

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**AGALEAN STUDENTS – END OF SCHOOL YEAR 2005 -
RETURN TO AGALEGA**

(No. I B/252) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Agalean students attending secondary education in Mauritius, he will state if he proposes to arrange for their return to Agalega at the end of the school year 2005 and, if so, will he state –

(a) when, and

(b) by what means of transport.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Outer Islands Development Corporation will make arrangements for the return of the Agalean children attending secondary education in Mauritius at the end of the school year 2005, as was the case for the past four years.

With regard to the date, this will be fixed subject to the availability of ‘The Vigilant’ and if this is not possible alternative transport arrangement will be made.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may ask the Ag. Prime Minister if arrangements could be made for either ‘Le Dornier’ or ‘Catovair’ to return these children after their school year, because as the ex-General Manager of OIDC, I know the problems which we got last year?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Member for this suggestion and we will take it on board. As you are well aware, there are problems regarding ‘Le Dornier’, ‘The Vigilant’ and also accessibility.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether arrangements could be made to bring back these schoolchildren at the beginning of the school year 2006?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, of course, we will make arrangements for their return.

POLICE EXHIBITS – RECORDING, STORING, ETC.

(No. I B/253) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to exhibits in cases pending trial, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police the following information –

- (a) the procedures followed by the Police –
 - (i) to secure same, and
 - (ii) to produce them in Court when needed, and
- (b) whether during the last two years any such exhibits have been lost or misplaced and, if so, will he obtain details thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police Standing Order 123 sets out in detail the procedures to be followed by the Police for recording, storing, packaging, handling of live, perishable and valuable exhibits, and for movement and disposal of exhibits. The procedures for handling of exhibits have been further streamlined by way of directives conveyed through the CP's Circular No. 19/2000 dated 11 August 2000.

In brief, the procedures are as follows –

- (i) A record is kept for all exhibits which come into possession of the Police. The record of exhibits is maintained in the Diary Book and in the Exhibits Register.
- (ii) All exhibits are kept in the Exhibit Room, except valuable exhibits, firearms, ammunition and drugs. Huge sum of money,

jewels and precious stones are kept in the vault of the Bank of Mauritius. Firearms are kept at the Central Armoury, explosives at the Bigara Magazine and drugs at ADSU safe.

- (iii) After having analysed the risks of contamination, loss during transit, damage or corrosion, the exhibits are packed separately in appropriate container/packing for their conservation.
- (iv) A full description of the exhibit is entered on the package to facilitate identification at a later stage.
- (v) Exhibits of perishable nature are not disposed of by Court like other exhibits, but are disposed of by the Police during the course of the enquiry after making a full entry in the Diary Book.
- (vi) The movement of all exhibits removed from a Police station for production in Court is recorded in the Diary Book and Exhibits Register.
- (vii) After the judgement is pronounced in the case, the Police Prosecutor moves for an order from Court for the disposal of the exhibits. The Court may order that the exhibits be forfeited, returned to the owner or destroyed.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the last two years there was one case of misplacement of exhibit. The details of the case are as follows -

On 22 March 2003, exhibits secured in a case of “Trading without licence” were kept at Floreal Police station. On 10 May 2005, during an inspection of exhibits, certain discrepancies were noted. An inquiry was instituted into the matter by the Central CID and it was disclosed that the missing exhibits were kept at the basement of the Floreal Police station.

On 22 July 2005, the Technical Unit of the SSU had to break open a wooden partition and all the missing exhibits were found. They were positively identified as being the exhibits which had been secured in the case. All the exhibits are still being kept at Floreal Police station.

For the information of the House, I would like to add that the loss of an exhibit or its misplacement from Police custody is no bar to eventual prosecution. Secondary evidence may also be produced in Court.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the Police secures the original exhibits?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: For the last two years, there has been only one case of misplacement and that has been traced out. May I know what has happened in the case of Police v/s Vishnu Bundhun with respect to the cassette as exhibit?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I don't have the information right now, but I'll find out and let the hon. Member know.

INTEGRATED RESORT SCHEME – FAST TRACT COMMITTEE, PROJECTS, ETC.

(No. I B/254) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Integrated Resort Scheme, he will state if a Fast Tract Committee has been set up and, if so, will he give the following information –

- (a) the number of times the committee met;
- (b) the number of projects dealt with by the committee
- (c) the value of each project
- (d) the dates the projects were submitted, indicating the names of the promoters in each case, and
- (e) the changes, if any, brought to these projects.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, a Fast Track Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to coordinate and speed up decision on major investment projects. The objective of this Committee is to take cognizance of any bottlenecks impeding implementation of these projects and to propose solutions.

With regard to part (b), the Committee has met for the first time on Thursday 08 September 2005, to examine in the first instance three projects.

The proposed investment for each project is as follows –

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------|
| (i) | Société de la Réserve | : Rs16.5 billion |
| (ii) | Société du Morne Brabant | : Rs5 billion |
| (iii) | Anahita | : Rs12 billion |

With regard to part (d), the dates the projects were submitted and the name of the promoters are as follows -

- Société de la Réserve on 20 May 2005
- Société du Morne Brabant on 28 June 2004
- Anahita in September 2002

With regard to part (e), regarding Société du Morne Brabant, I am informed by BOI that, so far, no change has been submitted officially by the promoters.

With regard to Anahita, some changes have been proposed and these are being considered by BOI.

Mr Guinness: Insofar as the two main projects for 2002 and 2004 are concerned, can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether there has been any drastic change in these projects?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I have just said, there has been no change in 2002. Regarding the project of the Société Morne Brabant, the short answer is 'no'. Nothing has been proposed yet.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether it is the first time that this Fast Track Committee met on Thursday last?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I remind the hon. Member that last Thursday was a Public Holiday and we took the trouble of sitting as from 10.00 a.m.

(Interruptions)

We sat for about four hours looking at the projects.

Mr Dowarkasing: I wanted to hear it from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister. So, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister confirms that the Fast Track Committee met the first time to examine the IRS Projects?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The object of the Fast Track Committee is to examine any project of major importance to the country and it will meet again and it will keep on meeting.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I have the confirmation that all projects that were examined by this Fast Track Committee on Thursday last were geared towards the IRS?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, there were proposals for reviewing as well, but I am not going to go into the details till Government has taken a decision.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we heard a lot about the Integrated Resort Scheme and that the new Government will bring changes in that scheme. For the 2002 and 2004 projects, can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether any changes are taking place?

The Deputy Speaker: This question has already been replied to.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have just replied to this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - 24.04.2005-03.07.2005

(No. I B/255) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if any contract involving the Government of Mauritius was signed between 24 April 2005, date of the dissolution of the National Assembly and 03 July 2005, date of the holding of the general election and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the parties thereto;
- (c) the nature of the contract/s;
- (d) the amount of money involved, and
- (e) the urgency, if any.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the question involves the submission by all Ministries of information concerning the award of all contracts irrespective of the project value and nature thereof. This exercise would be time consuming and, with your permission, Sir, the information would be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as it is available.

MAURITIANS (ABROAD) - RENEWAL OF PASSPORTS

(No. I B/256) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware of the difficulties encountered by Mauritian citizens living in France and other countries for the renewal of their passports and, if so, will he state if he envisages to review the existing procedures in order to facilitate matters.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, applications for Mauritius Passports from Citizens of Mauritius who are residents overseas, including France, are submitted from our Embassies/Consulates through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation for processing and personalisation by the Passport and Immigration Office.

The passports are then forwarded to our missions abroad through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation by diplomatic bag. Our missions are responsible for the delivery of the passports to the applicants.

I am informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that between 01 January to 09 September 2005, 499 applications for Mauritian passports have been received from our missions in France. 459 applications have been processed and the passports forwarded to our mission for delivery. 40 applications are under process awaiting submission of all necessary documents from the applicants.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I have been informed that certain complaints have in the past been received to the fact that our Embassy in France has not been giving the right information to citizens wishing to renew their passports. Our mission has been informed that they should review existing procedures with a view to issuing or renewing passports within the least delay and also to give the right information to members of the public calling at the Embassy.

I wish to inform Members of the House that our missions abroad have also been authorised to extend Mauritian passports expiring on or before 31 December 2005, free of charge up to 30 June, 2006, or for a period of 12 months, whichever is later.

STE CROIX - 9-YEAR OLD CHILD - ELECTRIC SHOCK

(No. I B/257) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a 9-year old child received an electric shock while walking between a traffic light and an electric pole in Ste Croix and, if so, will he ascertain the reasons therefor and state the measures taken to avoid such recurrence.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the CEB that -

- (i) on Tuesday 30 August 2005 at about 20.50 hours, the CEB was informed by the Abercrombie Police Station that a pole was reportedly alive at Ste Croix and that one Miss Elis Méléne,

residing at Block C4, Ste Famille, Roche Bois got an electric shock at Abercrombie Street, Ste Croix, near Père Laval entrance road;

- (ii) The CEB team immediately attended the site and, upon inspection, found that there was no leakage that could have caused the CEB pole to be alive;
- (iii) Further tests, carried out on the next day on 31 August 2005, did not show any abnormality or leakage on the CEB pole, which is located on the opposite side of the locus of the accident;
- (iv) On 01 September 2005, the CEB has requested the Chief Inspector of Abercrombie Police Station to liaise with the Energy Services Division and the Traffic Management Unit to verify and test the traffic lights at the locality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Energy Services Division of my Ministry has reported to me yesterday afternoon that thorough investigation carried out has revealed that there was no clue on site which could confirm that an electric fault had caused a voltage susceptible to electrocution on either the traffic light pole or the street lighting one.

FERTILIZERS - RETAIL PRICE - REVIEW

(No. I B/258) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will state if it is proposed to review the retail price of fertilizers and, if so, when.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the retail price of fertilisers was last fixed on 06 August 2004. A study is presently being made on the price trend of several commodities, including that of fertilizers and a decision will be taken in the light of the study.

I am also given to understand that manufacturers of fertilizers have stopped producing controlled items and have introduced new blended products which have remained outside price control. I am also informed that planters have made complaints on the quality of blended fertilizers.

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do intend to review the retail price of fertilizers.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that it is now being studied. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether Government has ever done an evaluation exercise concerning the profit margin of the various types of fertilizers, because the exorbitant prices are breaking the back of the small vegetable growers.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I replied to the hon. Members, a study is currently being made. I must emphasize that what has been happening so far is that wherever price is controlled, the suppliers have stopped producing those items. They have gone round and have started making new blends and this is probably why the prices have increased.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he can confirm that no analysis of the various components, prior to the sale of fertilizers, has been done, before distributing to the public.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am informed that product testing is done by MSB or any other certifying body only at the request of the clients.

Mr Dayal: I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that Government is entrusting the MSB to carry out investigations regarding the mixture of fertilizers, because what is good for the sugar cane plantation is not necessarily proper for the vegetable plantation.

The Deputy Speaker: What has this to do with the original question? The question is about the price of the fertilizers not about its standard.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, si je pourrais demander au ministre des finances...

(Interruptions)

Est-ce que je pourrais demander si le gouvernement pourrait introduire le subside sur les fertilisants pour les petits planteurs, parce qu'ils font face à des problèmes?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't answer for the Minister of Finance, but I can inform the hon. Member that it is now noted that with this new blending system, urea is used. And because urea is used up to 30% to 40%, evaporation is currently taking place which is rendering the fertilizers less effective. That's why planters are still suffering.

SCHOOL BUS OWNERS - FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME

(No. I B/259) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, the number of licences issued to owners of school buses, and
- (b) state whether he will consider the plight of the owners of school buses and thereby include them in the free transport scheme for students and, if so, will he state what remedial measures he proposes to take in that connection and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I propose to make a common reply to Parliamentary Questions I B/259, I B/267 and I B/268 as they are interrelated.

I am informed by the NTA that some 680 contract bus owners hold a school bus licence for the conveying of school children. However, it is a fact that a few owners of contract buses who are not holders of such licences do illegally provide the service.

I would like to inform the House that the free travel scheme to full-time students was meant to target those who use stage carriage buses as a means to go to their respective educational institution. However, I have

received several representations from contract bus owners performing school services, to the effect that they be compensated for the loss incurred as a result of students shifting to stage carriage buses.

In view of the unavailability of data on the number of primary school students using other modes of travel for attending schools, their residential address, fares being paid, etc, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources is at present carrying out a comprehensive survey to capture all relevant information relating to the bus using population and money spent on bus fares. A decision on the representations of the contract bus owners will only be taken in the light of the findings of the survey.

I wish to point out that with a view to addressing the problems related to the free travel scheme, monitoring committees have been set up at the level of the Ministry of Education & Human Resources, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizen's Welfare & Reform Institutions and the NTA as well as a Central Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry. The first meeting of the Central Monitoring Committee was held on 09 September at which it was pointed out that along a few routes, for example, Route 16 (Rose Hill to Flacq via Bel Air, Sebastopol and Montagne Blanche), the transport service for students was inadequate. The Central Monitoring Committee is addressing the problem and the NTA has been requested to liaise with the relevant Bus Owners' Cooperative Societies for the redeployment of buses to the routes where the service is not satisfactory.

I should seize this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to invite any Member of the House to kindly submit to the Central Monitoring Committee of my Ministry any views whatsoever and any suggestions he may have to propose on the functioning of the free transport scheme.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister when will that survey be completed and whether he agrees to table its findings?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We expect the survey to end middle or end of October, and then it will have to be analysed.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, normally, the school bus permits are given by the NTA. Can we know the number of such licences

and why these school bus permits – I am not talking about contract buses – are not taken on board?

The Deputy Speaker: Why does not the hon. Member come with a substantive question?

Mr Guinness: This question is related to PQ No. I B/267. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ag. Prime Minister mentioned the bus route Rose Hill via Sébastopol. I would like to inform him that we have a serious problem for those from Bramsthan, Ecroignard, GRSE going towards Flacq, because over there we have *taxi trains*, which were previously transporting students, as there was no bus available. Therefore, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he could see to it that a sufficient number of buses are put on that route?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I quoted that bus route number as an example, but there are other ones. I thank the hon. Member, and if he has any deficiencies to point out, we will be only too happy to address them.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether this free transport scheme is extended to the intra-urban transport system?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, subject to certain conditions.

BOOLAKY LANE, MIDLANDS – CEB PILLARS

(No. I B/260) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the electric pillars put up at Boolaky Lane, Midlands village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the CEB, information as to whether –

- (a) complaints have been received from the inhabitants to the effect that same are causing hardship to them in the construction or extension of their houses, and
- (b) such pillars represent a permanent danger to the inhabitants and, if so, will he state what remedial measures he proposes to take.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with respect to part (a), I am informed by the CEB that applications for approval of building plans have been made to the CEB by inhabitants of Boolaky Lane, Midlands Village. In view of the fact that the proposed constructions are not in conformity with minimum clearances, such requests have not been favourably considered.

I am also advised by the CEB that these lines have been constructed in the late sixties and the cost of their displacement is prohibitive.

As regards part (b), I am advised by the CEB that its pillars do not constitute a source of danger, provided the prescribed statutory clearances are adhered to. The CEB has also advised that a few houses in Midlands Village have been constructed close to the CEB pillars, despite the fact that the required clearances have not been obtained.

In that regard, warning letters have been issued to the inhabitants concerned, highlighting that, by not adhering to the prescribed statutory clearances, they may be exposing themselves to danger.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether those pillars have been constructed on a private property?

Dr. Kasenally: I need notice of that question, Sir. The pillars were there first, and then houses were constructed. You can imagine that, if statutory clearances have not been carried out or have not been observed, there is obviously a danger. However, we have to see how best to ensure that no life is in danger.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can I inform the hon. Minister that those pillars have been placed on a private property and no way-leave has been given to the CEB? Due to that fact, these people are facing a lot of hardship.

Dr. Kasenally: The hon. Member is well aware of the problem. As far as private land is concerned, I understand that, at the time, there was no development and the pillars were put there. It is just the same as in the middle of sugarcane fields at St Jean, where there was UBP. Eventually, it became an inhabited area, and they had to move. Anyway, I need notice of that question, and I shall investigate to see what is at stake. However, I can

assure the hon. Member that my Ministry will look into the matter and see whether we can come to some solution.

NATIONAL LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM

(No. B/261) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the National Land Information System (NLIS), he will state –

- (a) the date it was approved;
- (b) its project value;
- (c) the time frame established for its setting up;
- (d) if a land information project plan of action was presented and, if so, the date thereof;
- (e) whether an implementation plan was submitted and, if so, when, and
- (f) where matters stand.

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the National Land Information System, the information is as follows –

- (a) the project was approved in 1994;
- (b) the project value is Rs150 m.;
- (c) the time frame established for its setting up was five years;
- (d) a land information project plan of action was prepared and presented in November 1997;
- (e) the plan of action comprised also an implementation plan;
- (f) in accordance with the plan of action, tenders for consultancy services were launched in December 1997, and the firm Swedesurvey was awarded the contract. The consultancy firm

submitted its report in May 1998. The main recommendations in the report were as follows –

- (i) the enactment of a new legislation – ‘The National Land Information Act’ – a draft legislation was submitted by the consultant, and
- (ii) the implementation of a pilot project to cover an area of about 27km² in the Northern region of Mauritius.

I am also informed that the project was not fully implemented due to inadequacy of human resources.

Action was initiated for a study to be undertaken on the lands sector in Mauritius. The services of the Department of Land Administration International of the Department of Lands of the Government of Western Australia were enlisted. As soon as I took office as Minister, I arranged for the consultancy team to visit Mauritius without any further delay. The team visited Mauritius from 26 July to 12 August. During its visit, the team held various consultations and I personally arranged for a workshop to be held with the participation of all stakeholders.

A draft report has been received last week. The report is being studied and an implementation schedule is being prepared.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is committed to seeing the Land Information System operational within an accelerated time frame.

The objective is to have by 2010 a modern, integrated, secure, transparent, affordable and efficient land administration system, which system will include a comprehensive and up-to-date record of land information, assisted by accurate and reliable cadastral information.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister what were the fees paid for the consultancy with regard to the preparation of the implementation plan?

Mr Dulull: The fees paid for consultancy amount to approximately Rs2.8 m. There is an amount earmarked, where there is still a balance to be used.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may we know why, after having spent so much, that implementation plan has not been approved?

Mr Dulull: There are various reasons for the non-implementation of the plan. The first reason is the slackness of the previous Government; second, lack of staff in the Survey Division, where we have many vacancies, and third, the brain drain of already trained officers from the Land Information System Unit.

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Minister mentioned the previous Government. May we know when was that implementation plan ready? Can the hon. Minister confirm whether it was in 1998, and nothing was done?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Let the hon. Minister reply.

Mr Dulull: I already mentioned it in my answer.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think the Minister has answered my question. My question was very clear: whether the hon. Minister can confirm that the implementation plan was ready in 1998 and why was it not implemented?

Mr Dulull: I answered it in the first part of the question.

NOUVELLE FRANCE/PLAISANCE ROUNDABOUTS - SODIUM-VAPOUR LAMPS

(No. I B/262) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the sodium-vapour lamps along the Highway from Nouvelle France roundabout to Plaisance roundabout, he will -

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to

- (i) the name of the contractor;
 - (ii) the number of sodium-vapour lamps installed;
 - (iii) the contract value, and
- (b) whether he is aware that the lighting system is defective and, if so, state the reasons therefore and the actions he proposes to take against the contractor to remedy the situation.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the answer is as follows -

- (i) the contract for the construction of the second carriageway from Nouvelle France to Plaine Magnien on a stretch of 12.5 km was awarded to Messrs A & J Maurel Construction Ltée in May 2001;
- (ii) the contract also included the provision of street lighting. A total of 861 sodium vapour lamps have been installed on the project, and
- (iii) the contract value for street lighting works was Rs19.3 m.

With regard part (b) the whole project was completed in July 2003. However, frequent breakdowns occurred due to earth leakage sensitive circuit breakers. The Energy Services Division was entrusted the responsibility for the supervision of this project from July 2003 to May 2005 and the handing over of the street lighting was effected to the Grand Port/Savanne District Council on 26 May 2005. The final commissioning will be effected after the guarantee period during which the contractor is attending to the snag list.

PAILLES – SOCIAL HALL COMPLEX PROJECT

(No. I B/263) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the social hall complex project at Jonction, Pailles, he will state –

- (a) when was the tender launched and the contract awarded;
- (b) the contract value, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that -

- (a) the tender was launched in December 2002 and the contract was awarded in May 2004 to J & B Contractor Co Ltd;
- (b) the contract value was Rs12,318,915, and
- (c) works were expected to be completed by the end of October 2005.

RICHELIEU - LANDSCAPING AND EMBELLISHMENT WORKS - CONTRACT

(No. I B/264) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the landscaping and embellishment works at Richelieu entrusted to A. J. Maurel & Co Ltd, he will state –

- (a) when was the tender launched and the contract awarded;
- (b) the contract value,
- (c) the date works started and the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question the information is as follows -

- (i) the date of launching of tenders is 03 July 2003
- (ii) the date of award of contract is 23 March 2004.

As regards part (b), the contract value is Rs20.74 m. (including VAT).

As regards part (c), the date of start of works is 06 May 2004. The expected date of completion October 2005.

RICHELIEU - LANDSCAPING AND EMBELLISHMENT WORKS – CONTRACT, COMPLETION, ETC

(No. I B/265) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if works in connection with a landscaping project along the main road of Richelieu have been entrusted to the Development Works Corporation and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the scope of the works;
- (b) the value of the works;
- (c) when works have started, and
- (d) whether actions have been initiated against the Development Works Corporation for the completion of the project, and if so, when.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am tabling the reply.

POINTE AUX SABLES - MARKET FAIR - CONTRACT

(No. I B/266) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the market fair at Pointe aux Sables, he will state -

- (a) when was the tender launched and the contract awarded;
- (b) the value of the contract and the name of the contractor, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the tender was launched in May 2004 and the contract was awarded in January 2005 to Ireko Design and Construction Ltd for the sum of Rs12,991.014.50. Works are expected to be completed by December 2005.

SCHOOL BUSES AND VANS (CONTRACT) FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME

(No. I B/267) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the owners of contract buses and vans, commonly used for the transport of school student, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –
 - (i) the number thereof holding a school bus permit;
 - (ii) the number holding a contract van permit and which were previously transporting students, and
- (b) state what actions are being taken to take these owners on board for the free transportation of students.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/259)

SCHOOL BUSES - SHORTAGE

(No. I B/268) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that there exists an insufficient number of buses in certain regions of the country for the transport of school students and, if so, will he state what remedial actions are being taken in that connection.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/259)

SUGAR ESTATE EMPLOYEES - BUS FARES - REFUND

(No. I B/269) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the refund of bus fares to sugar estate employees as per their conditions of employment, he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain if such employees will continue benefiting from that refund and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to that question.

Bus fare of employees are being paid in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Sugar Industry Remuneration Order

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that the children of the employees are travelling free of charge in buses, are the employees entitled to a refund of the bus fare?

Dr. Boolell: There are several modes of transport. There are the sugar estate buses which are put at the disposal of the children of the employees and they also use contract buses. Now with the free transport, it means that the money is not going to be refunded. Free transport has been extended to children going to primary, secondary and university, provided they are below 20. So, we will have to impress upon the sugar estate that, in respect of the money being saved, they use it for the welfare and educational benefits of the children of the workers.

Mr Guinness: I suppose there must have been a calculation made. Can I know from the Minister what is the amount of savings that this represents to the sugar estate in general?

Dr. Boolell: Reimbursement to students amount to Rs14 m., buses contracted out is Rs4 m., which means that there is probably a savings of Rs18 m. As I told the hon. Member earlier, we may impress upon the sugar estate to use this money judiciously to invest and to promote FOR the welfare and educational benefits of the children of the sugar estate employees.

Mr Guinness: Is there any follow-up mechanism to ensure that this money is being used for the welfare?

Dr. Boolell: The hon. Member can rest assured that contrary to past practices, we are going to put those students first and we will see to it that benefits are going to accrue to those who toil and sweat in the sugar industry.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is interesting to hear. Can the Minister give a concrete example of what will be done with that Rs18 m. so that we can follow up?

Dr. Boolell: Well, certainly, they are not going to be caught with their pants down. We will see to it that the proceeds be used judiciously to empower those children, and, by empowerment, we mean investment in education which is the best and the soundest investment.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last question. Again, it is a lot of *bla-bla-bla*. Can the hon. Minister give a concrete example as to the plan of action, of what will be done with that money?

Dr. Boolell: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can increase the number of scholarships. We can provide them with facilities such as grants and other educational assistance, especially to those attending universities. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will impress upon the sugar estate to improve the community welfare of the workers' children.

PETROL (UNLEADED) - INTRODUCTION & AIR QUALITY

(No. I B/270) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, having regard to the quality of air, he will state

- (a) when unleaded gasoline was introduced, and
- (b) whether there has been any test carried out to ascertain whether there has been an improvement in the quality of air and, if so, will he give the results thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that unleaded petrol was introduced in Mauritius in September 2002.

As for part (b), monitoring of ambient air quality carried out by my Ministry through the air monitoring station of Cassis since September 2002 has indicated a reduction in the average level of lead in ambient air from 0.1 microgrammes per cubic metre prior to the introduction of unleaded petrol to traces, after its introduction.

FUEL – SULPHUR – REDUCTION

(No. I B/271) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, having regard to the quality of fuel, he will state –

- (a) whether there has been a reduction in the percentage of sulphur in diesel fuel and, if so,
 - (i) when was the last reduction effected, and
 - (ii) whether any further reduction is envisaged, and
- (b) if a Technical Advisory Committee has been set up to look into the matter and, if so, state the outcome thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there has been a reduction in the percentage of sulphur content in diesel fuel from 0.50% by weight to 0.25% by weight since September 2001.

Any further reduction will be considered in the light of the findings and recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee on fuel quality.

ENTERPRISES - DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES

(No. I B/272) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether he is aware that most disciplinary committees are

chaired by persons remunerated by the employers and, if so, whether he will state if he proposes to bring about legislation to remedy the situation.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, indeed, I am given to understand that many employers do appoint a person within the enterprise to chair disciplinary committees, but it is also a fact that some employers do have recourse to the services of independent labour consultants or legal advisers to conduct the proceedings of disciplinary committees.

Hon. Members may wish to be informed that there is provision in the Labour Act for the worker to avail himself of the assistance, at disciplinary committees, of a representative of his trade union, if any, of an officer of the Ministry of Labour & Industrial Relations if he so wishes or of his legal representative. In the event the worker feels that the employer has acted in an unfair manner in the conduct of the disciplinary proceedings, he can further seize the Court for redress.

I wish to further inform the House that in the course of meetings I have had with a certain trade unions in my office recently, my attention has been drawn to the fact that in some enterprises, it is the practice to call the worker for preliminary inquiry and oral explanations before the disciplinary committee proper is instituted. This practice may give rise to a situation where the worker may be not conversant with his rights in such a matter, admit guilt.

This situation, I believe, is not fair and therefore I feel there is need to take some form of action and the matter will be taken on board when we proceed with the review of the Labour Act for earlier if circumstances so permit.

Mr Boodhoo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it would not be fairer to the employee if disciplinary committees are chaired by a Labour Inspector who will be regarded as unbiased?

Dr. Bunwaree: The Labour Inspector is supposed, in some circumstances, to act as the lawyer of the employee. So, I don't think this can be looked in that way, but all this is being taken care of, and, in the review of the Labour Act, we will probably find better ways and means to give more independence and more guarantee to the employee.

CARREAU ESNOUF - WATER-CRESS GROWERS

(No. B/273) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to water-cress growers of Carreau Esnouf in Constituency No. 12, he will consider setting up a technical committee to study the problems faced by them, mainly due to the non-availability of river water.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that watercress is grown extensively in the region of Carreau Esnouf over an extent of some 30 arpents by 27 watercress planters. These plantations are supplied with water from springs which dry up for about two to four months during the period of October/November and December/January. The planters are, therefore, constrained in their activities during that period.

It is contended by the planters that the drying up of the springs is due to the exploitation of boreholes in the region by Mon Désert/Mon Trésor. However, I am informed that the decrease in the groundwater level during the dry season is a natural phenomenon depending on effective rainfall upstream of the aquifer, that is in the recharge zone. The flows in the springs usually begin to decline in the months of June-July when there is a deficit in the rainfall and this worsens as from the month of October/November where the springs dry up and the groundwater flow is sub-surface.

After a site visit effected on 28 December 2004 together with the planters of the region, the Water Resources Unit of my Ministry and the Irrigation Authority came up with a proposal that a borehole be drilled to supply water to the watercress fields in the dry season by a pumping groundwater and allowing same to flow into fields.

However, the planters were made aware of the risk of the proposed measure. It was explained to them that the pumping of groundwater may result in infiltration of the sub-surface of the ground and thus the borehole solution may not bring them the targeted relief.

With a view to solving the problem, my Ministry has requested the Irrigation Authority to drill a borehole of 215 mm diameter that can yield some 2000m³ daily. The trial borehole will confirm or otherwise the

possibility of pumping ground water to allow surface flow in the fields in the dry season. If the pumping tests are conclusive, then a duplicate borehole may be drilled.

However, the Irrigation Authority has to clear wayleave for access of the site for the drilling of the borehole. The Irrigation Authority has estimated the cost of the drilling to be around Rs250,000.

In fact, I have been inviting my colleague, the Minister of Agro-Industry & Fisheries, to set up a technical committee comprising representatives of planters, Central Water Authority, Water Resources Unit, Irrigation Authority to uphold the initiative and see through the successful implementation of the project.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister when the borehole at Carreau Esnouf will be dug?

Dr. Kasenally: It is under consideration. As you can imagine, one has to find the sum of Rs250,000. They are trying to find funds to initiate the experimental borehole.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the technical committee is concerned, can I ask the hon. Minister when will the request be made to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries to set up the relevant technical committee?

Dr. Kasenally: I think I have asked the hon. Minister and he has nodded positively, so we will be setting up the committee fairly shortly.

MARE TABAC - BRIDGE

(No. B/274) **Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware of the requests made to his Ministry by the inhabitants of Mare Tabac for the extension and consolidation of the bridge situated along the main road of the village and, if so, will he give same priority.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the National Development Unit has not received any such request.

However, I am advised that the Road Development Authority has recently carried out a site visit and it was observed that the bridge is old and narrow. The Road Development Authority is therefore proposing to carry out a survey to assess the feasibility of the reconstruction of the bridge following which appropriate action would be initiated accordingly.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister when the survey will be carried out?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the information which is available to me is that the RDA is proposing to carry out a survey. I'll try to convey this message to the RDA so that they can activate things.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(No. B/275) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if there is an established set of performance indicators in public primary schools and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the rate of teacher absenteeism;
- (b) the rate of pupil absenteeism;
- (c) the running cost per pupil;
- (d) the actual and desirable ratio of administrative to teaching staff.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am informed that presently we do not have a comprehensive set of performance indicators in public primary schools. However, the two main indicators being used for pupil's performance in our primary schools - Standard I to Standard VI - are the term tests and end of year examinations.

As regards parts (a) to (d) of the question, I am informed that -

- (a) Presently, there exists, at the level of the schools, a mechanism whereby the teacher's absence is computed on a monthly basis and appropriate returns are forwarded to the respective Zones Directorate for close monitoring. However, the rate of teacher absenteeism, *per se*, is not computed and is therefore not available.
- (b) Pupil's absences are monitored through the existing system of attendance register. However, the rate of pupil absenteeism, *per se*, is not computed and is therefore not available.
- (c) The running cost (defined as operating costs which include salaries, other related costs, utilities, teaching aids and other recurrent costs) per pupil on average for public primary schools, excluding RCA, Hindu Aided and the ZEP schools is around Rs13,000 per annum (financial year 2004-2005), and
- (d) As regards the actual and desirable ratio of administrative to teaching staff, these have not been worked out so far.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must state that these are very simple statistics which are important elements for the education reform process, but are presently not available.

As this Government is giving a new dimension to education reform which aims at improving cost-efficiency across the primary school system, clear measurable performance indicators at all levels will be worked out for proper monitoring, control and assessments.

Dr. Mungur: I thank the hon. Minister for this valuable information. If the curriculum is a road map for quality education, then performance indicators are the informational signs along highways of educational journey. So, will the Minister look into the possibility of making the performance indicators a reality in the near future where the parent/teachers and the students can make use of standards in the educational system. This is where we can start with.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have inherited a system where I have indicated that even simple statistics which are very important for monitoring and policy making are not available. In the context of the

education reforms, this is essential and this is being addressed and I can assure the hon. Member that these statistics will be compiled so that we can assess how the reforms are impacting on the quality of education.

PLEASURE CRAFTS, LICENCED SKIPPERS, ETC.

(No. B/276) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether he will state –

- (a) the number of pleasure crafts todate;
- (b) the number of licensed skippers todate;
- (c) the number of provisional licenses issued to skippers todate;
- (d) whether there is a competency test for the licensing of skippers, and
- (e) the number of fatal accidents registered during the year 2004.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the position as at 12 September 2005, is as follows –

- 2,430 pleasure craft licenses have been issued;
- 214 skippers have been licensed, and
- 5,145 provisional licenses have been issued to skippers awaiting theoretical and practical examinations.

As regards part (d) of the question, I am informed that there is a competency test, comprising of theoretical and practical examinations, which has to be taken by applicants for a skippers license. As at 12 September 2005, there were 3,343 applications to sit these examinations.

The Tourism Authority has two examiners conducting these tests. Therefore, given the time required in order to enable all applicants to sit for the examinations, the Tourism Authority has taken the decision to extend the

validity of the provisional licenses up to 29 September 2006.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that given the high rate of failure in the theoretical examination in Creole language, I have requested the Tourism Authority to arrange for training courses to be organised for the benefit of the applicants and to give priority to skippers working on pleasure crafts used for commercial purposes.

I am pleased to announce that, the Tourism Authority has now started a training programme on a regionwise basis. A first course started on 30 August at the Hotel School of Mauritius. On 02 September, the theoretical examination was held where a pass rate of 87% was recorded.

Further training courses are being organised as follows –

- Flic en Flac - starting 17 and 19 September
- Grand Bay - starting 4 and 7 October
- Southern Region - starting 11 October
- Eastern Region - starting 25 October

As regards part (e) of the question, I am advised that according to the National Coast Guard, no fatal accident was registered during the year 2004.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Deputy, Speaker, I think the pleasure craft is licensed by the Ministry of Tourism where there is emphasis on safety equipment, a valid certificate of competency, a valid insurance cover and a high licence fee whereas on the other side, we have the pleasure boat licence which the Ministry of Fisheries is giving. Since the commonality is that human life may be lost, can the Minister look into the possibility of having only one body so that regulations can be done in a more effective way?

Mr Duval: There is an anomaly in, that, part of the boats are licensed by the Ministry of Fisheries and part by the Tourism Authority. This, in fact, can be looked at. I will try to sort it out.

EXCHANGE RATE POLICY

(No. I B/277) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state Government policy on

exchange rate in view of the massive depreciation of the Mauritian rupee vis-à-vis our main trading currencies over the recent years.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, since the suspension of the Exchange Control Act in July 1994, a greater role has been assigned to market forces in determining the exchange rate. An inter-bank market for foreign exchange has also been set up. The Bank of Mauritius monitors and analyses, on a daily basis, the movements of the exchange rate of the Mauritian rupee against major international currencies, including the US dollar and the Euro, and intervenes from time to time in the foreign exchange market. The Bank of Mauritius interventions in the foreign exchange market are not aimed at offsetting underlying market pressures, but rather at smoothing out seasonal and unwarranted short term fluctuations in the exchange value of the rupee.

The exchange rate policy generally reflects the macroeconomic fundamentals of the country. Exchange rate movements of the rupee over the recent past have reflected a combination of international market trends and local market conditions.

EAST COAST TRUNK ROAD

(No. I B/278) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will inform the House if his Ministry has any project for the construction of a motorway to link the Northern and the Eastern parts of Mauritius.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Physical Development Plan of 1993 recommended the construction of a trunk road between Mahebourg and Grand Baie. This project referred as the East Coast Trunk Road is intended to be an alternative route between the South East and the North West.

The project starts from Pont Lardier at Bel Air and ends at Forbach roundabout on the Pamplemousse-Grand Baie Road. It also includes a bypass starting at Bramsthan and ending at Constance.

The project may be implemented in three lots –

Lot 1	–	Bramsthan to Constance – Flacq bypass	–	3 km
Lot 2	–	Pont Lardier to Bonne Mère	-	8 km
Lot 3	-	Constance to Forbach	-	19 km

The estimated value for the works is Rs1.2 billion, exclusive of VAT.

This project is not on the priority list of my Ministry for the time being.

Mr Boodhoo: May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister the date when the project is expected to start and if there is any time frame?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I cannot at this moment in time commit myself to a time frame. Our main concern at the moment is the traffic situation in Port Louis and around.

STOCK EXCHANGE OF MAURITIUS - FOREIGN COMPANIES - LISTING

(No. I B/279) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will inform the House if his Ministry has any plan to attract foreign companies, particularly from the Region, for listing in the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, with a view to make of Mauritius an international financial centre.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as stated in Government Programme, we need to strengthen the development of our capital market and integrate it in the global financial system. Promoting the Stock Exchange of Mauritius as well as the listing of foreign companies on our Stock Exchange forms part of our strategy to position Mauritius as a regional financial centre. We need, therefore, to ensure that the necessary regulatory and operational infrastructure to facilitate cross-listing are in place. In this connection, the Stock Exchange of Mauritius is currently working on the harmonisation of its Listing Rules with those of Stock

Exchanges of the SADC region and on providing a listing facility for offshore funds

The Stock Exchange of Mauritius has also applied for membership of the World Federation of Exchanges, which is an important benchmark for companies interested in cross border listing.

There is also need to have an aggressive marketing campaign to attract foreign companies on our Stock Exchange. We will, therefore, ensure that the creation of a unique brand identity for Mauritius, as announced recently in the House will include the promotion and marketing of our Stock Exchange.

**DR. IDRIS GOOMANY AREA HEALTH CENTRE/MEDI-CLINIC
- CONSTRUCTION**

(No. I B/280) **Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Goomany Area Health Centre, he will state if he is aware that it is overcrowded and in an insalubrious condition, and, if so, will he consider the advisability of having it replaced by a medi-clinic, which project was earmarked by Government during the period 1995-2000.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is indeed a serious space constraint at the Dr. Idriss Goomany Area Health Centre. The Centre is housed in a building belonging to the Municipality of Port Louis. The building has also within its compounds a Gymnasium and a Karate-Club.

The space is very limited to provide adequate health services to a population of about 22,000 inhabitants. Moreover, access to the building is open to the public at large because of the other amenities which are also available there.

I am informed that action was initiated in 1998 to construct a new building to house the Area Health Centre. A portion of land of the extent of 1577 M² was identified and was vested in my Ministry on 11 June 1999 for the construction of a medi-clinic. However, due to lack of funds, the project did not materialise.

Subsequently, my Ministry decided to construct an Area Health Centre on the identified plot of land and necessary instructions were given to Ministry of Public Infrastructure to work out the designs. That Ministry had already prepared the plans which were approved by my Ministry.

However, in August 2003, the Ministry of Environment took over the plot of land for the construction of a swimming pool on the site initially earmarked for the construction of the Area Health Centre.

My Ministry has now requested the Ministry of Housing and Lands to look for an appropriate site for the construction of the new medi-clinic

taking into account the population of the catchment area of Plaine Verte and in order to ease pressure on Dr. Jeetoo hospital, I am now considering to revise the project of a medi-clinic in the place of the existing Dr. Idriss Goomany Area Health Centre.

**MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS – COUNCILLORS –
OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

(No. I B/281) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the official overseas missions effected by the Councillors of the Municipality of Port Louis, he will state –

- (a) the names of the Councillors who travelled from September 2001 to August 2005, and
- (b) the cost of the air tickets and any other allowances paid to them in relation thereto.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am circulating the required information. (**Appendix I**)

Concerning part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that public funds of around Rs4 m have been spent in terms of payment of air tickets and allowances to Municipal Councillors and officials during their various overseas missions for the period September 2001 to 11 August 2005.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to add that the following Councillors have travelled extensively at the expense of tax payers, namely –

- Councillor Nina on 12 occasions
- Councillor Moosun on 7 occasions
- Councillor Veerabadren on 6 occasions
- Hon. J. C. Barbier on 5 occasions

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

SCHOOLS (PRIMARY) – CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

(No. 1 B/282) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if the subject of Citizenship Education is being taught in primary school and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: I am informed that the Curriculum Renewal Project in the primary sector which was effective since March 2001 provided for Citizenship Education to be introduced in an incremental manner in the primary schools over the period 2001–2005. Citizenship Education was thus introduced in the primary schools in the third term of the year 2001, on a trial basis for upper primary classes.

The objectives of Citizenship Education are to inculcate in our children knowledge of the social and natural environment, and learning to live together harmoniously as active members in a multicultural society; and to create a sense of awareness among the children of their rights, duties, safe and healthy living principles, of democracy, peace, co-existence and gender equality.

When it was decided to introduce the subject in schools, a panel prepared the textbook for the teaching of that subject in standards IV, V and VI. However, upon introduction of the subject, it was found that the instructional materials in the textbook were too difficult for the pupils. Subsequently, in 2002, following representations from different quarters, particularly from the teachers and the unions, the materials were reviewed and it was decided to have a combined textbook (for standards IV to VI), as a trial material, for upper primary schools.

Citizenship Education was meant to be taught by general purpose teachers has, in fact, been neglected by schools. Teachers were not imparted the appropriate training that would have enabled them to effectively teach the subject.

Statistics reveal that some 10% of primary schools actually teach the subject. The periods meant for conducting Citizenship Education are rather

spent for the teaching of other examinable subjects. The fate of Citizenship Education shows again a disparity between intention and reality.

My Ministry is, therefore, proposing, in the context of curriculum reforms, to adopt a cross curricular approach to the teaching of Citizenship Education. Standards I, II and III are crucial periods for the child to develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills, and during those stages they will be exposed to Civic Values. As for standards IV, V and VI, the themes for Citizenship Education will be integrated into the curriculum in language-teaching, Environmental Studies and Science.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the Minister inform the House of the amount spent on this project?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, this was an important project and money was made available to the tune of some Rs2 m. But when I examined the way the project has been handled, and it has not been implemented successfully, it tantamounts to a waste of public funds.

Mr Dayal: Is the hon. Minister aware that the textbooks proposed were much disputed, controversial and not secular? Does he consider it to be a judicious use of public funds?

Mr Gokhool: As indicated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the material was too difficult for the pupils of Standard IV, V and VI and that is one of the reasons why the project has been abandoned. Only 10% of the schools are teaching Citizenship Education. This is why I say it tantamounts to a wastage of public funds.

ROYAL ROAD, PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE – ROAD LEVELLING

(No. 1 B/283) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that there is an uphill road which has been the cause of several accidents at Royal Road, Providence, Quartier Militaire near Bombay Road and, if so, will he state what actions he proposes to take to have the road levelled.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that we do not have road accident statistics for the specific location referred to by the hon. Member. However, in respect of the whole stretch of Royal Road, Providence, Quartier Militaire, statistics reveal that 139 accidents have occurred during the past four years as follows –

- Fatal 3
- Serious injury 10
- Slight injury 29
- no injury 97

I am informed that the following traffic calming measures along the stretch of the Providence Road have been taken –

- 50 km/hr speed limit traffic signs at both ends of the village have been installed;
- A flat-top humped pedestrian crossing near Providence Government School has been constructed; and
- Continuous white line to prevent overtaking along the main road near Bombay Road has been marked.

I thank the hon. Member for drawing my attention to the road safety hazard which exists at Providence near Bombay Store. I have arranged for the Road Development Authority to conduct a survey of the vertical alignment to assess the visibility of oncoming traffic and the traffic emerging from Bombay Road at Quartier Militaire.

The Survey will indicate whether it is feasible to take corrective measures on the vertical alignment of the road and appropriate measures will be taken accordingly.

Mr Dayal: In the same exercise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister consider the possibility of looking same at Pont Bon Dieu road and all along the road from Eau Bouillie where there had been two fatal accidents last week?

Dr. Beebeejaun: My attention has been drawn to this problem and we are attending to it urgently.

BOIS CHERI ROAD, MOKA – MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX PROJECT

(No. 1 B/284) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that Government purchased, around the year 1999, a portion of land at Bois Chéri Road, Moka for the setting up of a multipurpose complex project for recreational and other activities and that the land was vested in the relevant Ministry before 2000 and will he state where matters stand.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is another case of mismanagement and poor planning by the Moka/Flacq District Council.

I am informed that a plot of private land of an extent of 10 perches was purchased on 17 February 1999 by the District Council for the price of Rs1 m. to construct a multipurpose hall to be used by the inhabitants of that region.

Following a tender exercise in October 2000, the Council decided to accept the lowest offer of Rs2 m. for execution of this project.

I am further advised that in July 2001, the District Council reviewed its decision and froze this project. Thus the funds earmarked for financing this project was reallocated for implementation of other capital projects. I am informed that the plot of land in question is in an abandoned state.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fail to understand the motive of the Council behind the change in its decision. I cannot understand why the then Minister of Local Government in 2001 did not enquire as to why public funds were not judiciously utilised. A major priority project which could have benefited all the inhabitants of that region and vicinity and for which a plot of land had already been acquired with public funds has been frozen at the whims and caprices of a few councillors.

Such state of affairs is revolting and unacceptable. Public funds to the tune of Rs1 m. had been spent to purchase land and same had not been put at the disposal of the inhabitants of the region for the purpose it was acquired. I propose to take up this matter with the Council.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister when he intends starting the project anew?

Dr. David: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as this was brought to my attention, I immediately contacted the District Council, and we follow it up very closely.

**ROYAL ROAD, CITE STE CLAIRE, GOODLANDS -
L.C.C, MR -LAND LEASE**

(No. I B/285) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state –

- (a) if a lease for a plot of State Land situated on Royal Road, Cité Ste Claire, Goodlands has been granted to one G.C. for the construction of a commercial building and, if so, since when, and
- (b) if he is aware that the building is encroaching onto the road reserves.

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to records available at my Ministry, one person having as initials G.C. has been granted a lease over a portion of land which is part of ex-CHA Estate at Cité Ste Claire Goodlands. That person does not hold any commercial site lease.

However, there is another person, having as initials L.C.C who holds a lease on a portion of land which is part of the ex-CHA Estate at Cité Ste Claire. Though not in possession of any commercial lease, that person has, without any authorisation, caused to construct a building over part of the service road earmarked for access to the CHA Estate and part of a buffer zone.

I am informed that there are a few other similar cases of encroachment at that ex-CHA Housing Estate. These are being examined at the level of my Ministry for remedial measures to be taken. I am also informed that this issue was raised in September 2002, but the previous Government did not take any action to remedy the situation at that time.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Can the Minister clarify whether we can accept State land to be used as commercial renting as well, Sir?

Mr Dulull: State land is given for a particular purpose. If there is any change of purpose, an application needs to be made at the Ministry and, subject to the approval of the permit being granted by the local authorities or other authorities, the change of purpose may be entertained.

Mrs Virahsawmy: In this case, has any permission been asked, Sir?

Mr Dulull: In this particular case, no change of purpose has been entertained.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister clarify if goodwill was taken on the new built complex on the State land, before selling the complex?

Mr Dulull: Based on Court evidence, Rs100,000 were taken for the renting of each shop.

Mrs Virahsawmy: In that case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House why that has taken place and why the ex-Government did not take action on that matter?

Mr Dulull: I am not aware of the hidden agenda of the previous Government, but, at the Ministry, we are determined to remedy the situation.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether he plans to take any action and, if so, in this case, will he say when he intends to take it?

Mr Dulull: The matter is being looked into and, based on the existing provision, remedial action will be taken.

ICTA - CHAIRMAN & BOARD MEMBERS - MISSIONS OVERSEAS

(No. I B/286) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information and Communication Technologies Authority Information as to -

- (a) the number of overseas missions/seminars/workshops/training courses attended by the Chairman, the Board Members and members of the staff during the period 01 July 2002 to 30 June 2005 and the outcome thereof, and
- (b) the total expenses incurred in terms of air tickets and per diem allowances for each beneficiary.

Mr Sinatambou: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority that the number of overseas missions/seminars/workshops and training courses undertaken amount to 22 for financial year 2002/2003, to 50 for financial year 2003/2004 and to 49 for financial year 2004/2005, that is a total of 121 over a 3 year period.

The total expenses incurred were -

- (i) Rs3.92 m. for financial year 2002/2003;
- (ii) Rs7.6 m. for financial year 2003/2004;
- (iii) Rs3.65 m. for financial year 2004/2005;

The rest of the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is being compiled and will be tabled at the next sitting of the National Assembly.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that in some cases officers had travelled more that the director of the ICTA?

Mr Sinatambou: No, I am not aware, but I will certainly give instructions for the matter to be looked into, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that some missions have been wrongly computed in the case of the name of a director who had never gone on a mission?

Mr Sinatambou: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware, but I will again request that the matter be looked into.

NOTRE DAME WOMEN CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. I B/287) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Notre Dame Women Centre which was opened under the Gian Nath Scheme to facilitate access to Information and Communication Technologies for women of the region and subsequently closed she will state -

- (a) the reasons for its closure, and
- (b) if she will consider reopening the Centre and, if so, when.

The Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection (Mrs I. Seebun) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with you permission, I shall answer to this question.

I have been informed that the IT centre was opened in March 2000 at Notre Dame. The centre was closed down by the former Government in February 2001 for reasons, which appear to be very vague.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry proposes to construct a new women centre on a plot of State land to the extent of 25 perches at Notre Dame. The plot of land has already been vested to my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project is long overdue. Since financial year 2003/2004, funds were earmarked. There has not been much progress.

The new women centre will include a family support bureau and courses in IT will also be provided of which women of Notre Dame had been deprived since February 2001. Tenders will be launched once drawing documents are ready and I assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, construction may start in six months time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall personally monitor the situation closely and ensure the timely implementation of this project.

**AUGUSTE ESNOUF STREET, FOREST SIDE - HIGH TENSION
LINE & TRANSFORMER - TRANSFER**

(No. I B/288) **Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board (CEB), information as to -

- (a) the reason for the transfer of a High Tension Line and a transformer located at Auguste Esnouf Street, Forest Side in December 2004;
- (b) the expenses incurred by the CEB in connection therewith;
- (c) the name of the occupier of the land where the sub-station was located for the last 25 years, and
- (d) the name of the present occupier.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the CEB that on 07 April 2004, the ex-Minister Deelchand Jeeha made a request for the shifting of the 500 KVA transformer on the ground that it was a nuisance to him in view of its proximity to his house and the neighbouring houses.

The works comprised an extension of the existing high tension line, erection of two pole-mounted transformers of capacity of 150 KVA and 1000 KVA each at two different locations and removal of 500 KVA transformer. The shifting works were estimated to cost over half a million rupees.

The CEB considered very carefully this proposal in view of the high financial implications. However, my information is that continued, sustained and, perhaps, unfair pressure was exerted on the CEB management and officials of the Ministry of Public Utilities. Even my predecessor might not have been spared. May I point out that the transformer had been there for the last 25 years and none of the occupants ever made any complaint. Finally, the CEB Management yielded to this pathological pressure. In the process, the CEB had to disburse the modest sum of Rs409,497.00 plus a few cents.

The examination of the relevant title deed indicates in no uncertain terms that the subject site does not form part of the property of Mr Jeeha. In fact, the title deed spells out that the plot of land belongs to the CEB.

After removal of the transformer and all auxiliaries, the sub-station was left locked and unoccupied by the CEB. During a recent visit, the CEB has found that the concrete structure, which housed the sub-station cabin, has been illegally pulled down and most of the debris carted away. Moreover, Mr Deelchand Jeeha has appropriated the land by extending his fencing to encompass the land previously occupied by the CEB.

Prior to removal of the transformer from the cabin sub-station, the CEB had initiated an application for prescription of the land so as to obtain ownership of the property. But, I am given to understand that pressure was put on the CEB not to go ahead - undue and unfair pressure. Mr Deelchand Jeeha had subsequently declared dispute by way of a *mise en demeure* and the CEB is responding appropriately and effectively to this action.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the area of that land which is being appropriated by the ex-Minister Jeeha?

Dr. Kasenally: The dimension of the sub-station cabin was 18 feet by 10 feet and 13 feet high. The extent of the land occupied by the sub-station cabin was about 71 sq. meters.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apparently there was a complaint about this transformer being a nuisance to the vicinity. May I ask the Minister if a study was conducted by the CEB to investigate whether there was any sort of nuisance, noise or whatever it may be, before transferring this transformer to some other side?

Dr. Kasenally: As I said, nobody complained, but there was no complaint officially by any of the people around there for 25 years.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure that if the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there, he would have said '*ène ti boute la terre pou ène ti boute ministre*'.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should not impute motives, please.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he proposes to set up a full-fledged enquiry to situate the responsibilities and to report to the Assembly later on?

Dr. Kasenally: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of concern that land belonging to the CEB has been appropriated in that manner. It is, therefore, my decision to go further and try to get that land back.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it would seem that the answer is not clear. At a point in time, the hon. Minister said that the land belongs to the CEB, but, then, at another point in time, the Minister said that the CEB initiated procedure for the prescription of the land. How can it be, if the CEB was the owner of the land? Why the need for the prescription of the land?

Dr. Kasenally: I have gone into a copy of the sale of the land by Mr Bechard to Mr Jeeha in which it is clearly mentioned “*du quatrième et dernier côté parti par un terrain de 25 toises et parti par un terrain appartenant au CEB.*”

The hon. Member asked about the prescription. Well, the CEB has been occupying this land for over 25 years and this is recognised in the title deeds. Therefore, it is more appropriate for the CEB to prescribe that land rather than Mr Jeeha.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we welcome what the hon. Minister says, namely, that he intends to get that land back. Does he also intend to institute proceedings in order that we may get the money back as well?

Dr. Kasenally: It is difficult to get the money back, because the CEB has already spent it, probably, because of health hazard. But, I don't think it was because of any health hazard. The electromagnetic waves generated by the high-tension lines or the transformer may, in certain circumstances, cause mutation of the gonads, but, scientifically, it has not been proved to be so.

Another possibility is that it might cause malignant change in the bowels or in the lungs. Actually, these are all theories and none has been proved. Besides, one has virtually to be under this electromagnetic wave to a distance of not more than 2 or 3 metres to be affected.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the house of Mr Jeeha is well away from that distance of 2 metres.

JET FUEL STORAGE – CONTRACT

(No. I B/289) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether he is aware of the existence of any agreement between the airport authorities and other parties regarding the construction and commissioning of proposed facilities to increase the jet fuel storage capacity and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the names of the parties to the agreement;
- (b) if works are progressing in accordance with the terms of the contract and, if not, whether there is any delay and, if so, the damages it may give rise to.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a Sublease Agreement for the lease of an extent of 6 hectares of land was signed on 14 April 2003 between the Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd. and a Consortium of Oil Companies.

The Consortium of Oil Companies consists of Esso, Shell, Caltex, Total and Indian Oil. These companies will invest in the construction of the new fuel depot at the SSR International Airport.

I am further informed that preliminary works, including the fencing of the depot site started last month. The construction of the tank farm and associated buildings is due to commence in October this year.

My Ministry is closely monitoring the implementation of the project in consultation with Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 05 August 2005, Government agreed to review the Letter of Comfort initially issued on 30 April 2003 to the Consortium.

This is in order to take into account the revised construction cost of the fuel depot, now estimated at US\$ 15.9 m. against US\$ 8 m. initially estimated, as well as a new timeframe for the implementation of the Shandrani Road deviation.

Government has also now decided that notwithstanding the Sublease Agreement, should the oil companies not start the construction of the fuel depot within a period of six months, the Letter of Comfort, as subsequently amended, would lapse and the land will be returned to Government. This condition is an *addendum* to the Sublease Agreement and has to be signed by all the parties. The *addendum* will be signed by the oil companies this week.

I also wish to inform the House that in the process of updating a Letter of Comfort, I have corrected two anomalies, which could have had far-reaching financial implications for Government.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, clause A (e) (ii) of the original Letter of Comfort provided that Government would guarantee to reimburse the relocation costs, plus inflation upon any repossession of the land leased to the Consortium. This guarantee was, however, incorrectly denominated in US dollars whereas the construction costs were denominated in Mauritian rupees. Given the historic tendency of the Mauritian rupee to depreciate, and considering that the guarantee period covers 20 years, this could have had serious financial implications. This has now been corrected.

The original Letter of Comfort also contained another anomaly in that the amount guaranteed did not take account of the depreciation of the asset. This point has also now been corrected as it could have represented excessive compensation for a depreciated asset.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether in relation to the Shandrani Road, there is an agreement where the Shandrani Hotel and Mon Trésor Mon Désert were going to contribute to the construction of part of that road, because they were going to use it afterwards?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not been informed of that particular part of the agreement, but I'll certainly look at it.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

PHARMACY ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. I B/290) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if he proposes to bring amendments to Pharmacy Act to address the issues of -

- (a) the practice of medical practitioners within the pharmacy premises;
- (b) medical practitioners being pharmacy owners, and
- (c) one pharmacist practising in more than one pharmacy.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that according to regulation 21 of the Pharmacy Regulations 1985, a person is not allowed to use any part of a pharmacy for any purpose other than that of a pharmacy or to sublet any part of a pharmacy. Consequently, medical practitioners are not allowed to practise within the pharmacy premises.

With regard to part (b), section 40(2) of the Pharmacy Act 1983, which stipulates that medical practitioners are not allowed to have any share, participation or other financial interest in the manufacture or sale, whether by wholesale or retail, of pharmaceutical products.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, in accordance with section 18(8) of the Pharmacy Act of 1983, no pharmacist should be in charge of more than one pharmacy except with the written permission of the Pharmacy Board.

I am informed that there are presently 293 pharmacists, including 20 pharmacists working in the public sector, while the number of registered pharmacies to date is 238.

There is a need to revisit the Pharmacy Act which dates back to 1983 with a view to regulating more effectively the practice, and my Ministry is taking action accordingly.

GEORGE V AND BAMBOUS STADIUMS - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS - TENDER, COST, ETC.

(No. I B/291) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether with regard to the last *Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien* held in Mauritius, he will state -

- (a) the initial amount earmarked for infrastructure, in particular the George V and Bambous Stadiums and the final cost thereof, and
- (b) whether the Central Tender Board procedures were followed and, if not, why not.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of the Indian Ocean Islands Games held in Mauritius in 2003, the project for the reconstruction of the George V Stadium was initially estimated at Rs62 m. However, on completion of the works, the final cost amounted to Rs170.9 m. as a result of variations and additional works.

Regarding Bambous Stadium, a new administrative block had been constructed and other ancillary works had been carried out. The contract was awarded by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to Building and Civil Engineering Ltd for the sum of Rs31.4 m. On completion of the works, the total cost for this project amounted to Rs35.4 m. as a result mainly of variation works.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that in the context of the games, an Association under the name of the "Association for the upgrading of Indian Ocean Islands Games Infrastructure" (AUGI) was set up to take over responsibility for the renovation and reconstruction of a number of sports facilities required for the games. The Association operated from grants and donations received from Government, the private sector and other sources.

Being not listed under the CTB Act, AUGI had not followed the CTB procedures for the award of the contract for the reconstruction of the George V Stadium. In this connection, Rehm Grinaker Ltd. was invited by AUGI to submit its quotation for the reconstruction of George V Stadium. On 09 October 2002, the contractor submitted its tender for the sum of Rs222.6 m. As the quotation was found to be on the high side, AUGI decided that discussions be opened with the contractor with a view to revising the price. Subsequently, the contractor agreed to revise its quotation to Rs165.8 m. As AUGI was still not satisfied with the information submitted by the contractor, it decided, on 15 October 2002 that negotiations be terminated with the contractor and fresh tenders be floated on a selective basis.

On 22 October 2002, AUGI invited tenders from eight Grade A contractors out of which two declined the invitation. Six contractors purchased the tender documents, but only two contractors submitted valid tenders namely -

- (a) Rehm Grinaker Construction Co. Ltd. - Rs144.8 m.
- (b) Bhunjun & Sons Ltd. - Rs149 m.

The contract was awarded to Rehm Grinaker Ltd. for a sum of Rs144.8 m. with an option for covering the Eastern Stand of the Stadium. Finally, on completion, the contract amounted to Rs170.8 m. as a result of variations and other additional works.

Regarding Bambous Stadium, I am advised that the contract was awarded to Building and Civil Engineering Ltd. by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping after obtaining approval of the CTB.

Mr Mardemootoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out that the Central Tender Board has been discarded just to award this tailor-made contract to Rehm Grinaker Construction.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, it seems so.

Mr Mardemootoo: When was that tender published?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: On 22 October 2002.

Mr Mardemootoo: May we know the closing date of that tender?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: 15 November 2002.

Mr Mardemootoo: Does the Minister find it proper and perfect to award a contract of Rs140 m. within only 22 days?

(Interruptions)

Mr Tang Wah Hing: In fact,...

Mr Mardemootoo: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether this funny association, AUGI, still exists?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: No.

Mr Mardemootoo: Did they disappear after this?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, it is only for the games.

Mr Bhagwan: Would the Minister agree to lay on the Table of the Assembly a list of the members of the AUGI and would he say whether the people of the Ministry of Finance and the Financial Secretary were in that committee?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes.

GRAND' BAIE BEACH - NATIONAL SAILING SCHOOL - SETTING UP

(No. I B/292) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre D'Or) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if there has been any application for land lease on Grand' Baie beach for the setting up of a boat house known as "*Ecole de la Voile*".

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is no application at my Ministry for land lease on Grand' Baie beach for the setting up of a boat house known as "*Ecole de la Voile*".

However, a plot of State land forming part of *Pas Géométriques* Grand' Baie Village of an extent of 400 m² has been vested since January 2005 in the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the setting up of a National Sailing School by that Ministry. I am informed that the project will be implemented during the next financial year.

SOLFERINO, VACOAS - IRRIGATION PROJECT

(No. I B/293) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether with regard to the irrigation project at Solferino, Vacoas, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Irrigation Authority that pumping tests to determine yield at the borehole for the Solferino small scale irrigation project will be completed by the end of this month. The detailed design and tender exercise for construction works would be completed by the end of this year.

According to the Irrigation Authority, the construction is scheduled to start early next year and irrigation is expected to start by May 2006.

AIR ACCESS POLICY - NEW CARRIER LICENCES

(No. I B/294) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether in regard to air access policy, he will state if Government intends to grant any new carrier licences and, if so, on which route and when.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr. X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member is referring to air transport service licences, I would wish to refer her to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question I B/136 wherein I informed the House that IBL Aviation Ltd., a Mauritian registered company has on 09 August 2005 been granted an air transport service licence to operate on the Mauritius/Rodrigues route.

As of today, my Ministry has not received any other application for an air transport service licence. The hon. Member may, however, be referring to the designation of new airlines to operate on routes to Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, air access policy is one of the basic instruments at the disposal of Government to control and regulate airlines to operate in and out of Mauritius. It is the main catalyst of sustainable growth.

Government has now agreed to the current air access policy being revisited in order to -

- (a) boost and revitalise the tourism sector, which has the potential to become one of the main engine of economic growth, and
- (b) stimulate demand from markets with high potential and, at the same time, induce more price elasticity in low seasons through the interplay of market forces.

In order to achieve these two objectives, Government has decided to –

- (i) enhance air seat capacity and competition on all markets with high potential;

- (ii) encourage and allow special flights on markets which are presently not serviced by scheduled airlines, and
- (iii) also allow special flights during peak periods when existing scheduled carriers cannot cope with demand and where there are capacity constraints.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the France/Mauritius route, I wish to inform the House that a French delegation is currently in Mauritius for a fresh round of bilateral air services talks with our aeronautical authorities, the aim being to review the existing air service agreement to provide for the designation of a second French carrier on that route. Talks are still continuing.

Furthermore, we are in the process of initiating new bilateral talks with Italian, South African and Malagasy authorities, in order to tap fully the market opportunities on these destinations. We shall, subsequently, look at other markets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with a new policy, it is also proposed to encourage price-based competition on regional routes, particularly Rodrigues, Reunion and Madagascar.

All these measures will go a long way in developing a long-term and durable air access policy that will, on the one hand, sustain our tourism sector as an engine of growth and, on the other hand, help address a mismatch between hotel room occupancy and demand for seat capacity during the peak season.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any form of study was made on the impact of such policy on our local carrier?

Mr X. Duval: In fact, there was a study commissioned by the previous Government, namely the NACO Report published in December 2004.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House of the outcome of the study?

Mr X. Duval: It is a big study. I can table it if the hon. Member wishes.

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

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

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