

Debate No. 05 of 29.04.2008

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**MR R.R., CHAIRMAN, STATE BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD. – SALARIES,
FRINGE BENEFITS ETC.**

(No. B/315) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr R.R., the Chief Executive of the State Bank of Mauritius Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to –

- (a) his terms and conditions of appointment, indicating –
 - (i) the salaries and allowances drawn;
 - (ii) the fringe benefits to which he is entitled, and
- (b) the make and model of the car put at his disposal.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the person being referred to by the hon. Member is the Chairman of the SBM group rather than the Chief Executive of the State Bank of Mauritius Ltd.

As the House is aware, SBM is a publicly listed company carrying out banking activities as per the Banking Act.

As a listed company, it has to abide by the Listing Rules of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and, as such, cannot disclose any specific information or make any specific statement other than in the manner prescribed by the Listing Rules of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, through official announcements and other periodical publications.

In these circumstances, it would not be appropriate to disclose the information that is being asked for.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether ...

Mr Speaker: Can I inform the hon. Member that once the Deputy Prime Minister has stated that he is not prepared to give the information, I cannot, according to the rules, allow any additional or supplementary question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, I said.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo! Unless you withdraw what you have said as it is an imputation of motive on the Chair or you get out of this House!

(Interruptions)

I gave a ruling, you cannot challenge it unless you withdraw what you have said you get out of this House!

Mr Jhugroo: I withdraw the Chair.

(Interruptions)

I withdraw to the Chair.

Mr Speaker: You withdraw the imputation of motive made to the Chair?

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: The hon. Member said: "I withdraw the Chair". Is that correct?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order. Order, I said!

(Interruptions)

I accept the withdrawal. Next question, hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order I said!

ÉBÈNE RIVER – BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/316) Ms K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a new bridge over the Ébène River, he will state –

- (a) the proposed timeframe, and
- (b) the estimated cost.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo: With your permission, Sir, I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

Heavy rain associated with tropical depression ex-Lola led to the overflowing of the bridge extending over Ebene River. Taking into account that the present state of the bridge constitutes a risk, especially to students of secondary schools in the vicinity, it has

been decided to include the scheme for the reconstruction of a secure bridge under the Emergency Rehabilitation Programme adopted by Government to address problems of flooding in different parts of the country.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that the scheme forms part of several emergency projects allotted to consultancy firms Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd. Following a survey which has already been carried out, the consultancy firm will complete the design of the appropriate structure to redress the situation in approximately one month. The time frame for the construction of the bridge will be about one year.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the estimated cost of the scheme will be of the order of Rs25 m.

“ROOTS OF EMPATHY” PROGRAMME

(No. B/317) Ms K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the recent events that took place at the Régis Chaperon State Secondary School, Belle Rose, and with a view to tackling antisocial behaviour in schools, he will state if consideration will be given to implementing, on a pilot basis, the “Roots of Empathy” programme, as obtained in Canada.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the project “Roots of Empathy” was developed in Canada by Mary Gordon to enable children to develop emotional literacy, that is, understanding of the emotions and feelings of children aged four and 14 and interpreting them to develop appropriate responses. The process involves especially trained “Roots of Empathy” instructors as well as the involvement of parents.

This project was developed at a time when a young suicide rate in Canada was fairly high - 30%. The ultimate objective of the project is aimed at reducing aggressive behaviour among school children by raising social, emotional competence and empathy. The project will be examined by my Ministry and attention will be given to the possibility of customising it, taking into consideration the specificities of Mauritian schools and their environment.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the hon. Member for bringing the project to the attention of my Ministry.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that this widely acclaimed programme has really gone global and that this programme not only reduces

the aggressive behaviour, but increases cognitive skills for students? Is the Minister willing to introduce a pilot programme, at least, some time soon?

Mr Gokhool: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken a look at the project. It is a viable one and, as I said, my Ministry will examine it and customise it in the Mauritian context.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister inform the House what is being done by his Ministry to tackle antisocial behaviour in schools?

Mr Gokhool: This is a wider issue, but I will just inform the House and the hon. Member that there is a daily tracking of incidents in all our schools and we have a pool of psychologists and social workers who attend to problems, taking into account the more serious ones, and they provide counselling and advice to students, parents and teachers. This is the arrangement which exists at present in terms of tackling the problems.

(Interruptions)

The hon. lady should listen when I am giving the answer!

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister since when this pool of psychologists has been operating and whether he has noted any reduction in the anti social behaviour resulting from the study?

Mr Gokhool: The scheme is already operational. We have a pool of psychologists and social workers on the field, and we can already see a certain positive impact of the work that they are doing. I would like to take the opportunity to inform the House that we are also extending the service to the private colleges where these problems also occur.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has already contacted the 'Roots of Empathy' programme? I have some email contacts, is the Minister willing to take note?

Mr Gokhool: I think the issue of aggressive behaviour is on the card of my Ministry, and before the question set by the hon. Member, we already had a proposal with regard to exercise and behaviour management which we are considering. As I said, we intend to look at the project more closely and in this context, we will recontact the authorities in Canada.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister talked about the job being done by the psychologists. I do have respect for them. But as this question of gang violence among students has been going for quite some time, has the hon. Minister himself dared to look into the root causes of this violence?

Mr Gokhool: It is not a question of daring to see, Mr Speaker, Sir, but this is an issue which is present in all school systems and I think any Minister of Education will have to address the issue and this is being addressed at the level of my Ministry.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how many psychologists are actually being employed either on a full-time or a part-time basis by his Ministry?

Mr Gokhool: There is a pool of about ten psychologists and some twenty social workers.

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister has mentioned the advice given to students with behavioural problems. May I ask the hon. Minister - because I am sure he is aware that, in such cases, advice does not give the expected results - what are the activities, if any, that his Ministry has been organising in order to tackle the problem of behavioural problems?

Mr Gokhool: I think the work of the psychologists and social workers are multi-pronged. It is not only with regard to the students, but with parents as well. In fact, parents are called to school and they are provided necessary advice and counselling. As regards the activities, in all schools we have a range of sports and physical activities as well as school curriculum and extra curriculum activities which they have to perform and which are being promoted in the schools.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not been very precise in answering my question. I wanted to know since when the pool of psychologists has been operating and whether actually he has noted that there has been a decrease...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has answered.

Ms Deerpalsing: Hearing all these supplementary questions prompt me to ask this question. Is the hon. Minister aware that the 'Roots of Empathy' programme has nothing to do with psychologists? It is a very innovative programme looking at basic human behaviour.

Mr Gokhool: I mean this is a larger project which has to do with other issues of aggressive behaviour.

DIVORCE AND ALCOHOLISM - STUDY

(No. B/318) **Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to cases of divorce, she will state if a study has been carried out to ascertain the number thereof, which are the direct consequences of the abusive intake of alcoholic drinks or related problems.

The Attorney-General, Minister of Justice (Mr R. Valayden): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

May I inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are presently working on a project! I believe, by September, it will be ready, and we will try to look behind the veil of statistics in a series of cases, including alcoholism and divorce.

ALCOHOL ADDICTS – STUDY

(No. B/320) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to alcohol addicts, she will state –

- (a) if any study has been carried out to assess the extent thereof, and
- (b) the measures that have been taken to reduce the negative social impact on women and children.

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

No study has been carried out specifically regarding women and children alcohol addicts, but however, a number of studies have been carried out on the nature and extent of substance abuse in Mauritius of which alcohol is a component.

As regards part (b), a series of measures have been taken to reduce the negative social impact on women and children including –

- (i) awareness and sensitisation campaigns against substance abuse, including alcohol among women and in the family, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women’s Right, Family Welfare and Child Development, and this involves 1123 women associations;
- (ii) empowerment of women social leaders and youth leaders on substance abuse, including alcohol both in Mauritius and Rodrigues;
- (iii) the same programme has been carried out at the level of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and also with NaTRESA for the benefit of students at pre-primary, primary, secondary, even the IVTB and the pre-vocational and tertiary levels, and
- (iv) also there is an awareness campaign going on at the level of community based programme and this includes women and children.

Furthermore, NGOs such as *Etoile d’Espérance (Association Alcool Femmes)* which is a residential centre for women alcoholics at Moka, is supported by NATReSA by way of a grant-in-aid amounting to Rs126,000 per month. From July 2006 to March 2008, the centre has attended 315 new cases and there have been 596 follow-up cases.

I have also been informed that an Alcohol Dependent Syndrome (ADS) Programme is being run by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for women alcoholics at the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre. Once these women are discharged, the psychological support and therapies are taken over by *Etoile d'Espérance*.

Mrs Juggoo: We thank the Minister, first of all, for the action being taken, but again taking into consideration that from 2001 to 2005, about 50% of cases of patients admitted at Brown Sequard Hospital were recorded to be alcoholic. From 2005 to 2007, it decreased to 45%. But over and above all the activities being carried out by NATReSA and other organisations and Ministries, can the hon. Minister consider carrying an intense study on this matter to reduce the negative social impact on women and children specifically?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to take up the issue with my colleague, the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare, and see how far such an in-depth study can be carried out for women and children specifically.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think there is a big mistake. Hon. Mrs Juggoo rightly put the question to the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare because everybody knows that when there is an alcohol....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! What is your question, hon. Lauthan?

Mr Lauthan: Everybody knows that when there is an alcoholic in the family, the whole family life is disrupted. The hon. Member rightly put the question to the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare.

Mr Speaker: Please sit down! The Chair is helpless in this matter. According to the rules, it is for the Executive to decide who is going to answer the question. Next question, hon. Gunness!

MTPA - MR Z. R. - POSTING

(No. B/321) **Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if Mr Z. R. has been posted at the Mauritius High Commission, London, and, if so, indicate –

- (a) in which capacity, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of his posting.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr Z. R. is not posted at the Mauritius High Commission in London. Instead, he has been posted at the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority in London, which is housed at the premises of the Mauritius High Commission there.

Concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mr Z. R. has been appointed Cultural Tourism Coordinator on a purely contractual basis by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority with effect from 15 December 2007. He has, however, assumed duty on 21 January 2008 after completing all the necessary formalities.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am arranging for a copy of his contract of employment, which spells out the terms and conditions of his posting, to be tabled.

PALMAR LIVESTOCK STATION – LAND REDISTRIBUTION

(No. B/322) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Palmar Livestock Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if it has ceased its operations and if the land it occupied has been redistributed to other investors and if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the investors;
- (b) the acreage of land allocated to each of them, and
- (c) the project in each case.

Dr. Boolell: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is currently proceeding with the closure of the Palmar Livestock Breeding Station. The State Land at Palmar Station is of an extent of 310.4 *arpents* comprising –

- (i) 10 *arpents* solely earmarked for agricultural activities. Six *arpents* have already been leased to one company solely for vegetables cultivation;
- (ii) 25 *arpents*, will be vested with the Ministry of Housing and Lands and have, in principle, been approved for lease to Ayurvedic Village and Resorts Ltd for the setting up of an Ayurveda Village;
- (iii) 25 *arpents* of natural wetland which may be considered for development subject to the approval of the National Ramsar Committee, and
- (v) the remaining 250 *arpents* earmarked for industrial and tourism related projects.

My Ministry is of now in the presence of 13 applications for State Land at Palmar for various projects submitted by potential investors mainly in the tourism sector offering holiday packages with holistic wellness at the core. My Ministry expects to receive similar applications. In this connection, Government has on 08 February 2008 decided that the Ministry of Housing and Lands would conduct a survey and prepare a Master Plan for the judicious utilisation of the State Land.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands is presently working on the Master Plan of the Palmar Livestock Station.

The Master Plan will then be submitted to a committee to be set up to examine the credibility of the promoters and the viability of their projects. Thereafter, the name of the investors will be known.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that the animals have been allocated to farmers. Can I know from the hon. Minister what criteria has been used to select the farmers?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, the criteria was worked out by AREU and Agricultural Services, and we have identified members belonging to Cow Breeders Cooperative Society and then individual breeders, subject to their applications. It is on a first come, first serve basis.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister seems to indicate that there will be transparency as far as the Master Plan is concerned. Would he not agree with me that, in fact, if we are to have real transparency, publicity should be given so that investors come forward and it is only those who are in the know that will come with projects?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have replied to questions in Parliament and I have stated very openly that anybody can submit his application. There will be vetting by committee, subject to the preparation of the Master Plan by the Ministry of Housing & Lands.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say why there has not been any tender exercise for the disposal of the animals? Because, in the past, we have seen that cow breeders who wanted to have these animals did not get them?

Mr Speaker: The question is whether there was a tender for the disposal of the animals.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have replied to that question. In fact, I have stated that we invited members belonging to Cow Breeders Societies to submit their application, and we have given them preferential treatment because they regroup themselves in cooperative societies. There are also other existing cow breeders, and those who have expressed their intention to go into cow breeding activities. We have chosen these people in the light of the experience which they have acquired.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister said in his answer that they envisaged to have development on wetland. Knowing the importance of wetland in the protection of the environment, can I know from the hon. Minister what kind of development is envisaged there?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. lady had paid heed to what I have stated, I have said, 'subject to approval by the National Ramsar Committee,' as it is the usual practice.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House why is the Palma Livestock Station being closed?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, as my hon. friend is aware, Government is going to cater for the needs of tourists. We expect 2 million tourists by 2015 and we are going to release the land to make sure that it is going to be used for this purpose. The workers are being relocated to other stations and the animals are being allocated to *bona fide* and existing cow breeders.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I come back to the question which was asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Minister replied that there are some 200 acres of land which are going to be leased out. He also said that he talked about it in the House. If we really talk about democratisation and transparency, what is the problem to have an advertisement put in the press saying what are the plots of land available, their purposes, how people are going to submit their applications and then have a committee, or whatever it is, to make the choice?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have stated that there are 250 *arpents* earmarked for industrial and tourism related projects. We would have no problem in inviting applications.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many animals there are presently at the Palmar Livestock Station?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the exact number, but my friend is fully aware that following *la fièvre porcine*, unfortunately, most of the pigs have died and what we are doing is to allocate cows to cow breeders and sheep to some of the breeders in Nouvelle Découverte and elsewhere. I don't have the exact number, but I can supply the information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that 10 acres of land for agricultural purposes, for vegetables, have been allocated to a company. Can I know the name of the company? We know the food crisis which is ahead of us. Is he prepared to allocate the 250 acres of land to cooperative societies solely for agricultural purposes, for growing vegetables, animal farming?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has released more than 1300 acres of land to willing and existing farmers. Following the win-win deal between the MSPA and Government, 2000 *arpents* will be released for agricultural diversification and low-cost housing ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I can't hear what the hon. Minister is saying!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have impressed upon Rose-Belle Sugar Estate to release land for agricultural diversification and we have invited the MSPA and the Chamber of Agriculture to ensure that there is participative approach by the private sector to enable us to meet our set target in respect of potato production. Six *arpents* have been allocated to a company known by the name of Aksay company.

At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

EDEN COLLEGE – SCHOOL LIBRARY – ACCESS

(No. B/323) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the teachers working at the Eden College (Boys) Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Private Secondary School Authority, information as to if a written authorization from the administration is required for them to have access to the school library and, if so, if this is normal practice.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is in the negative. This is not a normal practice.

I am informed that the management has informed the PSSA that teachers will continue to enjoy unrestricted access to the school library when they have free periods, but they should inform the school administration accordingly.

Mr Guinness: The hon. Minister is saying that this is not normal practice. How is it that during free periods the teacher must still inform - this is the main question - the administration for access in the library?

Mr Gokhool: I think the question was whether there has to be a written authorization. The answer is no. But if the teacher goes to the library and, in case the teacher is required, the management should know where he or she is. He or she has just to inform the management and that is a normal practice, but not the written authorisation.

Mr Guinness: I am sure the Minister must be aware that the PSSA in a letter dated 11 March to the management of Eden College stated that they have to refrain from such practice. Is the Minister aware that on 17 March the management wrote another letter to the teachers insisting that this practice, that is, a written authorisation, will continue?

Mr Gokhool: I am giving the answer that I have as at now, that there is no practice of written authorisation. That is the answer.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the Minister whether he can, at least, ask the inspectors of the PSSA to meet the teachers separately so that they know the real story?

Mr Gokhool: That has been done, because the supervisors went to the school. I have to inform the House that they did notice certain abuses and the abuse is that some teachers leave the school premises during school hours without informing. I am not generalising, but there have been such cases and the attention of the management has been drawn to look into the matter whereby the management introduced this issue of written authorisation, but this is not in order. The attention of the college has been drawn by the PSSA and this is the situation now.

Mr Guinness: We know that when supervisors visit the school, they meet the management only. Is the Minister prepared to ask the inspectors to meet, at least, the teachers separately?

Mr Gokhool: Supervisors visit schools regularly. But if the hon. Member insists I will ask the PSSA to do the needful.

Mr Speaker: Or else the teachers can meet the inspectors!

(Interruptions)

TROU D'EAU DOUCE PUBLIC BEACH – TUCKSHOPS AND LIMEKILN

(No. B/324) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Trou d'Eau Douce public beach, he will, for the benefit of the house, obtain from the Beach Authority, information as to if –

- (a) the Tuck shops constructed thereat have been pulled down, and
- (b) the limekiln has been rented for any commercial purpose.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/973 on this issue.

I am informed by the Beach Authority that the two tuckshops have not been pulled down and I understand that consultations are ongoing with the stakeholders including the Force Vives, hotel groups and village councillors with a view to adopting an integrated approach towards the upliftment of Trou-d'Eau Douce public beach.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the limekiln *per se* at the public beach has not been rented for any commercial purpose. It is only an annexed structure which has been leased following a tender exercise carried out in November 2006.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister referred to an answer given to PQ No. B/973. I can say that the answer today is a copy of that reply. Since August, the Minister said consultation is going on and construction will stop. It has been stopped, but today it is an eyesore. Is the Minister prepared to ask the Toursim Authority to pull it down?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not the Tourism Authority, but the Beach Authority. Secondly, I said that the works will stop and the works have stopped. Thirdly, I said that there are consultations, even with hotel groups, to uplift that beach. This is ongoing, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid that this is not an upliftment of the public beach, it is an eyesore instead. Those who go to Trou d'Eau Douce public beach know that it is an eyesore.

Mr Speaker: This is a matter of opinion.

Mr Guinness: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I put my question?

All the *Forces Vives* and the village councillors are of the opinion that these tuckshops have to be pulled down. Can I ask the Minister whether this can be done?

Dr. David: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. I said that there is consultation at the moment with village councillors, *Forces Vives* and hotel groups.

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Member saying ‘*un an*’? I will give the hon. Member more information about this extension?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the limekiln, can I ask the hon. Minister why this needs an extension, when was it done, the purpose of the extension and has this not changed the real value of the existing limekiln?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, this gives me an opportunity to answer to the question asked by the hon. Member on the other side and by the Chief Whip as well.

Let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, inform the House that the construction for the annexed structure started - not the limekiln *per se*, and the dates should be well retained – on 26 December 2002 and ended on 16 January 2004. We know who was then in Government at that time! They spent Rs2.6 m. for that annexed structure. From 2004 to 2006, for reasons best known to them, that annexed structure was left empty, constructed for a café, to be given to whom, nobody knows! Rs2.6 m. werewasted. It is only when we came, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Beach Authority then launched the tender. There were 11 submissions and the highest one got it. And now they are talking about dates, about extended annexed structure! They are responsible for having wasted Rs2.6 m.

Mr Guinness: The Minister mentioned of an annexed construction. He is in presence of a letter dated 26 September from the *Forces Vives* of Trou d’Eau Douce, signed by Mr Pierre Dalais and the president of the village council, asking that the building be used as a nautical centre. Is the hon. Minister aware of it and may we know what he intends to do?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is: why was that annexed structure built in 2002, 2003 and 2004?

(Interruptions)

Whoever is going to ask us to use that annexed structure as a nautical centre! But, Mr Speaker, Sir, why was it built? Why were Rs2.6 m. spent and wasted between 2002, 2003 and 2004 ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, now! Hon. Minister, address the Chair, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, now!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what is the state of the building now and how much is it going to cost Government to refurbish it in order to bring it into a state where it can be used?

Dr. David: I don’t have the figures, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I know that that building was left empty, unattended and probably - for whoever, I don’t know – for reasons best known to them.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister how these tuck shops, which are actually an eyesore, will be allocated in case the....

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

Mr Guinness: I am still asking the question. I am still on my feet.

(Interruptions)

If he is excited, he just has to sit down!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, now! There is no need to generate that much of heat. Please!

(Interruptions)

What is the question? Hurry up!

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the hon. Minister how he will allocate these tuck shops if ever they are put to use?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are three things. One, the Minister does not allocate tuck shops. Two, the hon. Member said the tuck shops are an eyesore which need to be pulled down. Now he is asking to whom they will be allocated and how?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, thirdly, I have got a copy of the tender notice which was published on 11 July 2007.

(Interruptions)

Listen to the answer!

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: What has Sable Noir got to do with it! The hon. Member is insulting inhabitants of Sable Noir, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, I said!

Dr. David: Why does the hon. Member downgrade the inhabitants of Sable Noir?

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Dr. David, please address the Chair and answer the question!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said!

Dr. David: There was a tender notice published and if they want to know how these tuck shops would have been allocated, it would be done in all transparency, Mr Speaker, Sir; not as they did, wasting Rs2.6 m. and keeping it for I don't know who.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

FOOD SCIENCE AND FOOD SAFETY – OFFICERS – TRAINING ABROAD

(No. B/325) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to Food Science and Food Technology, he will state the number of officers of his Ministry who have been sent abroad for training therein since 2003 to date, indicating the number thereof who have thereafter been posted at the Food Technology Laboratory.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, in regard to the Food Technology Laboratory, 20 officers have been sent on training abroad since 2003 in Food Science and Food Safety to acquire the necessary qualifications, technical know-how and experience to carry out the analytical works. 16 of these officers are presently working at the Food Laboratory. The other 4 officers are posted in the other divisions of the Agricultural Services where their knowledge in Food Science and Food Technology is being put to good and effective use.

The Food Technology Laboratory has an important function to play with regard to food safety and it is currently carrying out tests to certify exports of tuna to the EU market. The Food Technology Laboratory has, on the basis of its modern state-of-the-art equipment and facilities and the quality of its staff, been recently selected as one of the three regional reference laboratories by the COMESA to be responsible for food safety.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say why some officers, who were sent abroad specifically for training for the food lab, have been posted elsewhere?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have stated that they have not been posted elsewhere. They are posted in the other divisions to serve the one and same purpose and they are happy where they are. We have no problem. In fact, their competence is being put to effective use and everything is all right. Initially, we had a problem with one of the staff and this has been addressed in the proper manner and corrective measures taken.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say whether a certain number of officers have already been earmarked for training for the next financial year and, if yes, in which disciplines and whether there are some of these officers who are nearing retirement?

Dr. Boolell: The hon. lady can rest assured, if there are officers who are nearing retirement, of course, they would not go on overseas leave for further training. We have to see to it that this facility is being given to those who are young, have the acumen and can deliver. At this stage, I can't say who are the officers who are likely to be chosen and the number who are likely to go overseas for further training. But, what I can say is that we are doing our level best to obtain accreditation, precisely for reasons which are obvious, because many of the tests need to be carried out and one of the tests which could have been carried out in the lab, but where there are some shortcomings in respect of traceability, namely histamine.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As the hon. Minister has just said, the food lab has a very important role. Can he inform the House as to the designation of the officer who is in charge of the food lab and whether he proposes to appoint a civil engineer to head the lab?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not that we have proposed. The officer is already there as Officer-in-Charge managing the food lab. I simply cannot release certain information as to why this lady has been asked to move elsewhere. At the time that they worked in Government, the lady concerned was at the Ministry. I don't know for whatever reason, but, certainly, she has the expertise and it is being used elsewhere. I don't want to release certain privileged information in the interests of the personnel working at the food technology lab and, I am sure, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee is fully aware of.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House to which country or countries the officers were sent for training?

Dr. Boolell: In South Africa and Australia.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say whether he thinks it fit for a civil engineer to head a food lab, given the specification of the lab itself and the technicalities involved?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we need somebody who can make sure that the lab is run efficiently, that interpersonal relation is excellent and we deliver and the outcome is good. This is the essence of sound management.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the former officer-in-charge was the one who had set up the lab and had allowed it to function as it is today?

Dr. Boolell: It is not only fair to say that she was the only one; she was one of a well competent team. We are making sure that we use her competence in a very judicious manner, but for reasons which I don't want to release here, I think she is best where she is and she is doing a good job.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I be allowed a last question, Mr Speaker, Sir? May I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not think that this will create some frustration on the site of work there?

Dr. Boolell: If anything, the atmosphere is more cordial.

TERRE ROUGE-VERDUN ROAD - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/326) **Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the project for the proposed construction of the Terre Rouge-Verdun Road, he will state if he is in presence of a report on the impact thereof on the traffic for the years 2010 to 2020 and, if so, table a copy thereof.

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

A full feasibility study was carried out by the "Bureau Central d'Études d'Outre Mer" (BCEOM), Consultant, and a report submitted in September 2006. The traffic forecast covers the period 2010 to 2025.

I am tabling a copy of the report.

HORSES – QUARANTINE – LOCATIONS

(No. B/327) **Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the quarantine for the import and/or re-export of horses, he will state –

- (a) the locations thereof, indicating if he is aware of the health hazards these locations represent for other animals in Mauritius and the consequences thereof, and
- (b) if he will consider the advisability of having them relocated nearer the airport and, if so, the urgent and immediate remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that horses which are imported are kept under quarantine at Avenue Gopal, Palma, Quatre Bornes since 1990 and those which are meant for re-export are kept at Merven Stables, Trou aux Biches since 1994. Both these sites have been recognised as suitable by the Veterinary Services of the Ministry and the Mauritius Turf Club. Thus there are no health hazards associated to the presence of horses at these two sites. As regards exports, the House may note that Mauritius is one of the few countries which are allowed to export horses to the European Union. The European Union is satisfied with the local Quarantine conditions and thus accepts horses from Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must point out that the places from which the horses are imported are disease free zones approved by both Mauritius and the country from which they are exported. In fact, in order to protect Mauritius from the introduction of diseases, horses undergo a series of vaccinations and treatments and are kept under quarantine for a period of 30 days prior to export to Mauritius. In addition, once they have landed in Mauritius, they are again kept under quarantine for a further period of 15 days.

As regards part (b) of the question, the need for relocation does not arise in view of what I have just stated.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, about 99% of the horses for racing purposes are imported from South Africa. Is the hon. Minister aware of the alarming frequency of horse diseases in South Africa? Is he aware that for the last two months till to date, the quarantine facilities at Johannesburg had to be transferred to Cape Town before the horses were boarded on plane to Mauritius. Therefore, in light of all these, I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether he does not consider it proper that the quarantine be moved towards the airport so as to prevent the possible propagation of diseases.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has put his question.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can understand the concern expressed by my hon. good friend, but he can rest assured that all the necessary precautions are taken. Before a consignment is given, we make sure that it is accompanied by an international veterinary certificate, not only certified by the Republic of Mauritius, but by the country to which the horses are exported to. And we are fully aware that the West Nile fever or the African horse sickness is prevalent in some parts of Africa, but where the horses are imported the countries are diseased free and assurance is made treble sure before the horses are exported to Mauritius.

SSRN HOSPITAL – MAGNETIC RESONANCE SCAN

(No. B/328) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether in regard to the Magnetic Resonance Scan (MRI) at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, he will state if it is out of order and, if so –

- (a) since when;
- (b) the actions that have been taken to have it repaired, indicating when, and
- (c) where are the patients being channeled for MRI scan and the amount of money spent in connection therewith, as at to date.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital is out of order since the end of September of last year. In fact, the Biomedical Engineer posted at the hospital reported that various problems had been encountered during scanning by the end users. He therefore recommended not to use the machine until a general inspection and preventive maintenance were carried out.

As regards part (b), given that there is no local expertise to carry out inspection on the equipment, my Ministry immediately sought the approval of the Central Tender Board to ask for a quotation from GE Healthcare Technologies, manufacturer of the equipment for a complete preventive maintenance and servicing of the MRI equipment. Subsequently, my Ministry requested GE Healthcare Technologies to submit a detailed quotation for a one off intervention. GE Healthcare Technologies informed my Ministry that they were in the process of sending an engineer to carry out a technical audit of the equipment and that they would submit a quotation for same in due course. In the meantime, they wanted the Ministry to authorise their local agent, FTM Ltd., to troubleshoot the Radio Frequency (RF) failures. The Ministry acceded to this request.

The engineer from FTM Ltd. attended to the equipment in December 2007 but was not able to do the troubleshooting. Consequently, GE Healthcare Technologies was again contacted to carry out the repairs on an urgent basis.

An engineer from GE Healthcare Technologies, South Africa, came to carry out the technical audit of the equipment on 12 February 2008. Following his report, GE Healthcare Technologies, France, has recommended replacing a few spare parts before recalibrating the equipment. They are in the process of procuring the spare parts before sending the engineer to carry out the repair works.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that arrangements are being made at the level of each Regional Hospital to send patients requiring MRI scanning to private clinics offering this type of service. As at to date, around 300 cases have been referred to the private clinics for MRI scanning and an amount of Rs1.3m. has been spent thereon.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have requested for an audit of all equipment including high-tech ones. This will enable the development of a comprehensive programme for the proper servicing and maintenance of equipment to ensure that there is no disruption in the service due to frequent breakdowns and long downtime periods.

Moreover, for all current and future acquisition of biomedical equipment, I have instructed that there should be an in-built maintenance component in the contracts to ensure that the equipment which are being procured are properly maintained during their useful lifetime.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House why was there not a maintenance contract in this particular case?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, when the order for the equipment was placed, there was an initial maintenance contract for two years which expired on 06 October 2005. When the Ministry asked the supplier for the renewal of the contract, they refused to enter into any contract and they said this was due to rising costs and the fact that GE Healthcare, manufacturer of the equipment, refused to give back to back support to FTM Ltd., which is the local agent.

Dr. Ramloll: Can I ask the Minister why is it that the supplier himself does not come for the repairs of the equipment once a part is damaged instead of going for a re-tendering exercise? Why not ask the supplier to repair it himself?

Mr Faugoo: In the absence of a maintenance contract, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are bound to go to CTB and follow procedures.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to these high-tech equipments, there is a continuous problem of after sale service and that has been highlighted so many years in the Director of Audit's report. Will the Minister decide to revise its policy regarding the purchase of these equipments, limited only to certain countries which can provide after sale service adequately?

Mr Faugoo: This is also difficult, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we are bound by whatever procedure has been laid down.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Minister to look into that because, sometimes, we hear that when the spare parts do come to the Customs, they are voluntarily made to disappear?

Mr Faugoo: I am going to look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding purchase of equipment generally, the hon. Minister said that procedures have to be followed. As this is a recurrent event with the purchase of highly technical equipment costing billions of rupees at the level of the Ministry, can he consider, at least, reviewing the procedure so that we get the best service possible? It is true that sometimes you are buying something from Israël, when it comes here...

(Interruptions)

I heard him say it is because of the procedures.

Mr Faugoo: This is exactly what I said in my main answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, but without justifying the delay, I must say. Even when there was a maintenance contract for the equipment, it took nearly four to five months to repair when it was broken down in the past.

ST. JULIEN D'HOTMAN/BASSIN LOULOU – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/329) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether in regard to water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if the old metallic pipe, along the road from St Julien d'Hotman leading towards Camp Thorel and up to the road leading to Bassin Loulou, will be replaced by a new poly-pipe, with a view to providing an adequate supply thereof to the inhabitants.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a cast iron pipe of about 400 metres long with a 75 mm diameter along the road from the junction at St. Julien d'Hotman leading towards Camp Thorel and eventually to Bassin Loulou. This pipe is relatively old and it is subject to regular heavy traffic loads. Thus, it has suffered breakages on numerous occasions which have been mended. However, this has not significantly affected the water supply in the region, so much so that the inhabitants serviced by the system are presently being supplied with water on a 24-hour basis, as far as I am informed by the CWA.

Irrespective of that, the CWA is planning to have the pipe replaced by a new one as part of its pipe renewal programme under its minor works contract.

The CWA plans to award the contract for the pipe replacement in July 2008 and the works are expected to be completed within three months, bearing in mind the work schedule for replacement of numerous pipes under the contract.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his prompt attention with regard to this problem. But, I received several complaints concerning regular water supply.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, that's why I underlined that this is information which has been fed by the CWA. Of course, I'll go and check it myself, because sometimes there are problems in communication.

ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES/SIR EDGAR LAURENT STREET, PORT LOUIS – TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(No. B/330) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware that the traffic lights at corner Route des Pamplemousses and Sir Edgar Laurent Street, Plaine Verte, Port Louis, are being switched off every day at 20 hours and, if so, will he state the reasons therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the timings of the traffic lights at the site mentioned are set between 06 00 h to 22 00 h. On 11 April 2008, it was reported to the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that the traffic lights were switching off at 20 00 hrs and the timings were reset by the contractor on the same day.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, for a few days, it was alright. But, we are back to the situation where it is switched off again. Fortunately, there are many minor accidents with mutual agreements. It has been there for so long that people forget where is the main road. We might get into trouble with a major accident occurring.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take note of what has been said by the hon. Member. I can assure him that, since he put the question, I had it checked every night, and it is functioning up to 2200 hrs. Would the hon. Member like it to be extended again?

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was on for a few days, but then it was switched off again. I would ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he could please check this.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll look into the matter.

CAUDAN ROUNDABOUT – PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

(No. B/331) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware of the hazards that the pedestrian crossings situated in the immediate vicinity of the Caudan roundabout on the highway represent to the road users and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the transferring thereof further away from the roundabout.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, there are always hazards associated with crossing the motorway, irrespective of the location of the pedestrian crossing. I am aware of the serious hazards faced at the crossing in the vicinity of Caudan roundabout.

The pedestrian crossing on the motorway bound towards Port Louis near the Caudan roundabout is located next to the Mariamen Temple and exists since the construction of the motorway.

I am informed that, during the previous ten years, no fatal or serious injury accidents involving pedestrians using the crossing has been recorded.

There has been an attempt in the past to shift the pedestrian crossing by about 25m, but gave rise to strong protest from the management of the temple. The reason given was that the relocated position was too far away from the temple. The crossing had to be reverted back to the original position.

Because of the site conditions, it is not possible to shift the pedestrian crossing by more than 25m. The central verge which is used as a refuge for pedestrians narrows to 0.50m and it will be too dangerous to allow pedestrians to stand on the motorway at such positions.

In order to ensure safety of pedestrians, there is a speed limit of 40km per hour along that stretch of the road and adequate traffic signs to warn motorists of the pedestrian crossings.

Police assistance is also provided during peak hours to assist pedestrians who have to cross the motorway near Caudan roundabout. In order to further enhance safety of pedestrians, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has provided zigzag lines near the pedestrian crossing, which warns drivers of the hazards near the roundabout.

Regarding the other pedestrian crossing on the other side of the roundabout, a re-assessment is being undertaken.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, with due respect to the management of the Mariamen Temple, the question is that instead of looking at possible pedestrians, people tend to look at cars coming from the roundabout. They concentrate on coming vehicles and may forget the pedestrians. This may represent a danger.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll draw the attention of the Police to that.

FLOOD VICTIMS - GRANT

(No. B/332) **Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the grant of Rs5,000 to the victims of the recent floods, she will state the number of families who have benefited therefrom region wise.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the recent floods which occurred on 26 March 2008, 4,589 families have benefited so far from the special allowance of Rs5,000. They are as follows –

Region

North	940	
Port Louis/Long Mountain	464	
East		2,813
Plaine Wilhems		80
South	291	

With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a detailed list, region wise, of the number of families who have benefited from this special allowance.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she has the figure for the number of claims that have been turned down?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 925 cases have been rejected by the Police on criteria that were given but thereafter not recommended by the Police.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say what criteria were used for the grant of such money?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the criteria worked out was that, first of all, all the victims who did register at the Ministry of Social Security on the very next day of the flood and who benefited of a one-day food allowance were those to be taken on board for the second special allowance. The date limit was 30 March, and the criteria were mainly the loss of basic amenities, for example, food items, kitchen utensils, mattresses. These criteria were defined according to the requests that were made from these people themselves when they came to the office on the very first day.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table the names of the 464 persons who benefited from the allowance in Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North & Montagne Longue?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this information is not available offhand.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say how long an inquiry takes on average, so that the person would know if her appeal has been rejected or not? Secondly, is she aware that some people who have benefited from the Rs109 compensation have not yet received the sum of Rs5,000?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the second part of the question, it all depends on the inquiry carried out by the Police. Someone might be a beneficiary of the Rs109, but might not, at the same time, be a beneficiary of the Rs5,000. It is not something which is automatically done.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, coming back to those who have benefited the Rs109, the hon. Minister just mentioned that it was the first criteria to allocate the Rs5,000. Is the hon. Minister aware that this has created a lot of confusion? Because it was firstly stated that those who have benefited from Rs109 would benefit from Rs5,000. It is afterwards that they have been told that this is not the case. This has been creating a lot of confusion. Is the Minister aware of this?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Member is herself really confused about the whole thing. The criteria of Rs109 stay as the main one. These are the beneficiaries of the first allowance who are supposed now to apply for the second special allowance. There is no confusion. The hon. Member must not confuse people.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister about a case in our own constituency? It concerns Balaksing Lane in Curepipe Road, where the flood victims whom she has visited and where the flooding was shown on television have not been granted the Rs5,000 compensation. May I ask why this is so?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I remember, these cases are really special ones because, according to the criteria, which also depends on whether the family has got a commercial business, whether they possess a car, a taxi. There are people among these families who are proprietors/owners of taxis, thus they are not eligible. If the refrigerator or the television sets get lost, these do not suit the criteria of basic amenities, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the hon. Minister why the services of a special cashier that was put at the Social Security Office at Edith Cavell Street to enable those victims to come and collect their money have been stopped? It was put for two days and this was benefiting all those victims. They knew where to come and collect their money and that service has stopped.

Mrs Bappoo: No, that special cashier was put for the qualified, eligible beneficiaries to collect the Rs5000, but yet some 300 beneficiaries never came to claim that sum. Then, we opened a special cashier where we asked them, if still they want to get the money, they can come for it. A few of them came, but others did not come till now. We have been requesting them so many times and they have not come; still there are 200 beneficiaries' money being in abeyance, but they are not coming. My question is: do they want the money or they are only fictitious persons?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: In view of the fact that such exercise is being the subject of confusion and controversy, is the hon. Minister prepared in the name of transparency to table the criteria used, together with the list of beneficiaries and their respective addresses?

Mrs Bappoo: In the name of decency, are we going to table the names of these people? I have already given the number.

(Interruptions)

I am not going to humiliate these people to that level, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I come back to the flood victims of Curepipe Road? Is the hon. Minister aware that the Police has requested those flood victims to come a second time for the inquiry, whether this is a practice, because we have had cut of dates, and whether the Police has requested, in other cases, the flood victims to come to make another report?

Mrs Bappoo: The way that things are being handled at the level of the Social Security Office, victims of various assistance do come several times again and again even after any request is being disallowed. When they learnt that the sum of Rs5000 has been disallowed, they did come over again many times and they still claim that they are credible, they are eligible. I believe on a purely humanitarian ground you must be able to say: 'Alright, we will again see the case'; and according to whether the case stands good or not, then the final decision will be taken, but we cannot just say: "Close the door!" And they go.

Mr Bérenger: What is causing confusion is that the Minister was asked what are the precise criteria. She gave a list: food items, *instruments de cuisine* and so on and she stopped there. Then, later on when an hon. Member presses on, she said: "If there is a commercial activity or a car." Why not clear it once and for all and give all the criteria for somebody to qualify?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, there have been criteria. I don't have the list with me. If proper question is being put, I am going to table all the criteria, but I still have in mind the basic amenities. I do agree that with the basic amenities, there is the question of the family monthly revenue or if they are in possession of a taxi or car. There is no problem for me to circulate the criteria next Tuesday, if a question is properly being put.

Mr Bodha: In view of the confusion which has been created, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister prepared to reconsider some deserving cases?

Mrs Bappoo: If they do come back, if they still insist that they appear to be eligible, in specific cases, we can consider, there is no problem to see to any specific case. Many MPs on both sides of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, give me their small note: "Please, see to that case." I think each case is to be seen it goes according to the criteria.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since there have been cases where, after the investigation, a number of people have been found eligible for the grant and they never turned up to collect same. Doesn't the hon. Minister think that the reliability of the

investigation has to be reconsidered? The people who carried out the investigation themselves noted that these people deserved to get the grant. Then how come this discrepancy? How come these 300 people never turned up?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are still requesting the Police to give us a helping hand in identifying these people, but they are not turning up.

NHDC - FLAT OWNERS - EVICTION ORDER

(No. B/333) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the eviction orders issued to the flat owners of the National Housing Development Company Ltd., since July 2007 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to the number thereof and the reasons therefor.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the NHDC Ltd. that since July 2007, no eviction order has been issued by the Supreme Court at the request of the NHDC Ltd as such, and in relation to NHDC flat owners

Mrs Navarre-Marie: M. le président, il est un fait que beaucoup d'occupants de la NHDC ne peuvent pas s'acquitter de leurs dettes pour une raison ou pour une autre, principalement, pour cause...

Mr Speaker: Excusez-moi! La question est une question spécifique qui porte sur le nombre de personnes qui ont été évictées à partir de telle date et pourquoi. *You cannot now come and say something else. Next question!*

Mr Cuttaree: The question is about eviction order. Nowhere is it said that it is through the Court. The question which I would like to ask the hon. Minister is: how many of these occupiers have been given letters from the NHDC stating that if they don't pay what they owe they will have to vacate the premises?

Mr Dulull: The NHDC has a debtors management system and if the people owe the NHDC, they have got to pay. We are flexible in the mode of payment, but still it has got to be paid and we have to make sure that each and every flat owner contributes...

Mr Speaker: I am not stopping the hon. Minister from answering, but the question is so simple: is the hon. Minister aware how many letters have been issued by the NHDC to the *venants* about non-payment of the rent. Is he aware or not? That is all!

(Interruptions)

Why are you opening the floodgate?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Minister aware?

Mr Dulull: As I said, I am not aware of the number, but it is a practice for the debt management control to issue letters when there are late or arrears in payment; it's a current feature.

Mr Speaker: Can I remind the House in January this year, the Speaker of the House of Commons had to stop a Minister because he was going round and round the question. Answers must be brief because so many questions have been put by Members and they have a legitimate right to have their questions to be called.

Mr Cuttaree: Can I ask the hon. Minister – he says he does not know – whether he is prepared to check...

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member come with a substantive question?

Mr Cuttaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next Question, hon. Cuttaree!

(Interruptions)

Order!

HOUSEHOLDS – INCOME ON FOOD

(No. B/334) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) ask the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state the number of Mauritian households which spends over 50% of their income on food.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, based on the United Nations methodology on Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP), the Central Statistics Office defines food as follows -

- (i) food products and non alcoholic beverages purchased for consumption at home, and
- (ii) food products, non alcoholic beverages and cooked dishes sold for immediate consumption by hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, kiosks, street vendors and automatic vending machines.

On the basis of this definition and according to the 2006/07 household budget survey, out of a total of 335,000 households an estimated 48,100 spend more than 50% of their disposable income on food. They represent 14.4 percent of the total number of households.

AIR MASCAREIGNES LTEE - AIR TRAFFIC RIGHTS

(No. B/335) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to air traffic rights, he will state if he is in presence of a request from Air Mascareignes to be designated as a second national air carrier and, if so, where matters stand.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a first application for designation as a second national air carrier to operate scheduled air services to Seychelles, South Africa and Thailand, was made on 31 December 2007 by the company now known as Air Mascareignes Ltée. The company reiterated its request on 15 April this year.

According to our current policy, matters pertaining to air traffic rights are considered on the basis of bilateral air service agreements between Mauritius and other contracting parties. Such agreements provide *inter alia*, for the capacity entitlement, frequency of services, route schedules, air safety and security issues as well as the conditions to be fulfilled by airlines to qualify for designation.

The application of Air Mascareignes Ltée is currently being examined by my Ministry in accordance with these parameters, in particular, the question of effective control, ownership as well as the mode of operation of the company which is proposing to lease aircraft from another airline for the purpose of its operations.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister when a decision is expected to be taken?

Mr Duval: I hope quite soon. We have got a tricky application because on the first part we had to decide on the timing for another second carrier for Mauritius, but the main problem is the mode of operation of Air Mascareignes Ltée in that it will be wet leasing aircraft from Air Austral and there has been some opposition to this from other carriers.

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION – COURSES

(No. B/336) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to the reviewing of the courses offered by the Council of Legal Education, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Government agreed in September 2007 to the setting up of a committee to look into the reform of the Council of Legal Education. The committee comprises my colleagues, the Minister of Local Government, hon. David, the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications, hon. Sinatambou and myself.

Members of the public were invited by press advertisements to make representations on the dispensing of courses run by the Council of Legal Education. The deadline set for the submission of written representations was 15 December 2007. The Chairmen/Presidents of professional law bodies such as the Bar Council, the Mauritius Law Society and the “*Chambre de Notaires*” were also written to, but have made no representations.

The representations received at my office relate to the syllabus as well as to the examinations and results, the pass rates, the lecturers and the course documentation. An interim report on the representations made has been compiled and is being looked into by the committee. We have scheduled the final report to be ready by mid June of the present year.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House when the Council of Legal Education was set up and under the aegis of which institution?

Mr Valayden: Sir, the Council of Legal Education was set up a number of years ago and it is now under the aegis of the Supreme Court. This is one of the areas that we are looking into because we all know that there is a perception of conflict of interest. It is the Council of Legal Education, headed by a Senior Puisne Judge, which heads the examination process, and there have been many criticisms on that aspect. It is one of the areas that we intend to reform to make it independent because we want a fully independent body to look into *la formation des juristes pour les années à venir*.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand the good intentions of the hon. Minister, but in reply to another Parliamentary Question some one and a half years back, he accepted that there is a possibility that the Council will be detached from the Supreme Court and it might be independent. Can I ask the hon. Minister why has this not been done for so long?

Mr Valayden: In fact, we are also contacting many other bodies to have the necessary help in order to establish an independent body. An independent body needs not only the necessary people, but the necessary lecturers, the structure, the library and also if we want to dispense courses by Internet. We have to look also at the course itself, its structure, its syllabus, whether it will be accepted by other bodies, for example, in England, because it will be a vocational course and it has to be accepted, especially that we have now so many countries around the world that are conducting courses. We are looking at the different types of courses in France, in England, in Wales, in Australia, in South Africa, in India, in other countries of the world. It is very complex; it is not as simple as we would like it to be, it is a bit tricky as my friend, hon. Sithanen, would have said. We are contacting our friends in France. I contacted the Minister of Justice in France to enlist the help of Miss Dati and I also contacted people in England, the different Bar. Therefore, we are doing a lot, I rest assured, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are doing the needful and it will be done by the end of the year.

Mr Bodha: Will the hon. Attorney-General be prepared to lay on the Table of the Assembly the interim report?

Mr Valayden: I have no objection, Sir.

Mr Cuttaree: In the Second Reading speech, the hon. Minister stressed the need to have a new look at the syllabus because of new areas which are coming up like the business law and international law. Can I ask him whether he really believes that being given the amount of work which has to be done, for example, consultations with stakeholders, financial services commission, a Ministerial committee can come up with recommendations and solutions? I am not belittling anybody, but I am asking the question as to whether he should have a fresh look at this and maybe have a team of consultants who can go and talk to the stakeholders and then make recommendations to Government.

Mr Valayden: My hon. friend might have a point on that issue, but we are working on it; at least, to have a report where we will have the broad lines and then we can go further to enlist other help in order to do what has to be done. I have to remind the House that nothing has been done before. We have the interim report and it is now that we are looking into it. Since December 2007 we have worked tirelessly in order to come to the conclusion of an interim report and I have already given the date, that is, by mid June, we have to be ready for a final report. Why mid June? The reason is that I would have to contact my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, in order to set up the second part of it. Therefore, I am giving myself one more year to have that institution that will take care of the *formation des juristes à Maurice*.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Attorney-General inform the House when was the syllabus determined for the Council of Legal Education and when was it last modified?

Mr Valayden: I do not have the information at hand.

Mr Speaker: How can the Minister be responsible to answer this question when the Chief Justice and the Judiciary are in charge of the matter?

TROIS BOUTIQUES – AREA REDEFINITION

(No. B/337) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Trois Boutiques Village, he will state if it is proposed to redefine its area, with a view to putting up an additional village council at Camp Carol and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Electoral Commissioner's Office that before envisaging the creation of a separate village the following factors have to be taken into consideration, namely, the general features including topography, geographical set up, means of communication, general affinity of inhabitants thereof and other facilities for their every day activities such as dispensary, market, Post Office, etc.

However, I wish to inform the House that the Local Government Act is presently being reviewed. Hence, the proposal for redefining the area of Trois Boutiques Village will be considered in the context of this review exercise.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the Trois Boutiques Village Council, in fact, discussed the matter and a proposal to that effect was submitted to the Grand Port/Savanne District Council?

Dr. David: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let it be done in the context of that change in the Local Government Act together with the support of the Electoral Commissioner

CAMP CAROL – STATE LAND – TITLE DEEDS

(No. B/338) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the occupiers of State land at Kenya, Camp Carol, in Constituency No. 12, he is aware of the difficulties they are encountering to obtain their title deeds in respect thereof and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Dulull: Sir, I am advised that according to records that there are 129 lots of State land in the region of Camp Carol of which one has been allocated to the village council and out of the 128 lots occupied by families, 50 occupiers already hold their lease agreement and 25 hold letters of intent since 1985, but have not signed their lease agreement.

Some 53 families are occupying the remaining lots without authorisation. With a view to regularising the situation of the occupants, necessary surveys were carried out in the past, but they were hampered by the disorderly occupation of the site by squatters who often encroach upon their neighbour's sites. In addition, many access roads have been encroached upon, even an illegal wall has been constructed across the major access road.

My Ministry has drawn planning lay out, but due to the dynamic evolution of structures within the area, the lay outs could not be implemented.

Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, a survey of 14 lots in the area has been completed and the situation is as follows –

- (i) ten leases have already expired and only one application for renewal has been received;
- (ii) six lessees have passed away and the affidavits of consent for transfer of the lease to the heirs are still being awaited;
- (iii) some lessees have encroached over adjoining private property and documents for regularisation of these cases are still being awaited, and
- (iv) my Ministry is seeking the help of the Citizen's Advice Bureau of Plaine Magnien to give a helping hand in the process of renewing the expired leases and of considering the regularisation of the cases of squatters in the region of Kenya, Camp Carol. Further a Ministerial Committee has been set up to look into the matter and expedite matters.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I raised the matter on 25 October 2005 and again at adjournment time on 10 April 2007. Could the Minister inform he House why nothing was done all that time until that question was put to him?

Mr Dulull: We are in the process of implementing the measures already decided upon. As I mentioned in my answer, we are facing difficulties due to encroachment, missing documents, but we do have the willingness to make sure that those squatters be allocated a well defined plot of land. The commitment of Government is shown in the setting-up of a Ministerial Committee.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House when the Ministerial Committee was set up, its composition and the terms of reference?

Mr Dulull: The Ministerial Committee consists of the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment. The terms of reference of the Ministerial Committee is to look into the situation and try to expedite matters so that each and every occupant gets a lease.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, what criteria had been used by the Minister to choose the Members of Committee?

Mr Dulull: The criteria were not chosen by me, it was decided by Cabinet under the chairpersonship of the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker: That is the answer.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how is it that the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment was chosen to form part of that committee?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member cannot question the decision of Cabinet.
(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister consider increasing the number of members sitting in that committee, to include village councillors and other elected Members of the Constituency?

Mr Dulull: I will inform Cabinet of the proposal of the hon. Member.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM – INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

(No. B/340) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritian National Football Team, he will state if any action has been initiated to ensure the participation thereof at the future regional and international tournaments.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the programme of the preparations for and participation in international competitions of the National Football Team also known as Club M is set by the Mauritius Football

Date	Match
31 May 2008	Club M v/s Tanzania (Away)
08 June 2008	Club M v/s Cameroon (Home)
15 June 2008	Club M v/s Cape Verde (Home)
22 June 2008	Club M v/s Cape Verde (Away)
07 September 2008	Club M v/s Tanzania (Home)
12 October 2008	Club M v/s Cameroon (Away)

Association (MFA) which is the national governing body for football.

According to the programme of the MFA, the Club M is scheduled to participate in the preliminaries of the World Cup 2010 and the African Cup of Nations. The calendar of matches is as follows –

I am informed that the MFA also proposes to organise on the 24 May 2008 a friendly match between the Club M against the St. Etienne Football Club of France in view of the preparation of the World Cup 2010.

Mr Bhagwan: Having listened to the list of matches which our national team has to play in the coming months, can we know whether the hon. Minister has discussed with the Mauritius Football Association following the poor result we have had? Our national team lost against Mayotte home and away.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Member put his question. Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Following the poor result we have had at the Indian Ocean Games where our national team lost against Mayotte, has the Minister discussed with the Mauritius Football Association about the means to be put at the disposal of the football federation, of our players, for them to give a better performance?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I thank the hon. Member. I wish to assure him that my Ministry is doing its best to recruit a *directeur technique national* in a near future so as to overcome all these problems.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, there are only a few months left for the football matches to take place and for the Minister to stay. Can we know when the arrival of this DTN is scheduled and what is our national coach doing?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I just said to the hon. Member, he should be patient, because we are thinking seriously in this direction.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, it is a question of national interest. Can the hon. Minister say what time-table has been fixed by our national coach for our national team starts giving some results very soon?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Once again, I will ask the hon. Member to wait.

NATIONAL INTER COLLEGE GAMES 2008

(No. B/341) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Inter College Games, he will state if they will be held this year and, if so –

- (a) when;
- (b) if the collaboration of the MSSSA and the Physical Education Sport teachers of the secondary schools have been enlisted, indicating if meetings have been held in connection therewith and the outcome thereof, and
- (c) the different categories proposed for the various disciplines.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced, my Ministry is proposing to hold the National Inter-College Games from 17 to 19 June 2008. Accordingly, my Ministry is working in close collaboration with all stakeholders for the organisation of the Games.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I must point out that my Ministry had held relevant consultations with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) and the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association (MSSSA) since March 2007 in connection with the launching of the Games.

I must here highlight that the Physical Education Teachers of Secondary Schools and Rectors fall under the aegis of the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sports Association.

Several consultation meetings took place between officials of my Ministry and all other stakeholders concerned after which the dates for the holding of the Games were finalized. Government's approval was then sought on 12 September 2007 for the holding of the Games on 17, 18 and 19 June 2008.

In February 2008, after obtaining the necessary clarifications, the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association reiterated its commitment to the holding of the Games as initially scheduled.

However, at the end of February 2008, a few Physical Education Teachers from Private Secondary Schools had expressed their apprehension as they considered that the dates proposed were not sufficient for the competitions.

On 07 March 2008, I received the Physical Education Teachers upon their request to hear their grievances and views.

On 21 April, I met again the representatives of the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association and the Physical Education Teachers where I requested them to submit proposals. During the meeting, my Ministry proposed the MSSSA and representatives of the Physical Education Teachers to be on board the different structures of the Organising Committee to ensure that the games become a success.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only yesterday, Monday 28 April 2008, that I have received the new proposals for the organisation of the National Inter College Games from the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association. My Ministry is presently working on the proposals and decisions will be taken very shortly.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I have the assurance from the hon. Minister, being given that this is a very important National Inter College Games, that everything will be done, that all the views of the Physical Education teachers and the managers of the college will be taken on board so that these games be held in a good atmosphere?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can give the assurance to the hon. Member.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT – CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

(No. B/342) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the conferences and workshops on environmental issues attended to by the officials of his Ministry during the last five years, he will state –

- (a) the number of officials, in each case, on a yearly basis, together with full details thereof, including the total cost incurred in terms of airfares, accommodation and *per diem* allowances, and
- (b) the follow-up actions initiated.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister if he can give a timeframe as to when the compilation will be completed and the relevant information tabled?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, within a fortnight.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether certain members of his staff spent an average of more than 50% of the number of working days abroad than in the country?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question which has been asked relates to the past five years. It is difficult for me to come on the spot with an answer and it is very difficult also for me to confirm whether my top officers have spent more than 50% of their time abroad.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House who are the officers of his Ministry who will be attending the conference on Waste Management from 11 to 15 May this year in Edmonton, Canada and the conference on Coastal Management from 19 to 21 May?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. The question relates to the last five years, not to the coming events. If the hon. Member wants an answer, he can come with a substantive question.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (b) of my question, following all these conferences on very critical issues, I want to know from the hon. Minister what are the different committees that have been set up. For example, I take the case of the recomap issue. Last time, the hon. Prime Minister replied that there has been a Monitoring Committee. Can we know what are the follow-up actions that have been initiated by the Ministry?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have got a series of small committees which have been set up and the recomap issue also is under the jurisdiction of my Ministry. In fact, there has been a slight technical problem as far as that committee is concerned and, most probably, with the help of the Ministry of Local Government, we are going to sort it out. Apart from that, all the other committees which have been set up, we are definitely following all the different issues where my officers have been involved at the international level.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact that environmental issues are very important, can Parliament be apprised of the work of all these committees in a statement from time to time by the hon. Minister?

Mr Bachoo: I will do so, Sir. But, I need some time because that will take two or three weeks to prepare, and then I can submit.

**CAMP CAVAL, JOACHIM AND WOOTON – COMMUNITY CENTRES –
CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/343) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the construction of the community centres in Camp Caval, Joachim and Wooton, in the Constituency of Curepipe and Midlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the amount of money spent thereon as at to date, and
- (b) the date on which works thereat have stopped, indicating the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 03 March 2004 a contract for the amount of Rs162,550,740 was awarded to the then Development Works Corporation for the construction of 13 Community Centres, including the Community Centres of Camp Caval, Cité Joachim and Wooton. The estimated cost of each community centre was of the order of Rs10,968,450 exclusive of VAT.

As the DWC was taken up with a number of projects in different parts of the country, there has been delay in the execution of the contract. In the meantime the DWC was closed down and works in respect of the three Community Centres were outstanding. Works at the Community Centres of Cité Joachim and Camp Caval consisted of electrical works and other finishing works. The Community Centre of Wooton sustained damage in respect of its roof in the course of cyclone Gamede. There was need to complete other unfinished works at the centre.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the amount spent so far is to the order of Rs13.3 m.

As far as part (b) is concerned, the work stopped by the end of July 2007. In view of the decision to wind up the DWC work stopped in respect of the Community Centre schemes.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping was contacted to assist to complete the remaining works in respect of the 3 Community Centres.

The expense involved in completing the Wooton Community Centre has been estimated at Rs800,000. Works order has already been issued to the District Contractor of MPI and work is expected to be completed by the end of May 2008.

MPI and the ESD extended assistance to prepare the tender documents for outstanding works at Camp Caval and Cité Joachim Community Centres. The cost involved for completing works at Camp Caval and Cité Joachim are of the order of Rs4.5 m. and Rs4.1 m. respectively. The tender documents were ready and were sent to the then Central Tender Board for clearance on 15 January 2008. With the coming into force of the new Central Procurement Board, as the ceiling to incur expenditure has been raised to Rs5 m., the Central Procurement Board has requested that the matter be taken at the level of the Department Tender Committee of my Ministry. It is expected that the schemes in respect of community centres at Camp Caval and Cité Joachim may be finalised in about 6 months' time.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do hope that the hon. Minister has taken cognizance of the very recent Audit Report on the constructions of the Community Centres. Will he admit with me that, in fact, reallocation of tender consultancy work is costing more than what was needed to complete those centres had not the work been stopped?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, that was beyond my responsibility. But I can assure the hon. Member that we are very serious about it and we do hope that the work will start soon.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state to the House, in view of the fact work has stopped on these different sites, what amount has Government spent on security services on those different sites?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information right now with me.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that up to now nearly Rs3 m. have been spent only on security services because work has stopped?

(Interruptions)

It's there, hon. Minister!

Mr Bachoo: I can't confirm, but I think the hon. Member is exaggerating a bit.

Mr Dowarkasing: Is the hon. Minister aware that only Rs7 m. were needed to complete those 13 Community Centres? Because the project value was Rs101.8 m. and the amount paid up to now was Rs92.8 m.

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Bachoo: I cannot confirm that, because normally, if “x” sum has already been allocated, it may be that the cost goes up due to the increase in the prices of materials. But I am not in a position to confirm how much exactly is needed.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any Community Centre which has been handed over to other Ministries?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, there is one Community Centre which has been handed over to the Ministry of Women’s Rights.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister which Community Centre has been handed over to the Ministry of Women’s Rights and for what purpose?

Mr Bachoo: The Pont Lordier Empowerment Centre, and I think that we have done the right thing.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is saying that it is the right thing. In my opinion, it is the wrong thing to be done.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! The Minister has given an answer and the hon. Member cannot dispute it. If he wishes to do so, he will have other opportunities to contest what the hon. Minister has said.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was meant to be Community Centres. It was after consultation with the population that Community Centres were constructed. How can it be that Community Centres are now being converted into women centres? The Ministry of Women’s Rights has its own budget, it can construct new ones.

Mr Bachoo: It is a Government decision and we can’t dispute that.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the different points raised, ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, now!

Mr Dowarkasing: ... may I request the hon. Minister if he is agreeable to table a complete report on the status of all these Community Centres where work has stopped, the amount of money remaining for the works to be completed and the amount of money spent so far on all these issues, including security services and all?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I need some time to compile the information and I have no objection in doing so.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION FEE – REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. B/344) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the environment protection fee, he will state the amount of revenue collected for each of the last three financial years, giving details thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being tabled.

I would also like to inform the hon. Member that the Mauritius Revenue Authority is responsible for the collection of the fee as from September 2007.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have requested the amount of revenue collected and the hon. Minister has not given any figures. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is satisfied that all the hotels and boarding houses are paying this environment protection fee?

Mr Bachoo: I do not have the information with me because the question was very straightforward and I have given it in the answer.

DETOXIFICATION CENTRE – ACTIVITIES

(No. B/345) Mr M. 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 Detoxification Centre, located at the Beau Bassin Rehabilitation and Correction Youth Centre, she will state if it is operational and, if so, give details of the activities carried out thereat.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Detoxification Centre which the hon. Member is referring to has been vested in the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life since November 2006.

FLOUR – CONTRACTS

(No. B/346) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the supply of flour on the local market for the current year, he will state the contracts signed at the beginning of the year, indicating in each case –

- (a) the terms and conditions thereof and if same have been complied with and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the measures that have been taken to ensure a regular supply of quality flour on the local market as from June 2008

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply made to PQ No. B/53 and B/97.

As regards part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that following the offer of LMLC, another contract has been signed by STC and LMLC for the supply of 30,000 MT of flour under the same terms and conditions as in the existing contract signed in January 2008. As such, this would ensure security of supply up to end of December 2008.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what are the terms and conditions of the contract for Chinese flour?

Dr. Jeetah: The question does not arise, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The question is: “whether, in regard to the supply of flour on the local market for the current year, he will state the contracts signed at the beginning of the year.”

Mr Bodha: Yes, but I was saying what were the terms and conditions and what was the price per ton and why the contract was not honoured?

Dr. Jeetah: I have already given ample clarification in my replies to PQ Nos. B/53 and B/97.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister why the contract was not honoured and whether we did receive any consignment of Chinese flour in Mauritius?

Mr Speaker: If I am not mistaken and if my mind serves me right, I think all these questions were put and answered. As far as I remember, the Minister said that the Chinese Authority had invoked *force majeure* and no consignment was received. All these have been dealt with.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the Minister what was the price per ton in the Chinese contract? What is the price per ton for the 30,000 tons of Turkish flour and what is the price per ton being paid for the next 30,000 tons from LMLC?

Dr. Jeetah: I can circulate my answer. It’s all in there. I have already given all the details.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is very simple. What was the price per ton which was estimated at the beginning of the year when we were expecting the consignment from China? What was the price paid for the Turkish flour which was bought without a tender and what is the price being paid now to LMLC?

Dr. Jeetah: I have replied, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did say that those 30,000 tons of flour were under the same terms and conditions as in the existing contract in January 2008. I can circulate the answer, all the figures are there.

Mr Bodha: My next question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is: out of total consumption of flour on the local market for this year, what is the percentage which is going to be supplied by LMLC this year?

Dr. Jeetah: It is about 80%. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we use about 100,000 tons and 20,000 tons came from Turkey. Therefore, about 80% came from the local suppliers

Mr Jhugroo: Is the Minister satisfied with the quality of flour available on the local market?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member had lunch today, he can judge for himself!

Mr Speaker: The quality of the flour was on the table at the lunchroom this afternoon.

Mr Jhugroo: May I ask the Minister whether it is the same bread that people eat in the different bakeries of the island?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the STC is the sole supplier of wheat flour in this country.

Mr Bodha: My last question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is whether the STC is spending more than the estimated sum for the supply of flour as estimated at the beginning of the year?

Dr. Jeetah: *Pour la énième fois*, I have already given all the details. I can circulate my answer. It's all in there.

Mr Speaker: I think all the answers will have to be serialized to guide hon. Members in future.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS – TAMIL CULTURE

(No. B/347) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the cultural programme for the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the independence of Mauritius, held at the Champ de Mars on 12 March 2008, he will state the reasons as to why no item on the Tamil culture was included therein.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the whole population is aware, the 40th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius was based on the patriotic theme “*Nou Pays Nou Fierté*”.

The cultural programme presented on 12 March 2008 comprised, amongst others, a one-hour cultural item on the theme “Colours of Mauritius”. This item was a special artistic presentation by our local performers. It was conceived, mounted and directed by Anna Patten and Sandhip Bhimjee, highly experienced dancers and choreographers of the Art Academy. Some 70 artists from all linguistic groups performed in this fusion dance item which included all the facets of the Mauritian culture.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the artists for their very high level performance which was very well appreciated by the whole population.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not know why the hon. Minister refers to Mrs Anna Patten who is an artist; she has got a company, which has been contacted through her. I am not asking the question to Mrs Patten, but to the hon. Minister. Why is it that in the show there was no item on Tamil culture on that day?

Mr Gowressoo: I understand that there was a fusion dance where all the linguistic groups performed and all the facets of the Mauritian culture were present.

Mr Cuttaree: The hon. Minister says that he understands, I thought he knew. Let me ask him a very simple question: between an item on Tamil culture and a fusion dance, is it the same thing?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was a fusion dance comprising all Mauritian cultures and colours.

Mr Cuttaree: May I ask the Minister whether he is aware that there have been protests from *L'Union Tamoule de Maurice et la Fédération des Temples Tamoules*, protesting against this issue? Is the Minister aware?

Mr Gowressoo: I am not aware, Sir.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been letters which have been sent to protest against the non-inclusion of programme in Tamil. How can the Minister say that he is not aware when the letters were sent to his Ministry?

Mr Gowressoo: I have already replied. I was not aware, Sir.

Mr Varma: Following the remarks which have been made in the National Assembly today, is the Minister prepared to query the programme organiser to see why a programme in Tamil was not included?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am insisting that some 70 artists from all linguistic groups performed a fusion dance which represented all the facets of Mauritian culture, which means that Tamil culture was included.

LE MORNE – WORLD HERITAGE SITES - INSCRIPTION

(No. B/348) **Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the application made to the UNESCO in relation to the inscription of Le Morne on the list of World Heritage sites, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in January 2006, Le Morne was designated as “National Heritage”.

In March 2006, UNESCO informed that the Dossier which had been prepared in 2005 was incomplete.

Government then decided to set up a Ministerial Committee to rework the Dossier and to monitor the inscription process.

A new Nomination Dossier, together with a Draft Management Plan were forwarded to UNESCO in January 2007.

A new Dossier was found to be complete and was retained for evaluation.

The evaluating body of the World Heritage Committee, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has also completed its evaluation of the site.

The Final Management Plan of Le Morne was approved by Government on 25 April 2008 and will be sent to UNESCO in the coming days.

The next and last step will be the examination of the Dossier by the World Heritage Committee in July 2008.

The Nomination Dossier of Le Morne is the only one retained from the African continent for consideration by the World Heritage Committee this year. This gives an indication of the quality of the Le Morne Dossier prepared by Mauritius. I am confident that Le Morne will be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give the date on which the Dossier was first submitted to UNESCO?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Dossier was submitted in January 2007.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister then how can he mention that the Dossier was incomplete in 2005? The question does not arise.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the initial Dossier which was sent.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House how much money was paid as overtime to prepare this Dossier of Le Morne?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Can the hon. Minister answer?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot assess.

**NATIONAL PAY COUNCIL
- MINISTER OF LABOUR/TRADE UNIONS - MEETING**

(No. B/349) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the National Pay Council, he will state the outcome of the meeting he had with the representatives of the trade unions.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a meeting with the representatives of all the federations of trade unions on 10 April 2008 to discuss ways and means to improve the functioning, composition and objectives of the National Pay Council (NPC).

At that meeting, the representatives of the federations of trade unions made several proposals. Government has examined these proposals and has decided that -

- (i) the appointment of the next Chairperson of the NPC will be made on the basis of consultations among the three social partners;
- (ii) as is normally the practice for such nominations, the most representative trade unions will be invited to submit the names of their representative for appointment on the NPC, except if there is consensus among the federations for a common proposal;
- (iii) the composition of the NPC comprising a chairperson and five representatives from each of the three social partners, will be maintained for the time being. Discussions will continue, however, on the request of the trade unions for more representatives on the Council;
- (iv) the inflation rate cannot be the only criterion for determination of the annual salary compensation;
- (v) it would not be desirable, in the present circumstances, to set up any committee to evaluate the loss of purchasing power due to price increase as such an exercise is already of the attributions of the NPC;
- (vi) the procedures prescribed by law will have to be followed for any strike action contemplated by the trade union movement on the quantum of the salary compensation, and

- (vii) the trade union movement should be given a fresh opportunity to submit the names of their representatives to sit on the NPC.

These decisions of Government have already been communicated to the federations of trade unions and they were given up to Monday 28 April 2008 to submit the names of their representatives to sit on the NPC. The trade unions have asked for an extension of this date limit which has been accepted.

SALARY COMPENSATION

(No. B/350) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the payment of a salary compensation for the loss of the purchasing power of the working class for the financial year 2007-2008, he will state –

- (a) the inflation rate which will be used for its calculation, and
- (b) the mode of assessment of the productivity rate and capacity to pay.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to the Private Notice Question asked on 08 April, I informed the House that there is currently a system in place to determine salary compensation by the National Pay Council. The National Pay Council will thus make appropriate recommendations taking into account four specific criteria, namely –

- (i) rise in consumer price index;
- (ii) national ability to pay;
- (iii) national productivity and competitiveness, and
- (iv) employment and unemployment rates.

As regards inflation, the Central Statistics Office has projected an inflation rate of 8.7 percent for this fiscal year in its latest Economic and Social Indicators on Consumer Price Index published on 21 April 2008. However, I am given to understand that the NPC will be using the latest inflation rate projection made by the CSO at the time of its deliberations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, the Central Statistics Office also compiles and publishes data on labour productivity for the whole economy and some

specific sectors. For the purposes of analysis and discussions at the level of the National Pay Council, I am informed that the CSO is compiling data on labour productivity for different industry groups. Labour productivity is indeed an important determinant of our export competitiveness as it measures output per worker.

Insofar as the capacity to pay is concerned, I am informed that the NPC considers a given set of criteria, namely profitability and the rate of growth, labour productivity and employment created, to assess capacity to pay in each industry group.

**BANK OF MAURITIUS – GOVERNOR -
APPOINTMENT, REMUNERATION, ETC.**

(No. B/351) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether in regard to the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to –

- (a) his terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (b) the remuneration and other fringe benefits to which he is entitled.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have, on various occasions, in reply to questions relating to the Bank of Mauritius, stated that the Bank is an autonomous and independent body governed by the provisions of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004.

Furthermore, Section 3(3) of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004 provides that the Bank shall perform its functions independently. Section 12(3) of the Act also provides that in the exercise of its functions, the Board shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

As per section 12(1) of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, the general policy of the affairs and business of the Bank, other than the formulation and determination of the monetary policy is, subject to this Act, entrusted to a Board of Directors.

In terms of section 13(3) of the Act, the Governor as the principal representative of the Bank is responsible for the execution of the policy of the Board and the general supervision of the Bank.

The Bank in that regard is seen as an institution operating with its own degree of autonomy.

Additionally, section 26 of the act prohibits any Director, officer or employee of the Bank or any person appointed by the Bank pursuant to the banking laws during and after his relationship with the Bank, to disclose directly or indirectly to any person, information relating to the affairs of the Bank, of any other bank or financial institution or of any of its customers, which he has acquired in the performance of his duties or the exercise of his functions.

In the light of the above, it would not be appropriate to disclose the information being sought for.

But let me inform my hon. friend that these information are already contained in some publications that are basically within public domain.

Mr Soodhun: I would like to thank the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Mr Speaker: Can I remind the hon. Member of the ruling I gave this morning to the effect that if the hon. Minister is not prepared to answer, according to the rules, no supplementary question is allowed?

(Interruptions)

I am just reminding the hon. Member of what I said this morning.

Mr Soodhun: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I was going to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is whether he can confirm that there has been an official statement by the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius that he is drawing a token salary of Rs10 per month. Is it true?

Mr Sithanen: This is correct.

NHDC HOUSES – ARREARS & EVICTION ORDER

(No. B/352) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the owners of the NHDC houses and NHDC firinga-type houses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Housing Company Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the amount of arrears, as at to date, due by each of them, and
- (b) the total number of families concerned for both types of houses, indicating the cases –
 - (i) which have been referred for legal action, and
 - (ii) in which an eviction order has been issued.

(Withdrawn)

WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY – ARREARS AND TARIFFS

(No. B/353) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of arrears due by the clients thereof, indicating the measures taken to recover same, and
- (b) if Government is proposing to increase the waste water tariffs.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Can I remind the House that Parliamentary Question B/357 has been withdrawn?

**PORT LOUIS SOUTH AND PORT LOUIS CENTRAL –
SPORTS AND LEISURE PROJECTS**

(No. B/354) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the Constituency No. 2, Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, he will give a list of the sports and leisure projects which –

- (a) have been initiated, and
- (b) will be forthcoming.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am pleased to inform the House that the following sports and leisure projects have been initiated by my Ministry –

- (i) construction of youth and sports complex at Harris Street, Port-Louis, which comprises a volleyball cum basketball pitch, two *pétanque* courts and a toilet block to the tune of about Rs7.4 m.

My Ministry has already approved the designs and drawings and the tender documents are presently under preparation.

- (ii) conversion of the Office Attendant's Quarters at Guy Rozemont Government School into a sub-youth centre. In this connection, an agreement has been signed between my Ministry and Investec Bank Ltd which will finance the project to the tune of Rs1.7m. while my Ministry will contribute Rs0.5m. for electrical installations, external works and roof water proofing and will also be responsible for the management and the maintenance of the Centre.
- (iii) construction of a football ground near Crematory Road, Tranquebar. In this connection, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing & Lands that an extent of 3A00 of land has been identified. Consultations are being held with the owner, Arya Sabha Mauritius and the Government Valuer prior to initiating acquisition procedures.
- (iv) construction of *pétanque* courts at Château D'Eau, Tranquebar. I am informed that the Ministry of Housing & Lands has already identified a plot of land at Château D'Eau, Tranquebar and has liaised with the Ministry of Education & Human Resources to consider the possibility of vesting the land into my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following representations made by the inhabitants of the region for the provision of sport/social activities, I am informed that the Ministry of Housing & Lands has vested an extent of land of 735m² at Boulevard Rivaltz Street, Port Louis into the Ministry of Local Government for the Municipal Council of Port Louis to arrange for such amenities. My Ministry will, on its part, provide technical support and other assistance as appropriate.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the Municipal Council of Port Louis is considering the possibility of constructing a sports complex at Vallée Pitot.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!