Mr Soodhun:** I withdraw.

**Dr. David:** With regard to parts (a) to (c) of the question, I am informed that 12 children have been admitted in Malherbes...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order, I said! I said order! Hon. Soodhun! Hon. Soodhun, you look at me! You stop now! And the hon. Minister also.

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Soodhun, that is the very last warning that I am giving to both of you.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. David:** It is for the third time that I am trying to reply, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know.

**Dr. David:** With regard to parts (a) to (c) of the question, I am informed that 12 children have been admitted in Malherbes Pre-primary school and 11 children have been admitted in Casernes Pre-primary school in January 2008. Each establishment comprises 27 children and two teachers.

For part (d) of the question, I have been informed that an amount of Rs200,000 has been earmarked by the Municipal Council of Curepipe for financial year 2008/2009 for renovation works in both schools. Renovation works for Casernes Pre-primary school includes painting, placing of tiles and upgrading of yard whilst at Malherbes Pre-primary school new playground equipment will be fixed.

**Mrs Martin:** May I ask the hon. Minister what is the actual capacity of those two pre-primary schools?

**Dr. David:** I am not aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will check.

**Mrs Martin:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the case of Casernes Pre-primary school, he is aware that it is actually the roof which needs repair more than the painting, the tiles replacement and upgrading? because the roof is actually threatening to fall on the heads of the children.

**Dr. David:** I'll certainly look into it. But from the information I have, for Casernes Pre-primary school renovation works consist of placing of tiles and painting of building, equipment for outdoor playground, cleaning of backyard. If there is a problem with the roof, I'll certainly look into it.

**Mrs Labelle:** From the information given by the hon. Minister, we see that the intake is very low. Has the Municipality set up an inquiry to see the reason behind such a low intake at these schools?

**Dr. David:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can pass on the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over!

**MOTION**

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

**The Ag. Prime Minister:** Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*At 4.15 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*