

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**PENSIONERS, HANDICAPPED PERSONS AND STUDENTS -
FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT - MoU**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the provision of free public transport to pensioners, handicapped persons and students, he will -

- (i) lay copy of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the bus owners;
- (ii) say -
 - (a) how the estimated annual cost of Rs600 m. was calculated and how it will be paid out;
 - (b) whether it will apply to all students including those travelling by contract mini-buses, and
 - (c) whether a pass system will operate and, if so, give the details thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government has implemented a scheme for free travel by public transport, for old age pensioners/disabled persons as from 15 August 2005. The 01 September 2005 has been retained as the date of commencement of the scheme in respect of our students in the primary, secondary and post-secondary schools. The scheme is applicable in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands.

This is a landmark measure that is aimed at consolidating our Welfare State and bringing social justice to the weak and the vulnerable groups of our society. As per our Governmental Programme, we have kept our promises to grant free transport facilities to the old age pensioners, the disabled persons and the students travelling by public buses well before the expiry of the 100 days delay we gave ourselves for realising this much cherished scheme. This scheme had appeared very high on our agenda to change the life of the citizens of this country. There is unanimous satisfaction from all quarters and the result has been beyond our expectations.

Features of the Scheme

The fundamental principle guiding the introduction of this scheme was to relieve parents from the financial burden relating to travelling expenses by public buses of their children that usually impeded access to free education. In the case of old age pensioners and the disabled persons, our priority as a caring Government, was to improve the quality

of life of this vulnerable segment of the population. Tremendous care has been taken to ensure that the scheme be -

- (i) transparent so that Government disburses the most appropriate amount on the scheme;
- (ii) flexible, especially bearing in mind the realities of the Mauritian context;
- (iii) simple and easily administered by Government, bus operators and other stakeholders;
- (iv) adaptable so as to account for yearly growth in the target population as well as any future increase in the tariff of bus fares;
- (v) cost-efficient and well-managed to meet the test of audit scrutiny, and
- (vi) effective so as to contribute towards the enhancement of the quality of life of the beneficiaries.

Given the complex nature of the transport structure, Government has decided to adopt the mode of direct disbursement to bus companies, as an interim measure up to the end of the current financial year.

Electronic Travel Card System

In the meantime, the possibility of introducing an electronic travel card system is being explored. This system would enable a passenger to swipe his card over an electronic card reader installed in a bus which could provide to the authorities concerned more reliable and accurate information on travelling pattern of the beneficiaries. I now come to the description of the project.

Facilities for Old Age Pensioners & Disabled Persons

According to statistics available, there are some 120,000 old age pensioners and disabled persons who are benefiting from this scheme. They are using their current concessionary bus pass to travel freely as from 15 August 2005 without any restriction on the frequency, distance and time of travel. New beneficiaries will be issued with bus passes.

Disabled persons under the age of 15, attending school and specialised institutions, will be provided with free transport according to the existing scheme operated by the Ministry of Social Security. They will also get a free bus pass for free travel at all times. Disabled persons not attending schools will also be provided with a free bus pass.

Operators will be compensated directly based on the proportion of Old Age Pensioners and disabled persons carried by them as assessed by the National Transport

Authority (NTA). The same mode of payment will apply to Rodrigues where 63 buses operate and where there are 3,000 old age pensioners and disabled persons.

Bus operators submit on a monthly basis returns of their operations to the NTA. The returns comprise the bus fleet, the number of buses operated per day, number of passengers carried per day, revenue collected, expenditure on diesel and other operating costs.

From analysis of these figures, it is found that –

- 13% of the total number of tickets issued by the operators are the old aged pensioners and disabled persons. This amounts to approximately Rs185 m.,
- 32% of the total number of tickets issued by the operators are to the students during school days.

Post-Secondary Sector

The post-secondary sector composed of approximately 11,000 full- time students, both non-fee paying and fee-paying institutions. At present most of these students are travelling by public transport, except for those attending SSR Medical College, who use public service vehicle (contract) buses for commuting to the colleges or hospitals.

The NTA has worked out an estimate based on 85% of the post-secondary population travelling by public transport, excluding Mauritius Institute of Health and Mauritius Institute of Education, and the cost is around Rs40 m. annually.

As the present Road Traffic Regulations allow only students below 21 years to travel at concessionary fare, the regulations will be amended to do away with the age restriction of students as from the 01 September 2005. Necessary measures are being taken for the issue of bus passes to those not in possession of existing passes.

Secondary Schools

There are 187 secondary schools that are managed either by the State or the private sector. As at May 2005, the number of students attending non-fee paying secondary schools, including those offering prevocational courses, amounted to approximately 115,000. On the other hand, those attending fee-paying secondary institutions total 5,048.

Government has decided that both non-fee paying and fee-paying secondary school students should benefit from the same scheme during school days and from residence to school and back on production of their bus passes. Those not possessing one will be issued with the same. Moreover, students attending school during the examination period will be allowed to travel freely upon specific production of their official time-table containing their name and index number to the bus conductors.

Special schemes will be worked out by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources for students living in areas not served by buses.

The NTA has estimated the expenditure at Rs300 m. annually based on the assumption that 96,000 of all secondary students (fee & non-fee paying) travel by public transport to attend school for a period of 180 days, up to the end of June 2006. Moreover, in the case of 10 schools where the Ministry of Education & Human Resources is already providing free transport facilities to diverted students, the system will be maintained. The actual cost of providing these services is around Rs5.4 m. annually.

At present there are 291 primary schools that are administered either by the Government or the private sector. As at May 2005, there were some 117,824 and 5,738 students attending non-fee paying and fee-paying primary schools respectively. The primary school students use various modes of travel and according to a recent preliminary survey carried out in all primary schools by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources, some 13% travel by bus. I am glad to state that the bus operators have agreed to take on board all primary school students on school days even though they are not in possession of a student pass.

The unavailability of data on the residential address, bus fares and distance travelled by students is rendering it difficult to make a cost estimate in respect of other modes of transport apart from public buses. A decision would be taken in the light of a comprehensive survey to be carried out by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources. In fact, it is expected that this survey would provide very reliable data and will be undertaken at the resumption of schools to capture all relevant information relating to the bus-using population and money spent on bus fares.

The NTA has assessed the annual amount to be disbursed to bus operators to be around Rs30 m for 13% of all primary students using public transport. It is to be pointed out that the NTA has not taken into account the 24 schools where the Ministry of Education & Human Resources is already providing free transport facilities to diverted students. This system will be maintained and the actual cost of providing these services annually is Rs4.3 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a copy of each of the MoUs signed with the bus operators in respect of old age pensioners, disabled persons and students. In fact, there are six MoUs including two for Rodrigues. All the bus operators have promised their full collaboration for the successful implementation of the scheme. Disbursements will be effected to bus operators in accordance with the terms of the MOUs, i.e. the fixed amounts will be credited to their bank accounts on the 10th of each month up to 30 June 2006.

To recapitulate the scheme will cost Government the following amounts both in respect of Mauritius and Rodrigues -

Rs

Old Age Pensioners	185 m
Tertiary Sector Students	40 m
Secondary School Students	300 m
Primary School Students	10 m

Total	565 m (which is an estimated cost)

A Central Monitoring Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry to ensure that the scheme meets its desired objectives. The Committee would address any weaknesses that may be identified within the system or brought to light by the public. Corrective measures will consequently be taken to improve the services provided to the beneficiaries.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, now pending us having the time to look at the sixth memoranda submitted, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether other stakeholders were consulted and why have there not been memoranda of understanding, in particular, concerning the *Individual Bus Co-operatives* and the Contract Bus Owners' Association?

The Ag. Prime Minister: All the buses giving public service have been consulted and they have signed an agreement. Outside the co-operative there are about 50 bus owners who have signed a separate agreement on the same line that they agree to give the service on the terms and conditions which are being discussed. As to the contract bus, they are outside the scheme as at present. We promised free transport for students, old age pensioners, handicapped using the bus system and we are sticking to this for the time being.

Mr Bérenger: I was going to ask that later on, but can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister - since he has confirmed that Government will not be paying for the transport of students using contract mini-buses - whether, at least, a survey has been carried out to know how many students are concerned?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I thank the Leader of the Opposition as it is important to clarify this position. As from the 18th, at the beginning of the school term, we are going to have a comprehensive survey of modes of travel of all students, but particular attention to the primary sector where we do not have, at the moment, enough information. In the light of what comes out, we are going to take the appropriate measures and I can re-assure the House that we are very sensitive to issues of safety, of younger children and so on. This will be taken into account and before the end of the year, Government will take a decision accordingly.

Mr Bérenger: May I also ask whether the transport facilities being paid for applies also to part-time students at the University, to the pre-vocational institutions and elsewhere?

The Ag. Prime Minister: This applies to full-time students of all institutions.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the measures taken apply to all buses, air-conditioned or not?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The problem has cropped up. The short answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, is yes, it will apply to air-conditioned buses, because the bus companies have agreed to provide the service. It will not apply to the blue line special coach that comes from Rose Hill or Vacoas to Port Louis directly. It won't apply to the express service, but it will apply to the air-conditioned buses and the bus operators yesterday have all agreed that they will do so.

Mr Bérenger: The Ag. Prime Minister has made reference to an interim way of paying out the sums that are to be paid out. Am I given to understand that different companies operating on different routes will be paid the same amount irrespective of how many students they do carry?

The Ag. Prime Minister: A survey has been done and the spread is fairly even. It is interesting that between town and country the spread is fairly even, but what is more important is that it will not be based solely on the number of buses that the fleet has. It will be based on the number of buses operating.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister what measures are envisaged or have already been taken to control so that there is no over expenditure as the scheme develops?

The Ag. Prime Minister: At the moment, it is an agreement that has been fixed in time, but we'll reserve ourselves the right to review it as more information comes in. We are more concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the standard of service. Government feels that we've got probably a good arrangement with the bus companies, especially that we have an arrangement to buy in bulk with the bus companies, and after a lot of persuasion, in view of the fact that they are being paid a sort of captive money, they are getting it as a guarantee, they have come down in price; and now I see some of them are over-reacting as maybe they are losing, but anyway it is for the benefit of the public.

Mr Bérenger: From what I understand a door has been left open following a comprehensive survey that will be carried out for the possibility of something being done for the students and their parents who use contract mini-buses. Can I ask for further clarification - there are memoranda of understanding with bus companies - concerning the situation as far as the *bus individuels* are concerned? The Ag. Prime Minister gave some information, but I would like to know what is going to operate in the case of the *bus individuels*?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The *bus individuels* have grouped into a co-operative and we have signed a memorandum with the cooperative. As I have said before outside the cooperative, there is – it is not a majority – a few individual owners with whom we have already signed the same sort of agreement.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the Ag. Prime Minister say that procedures are on to adopt, in due course, some form of electronic pass system. Can we have more details? What stage discussions have reached and whether there will be a tender procedure?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is much too early. We have just started the procedure. We have some estimation, but I don't think it would be in the interest of anybody to speculate at the moment. But we are aiming to get a report as soon as possible within the next few months.

Mr Bérenger: Being given that now we are informed that this facility will be paid to pensioners at any time, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister why it was spelt out in the Government Programme delivered on the 29th of July that as far as pensioners are concerned, it is only, I quote – “176. (...)during specific time periods” that that will be paid.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Following the announcement of our Programme, there have been requests that this be extended. We have listened to the people as always and we have come to the right conclusion. But I would make a plea here. In the interest of the old-aged people travelling it might be best if they avoid the rush hour. This is just an advice on safety that we are going to give to the old-aged people.

Mr Bérenger: It is a good thing that after the Government Programme came out and following points raised by the Opposition and others that Government *a corrigé le tir et le texte aussi - pas seulement le tir*. Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that facilities are being extended to the disabled and handicapped persons, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether Government will give consideration to special arrangements being made for the disabled to travel? As we know, elsewhere in buildings and so on, special arrangements are provided. Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether this has already been discussed with the bus operators and other stakeholders and if not, whether Government is prepared to look in that direction?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The answer is yes, we have looked into this problem. We are aware of the difficulties encountered, not only for travel, but in buildings and other places as well and we are paying particular attention to this problem.

Mr Dayal: I should like to ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he will consider the possibility of fine-tuning the provision that has been made by considering complaints and suggestions and, why not, criticisms from the stakeholders, from *forces vives*, from people concerned and from Members from the Opposition side because they also had it in their programme.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. .

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he has envisaged measures for those old people that do not travel by public transport? Because not every old person travels by public transport.

The Ag. Prime Minister: My colleague, the Minister of Social Security, I am sure, will attend to this problem.

PRESS ATTACHÉS AND ADVISERS – SEP. 2000-JULY 2005 – NAMES, SALARIES, ETC

(No. I B/33) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) 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 press attachés and advisers attached to each Ministry during the period September 2000 to July 2005, he will give their names and their respective salaries, other benefits and conditions of service.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am laying on the Table of the National Assembly a statement giving the information requested.

POLICE FORCE – RISK ALLOWANCE

(No. I B/34) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) 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 dangers and risks to life to which Police Officers are exposed whilst on duty, more specifically to the SMF, Divers, Flying Squads and other Sections of the Police, he will state if Government now has any plan to review –

- (a) the appropriate allowances and compensation, and
- (b) the Police Act.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, at present, a risk allowance is payable to Police Officers posted to the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU), the “*Groupe d’Intervention de la Police Mauricienne*” (GIPM) and to Air Pilots. Other types of allowances are also payable to Police Officers by virtue of their postings. These allowances are subject to periodic review by the Pay Research Bureau.

As indicated in the Government Programme 2005-2010, it is proposed to extend the payment of a risk allowance to other deserving units/branches of the Police Force. The matter is, at present, being considered by the High-Powered Committee chaired by

the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and comprising the Financial Secretary, the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and the Director of Pay Research Bureau.

As regards compensation payable to members of the Police Force, recommendations have been made in the 2003 PRB Report to the effect that members of the disciplined forces who sustain permanent incapacity as a result of injury arising out of and in the course of their duties, or who contract an occupational disease under conditions specified in section 37 and as listed in the Second Schedule of the Workmen's Compensation Act, be paid a compensation as per rate of compensation specified in the First Schedule or under section 37 of the Workmen's Compensation Act up to a maximum of Rs720,000.

Recommendations have also been made for those sustaining fatal injuries in the course of their duties or who have contracted a fatal occupational disease under conditions specified in section 37 and which is listed in the Second Schedule of the Workmen's Compensation Act for the payment to the heirs of a compensation of six years' salary at the rate of the deceased officer's last salary drawn before the accident, subject to a maximum of Rs1.1 m over and above any gratuity due under the Pension Regulations.

Provisions exist in the PRB Report for the implementation of these recommendations administratively pending amendments to the relevant legislation.

In regard to the last part of the question, as indicated in the Government Programme 2005-2010, the Police Act will be amended with a view to making policing services more customer-oriented and ensuring its delivery in a professional manner to meet the expectations of our citizens.

Dr. Ramloll: I thank the Ag. Prime Minister for the answer. I would like to have some more information. I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the risk allowance, paid to the regular Police Force, that is, those wearing the blue uniform, would be reviewed. The present rate, I am told, is not really up to the expected level. Will the rate concerning the regular Force be reviewed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I know there is a special committee meeting. I'll ask the Prime Minister to make a statement on the matter when he comes back.

Dr. Ramloll: I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the present compensation, being paid to the family members and especially to children who attend schools and universities, will be reviewed, revisited. And does Government propose to look after the welfare of those children, especially concerning the health and education of those whose parent passes away whilst on duty?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware that there is such a proposition, but what I am aware of is that the ceiling for the compensation is being reviewed upwards.

CIVIL SERVANTS (TOP) - COMPLAINTS

(No. I B/35) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if he has received complaints against top civil servants for having allegedly acted in breach of rules and regulations or in breach of constitutional provisions and -

- (a) if so, will he give the number of complaints made to that effect during the period 2000-2005, and
- (b) if not, will Government consider establishing a procedure whereby officers may raise such matters in confidence.

(Withdrawn)

SLAVES & INDENTURED LABOURERS - DESCENDANTS – COMPENSATION

(No. I B/36) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether Government intends to pay compensation to the descendants of slaves and of indentured labourers.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government's Programme 2005/10 proposes the setting up of a Truth and Justice Commission to establish facts regarding slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius.

The Commission, which will comprise internationally reknown persons, will be called upon to make recommendations on the different types of compensation or reparation for the descendants of the slaves and indentured labourers.

This Government will also see to it that we participate actively in international initiatives to seek redress for the persons who still have to suffer from the after effects of this degrading and inhuman treatment.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether there is a time frame for the setting up of the Commission to look after the compensation issue? The Ag. Prime Minister mentioned 'reparation'. May I know whether the issue of compensation will be considered by the Government?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply speaks for itself. When the Prime Minister comes back he will make a statement. But for the time being, we stand by what we have said.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -FIVE-YEAR OLD CHILD – SEARCHES

(No. I B/37) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware that on Thursday 07 July 2005 at the SSR International Airport the private belongings of a child aged 5 years were searched and, if so, will he take necessary measures to ensure that such searches be effected with care.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 07 July 2005 at 1610 hours, the ADSU office based at Airport received information from Rodrigues to the effect that one person who was flying to Mauritius from Rodrigues on Flight MK 131 was carrying drugs.

On the basis of this information, a Chief Inspector of ADSU approached the person concerned and his daughter while they were leaving the Green Channel and informed him that their luggage would be searched. At first he replied that he would contact a barrister-at-law. Eventually, he accepted to have the luggage checked and accompanied the ADSU officers.

Searches were carried out in one suitcase and two handbags. Nothing incriminating was found. The ADSU Officer then informed him that an entry would be inserted in the Diary Book in respect of the search, but the latter refused to sign and left the office with his luggage and in the company of his daughter.

I am advised that at no time any ADSU Officers were rude or impolite to the person and his daughter.

At 0915 hours on the same day at the Airport Police, the person concerned complained of the stubborn and arrogant attitude of the two Police officers who he avers, traumatised his daughter.

The Commissioner of Police has referred the case to the Complaint Investigation Bureau on 13 July 2005 for inquiry. The inquiry is still on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the last part of the question, I am informed that, in this particular case, the searches were effected taking into account the young age of the child. Nevertheless the Commissioner of Police has been advised to continue dealing with such cases with utmost care.

**RODRIGUES - VULNERABLE GROUPS –
REHABILITATION, PROJECTS, COST, ETC**

(No. I B/38) Mr J. Von-Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the projects financed through the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) give the number initiated and completed for the period January 2005 to date, with a breakdown of each in terms of site and cost incurred;
- (b) give the number of houses which have not been completed, giving the reasons thereof, and
- (c) arrange for an inquiry to be conducted on same with a view to detecting cases of mismanagement or victimisation, if any.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the projects financed through the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues, I am advised that during the period January to June 2005, 31 projects spread over 30 localities for the sum of Rs13 m. have been approved for phased implementation. A statement giving the sites, costs and status of the projects is being tabled. As it may be noted, most of the projects have been initiated and are ongoing. However, while some of them have not started, others have already been completed.

As regards part (b) of the question, during the period January to June 2005 the construction of 164 houses has been approved by the Trust Fund for an amount of Rs12 m. Out of these, 93 are ongoing and the remaining ones have not yet started. As the hon. Member is aware, the Trust Fund provides funding to Non Governmental Organisations for purchase of materials. The construction is carried out on a self-help basis with the assistance of voluntary labour. The delay for the completion of the houses is due mainly to periodic shortages of construction materials and the slow mobilisation of voluntary labour.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am given to understand that no formal complaints have been received concerning cases of mismanagement or victimisation at the office of the Trust Fund either in Mauritius or Rodrigues. I am, however, requesting the Trust Fund to carry out an inquiry for finding out whether or not there has been any such case as mentioned by the hon. Member. I would also invite the hon. Member to provide any information that he may have on that particular matter.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that no formal complaints have been received. It seems that certain documents may have been eaten by rats. If this is so, we need to have special type of traps to catch this special type of rats! May I ask the hon. Minister whether the way the inquiry will be conducted will allow those victims to depone? Because we believe that this is the best way to shed light on this issue.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Trust Fund has some noble objectives in terms of providing housing facilities to people wherever they are. There have been some complaints made to me personally, but short of firm evidence, we cannot act. I have asked these people to provide some leads so that we can set up the inquiry and investigate as to whether people are being victimised because of where they live or who they vote or do not vote for. But I think the Trust Fund's objectives are to help people wherever they are.

Mr Von-Mally: I thank the hon. Minister.

Mr Bérenger: Can I be allowed to point out to the hon. Minister of Finance that I adopted exactly the same attitude in the recent past when allegations of mismanagement and victimisation were raised. I appealed to the hon. Member to come forward with concrete evidence. Therefore, this is the way that we should proceed, that is, to come with concrete evidence and, if required, I am sure the Minister will consider a deeper inquiry.

LA FLORA, BOIS CHERI & GRAND BOIS - WATER SUPPLY

(No. I B/39) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member of Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the tender exercise for the Central Water Authority contract (C2000/49) (Improvement of water supply to La Flora, Bois Chéri and Grand Bois), ascertain –

- (a) if the contract has been awarded and, if so, to which entity;
- (b) the cost of the project, and
- (c) when works (i) started and (ii) are to be completed.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the contract referred to by the hon. Member pertains to improvement of water supply to La Flora, Bois Chéri and Grand Bois. It was awarded to A & J Maurel Construction Ltée on 15 October, 2002.

The contract value was Rs22,588,370.

Works started on 26 November 2002 and pipelaying works thereof were completed on 21 April 2004 whereas the rehabilitation works at the Nouvelle France pumping station were completed on 01 February 2005.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. However, I would like to ask him if he is aware that the inhabitants of the area commonly called tea belt i.e. Bois Chéri, La Flora and Grand Bois are still facing problems with the daily water supply be it during the weekend or the week days. In spite of what the Minister has answered, namely, that the works were completed on 21 April 2004, nothing seems to have been resolved.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem lies in the inadequate volume of water supply to cater for the whole region of Nouvelle France, La Flora and Grand Bois. As the hon. Member said, water is being provided for an average of 16 hours per day. The interruption of supply and frequent valve operation are affecting the proper functioning of equipment such as pressure reduces on the pipeline resulting into high pressure and burst on certain sections. Pipes have, therefore, to be repaired from time to time thereby necessitating interruption of the water supply.

In order to bring further improvement in the system, additional water resources are to be injected to ensure an uninterrupted supply regime. The Water Resources Unit is presently investigating the availability of additional groundwater resources in the region and the possibility of transferring more water from La Marie system towards 16^{ème} Mille and Nouvelle France is also being examined by the CWA.

There are two projects being presently implemented in the region with two contracts under consideration.

AUDIT REPORT (2003-2004) - PROJECTS

(No. I B/40) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the 233 projects, referred to at paragraph 10.4 of the 2003-2004 Annual Audit Report, for a total amount of Rs1.1 billion on which consultancy fees amounting to Rs10.1 m. have already been paid as at 30 June 2004 and which have not yet been implemented, he will –

- (a) give the name/s of the consultancy firm/s involved;
- (b) state the reasons for the non-implementation of those projects, and
- (c) state the steps he proposes to take with a view to avoiding any such recurrence.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir , as regards part (a), Gibb (Mtius) Ltd was the only firm retained for Consultancy services for the period under review by the Director of Audit.

With regard to part (b), the past practice at the NDU was to entrust the Consultant, Gibb (Mtius) Ltd with the responsibility of preparing detailed design and cost estimate before approval for the implementation of the projects was sought.

Once the design and cost estimates were ready, the Ministry was liable to pay Gibb (Mtius) Ltd for its services irrespective of the implementation of works. Implementation depended on availability of funds and in many cases funds were not available. Therefore, the Ministry had no option but to shelve the projects and to pay Gibb (Mtius) Ltd the appropriate consultancy fees.

As for part (c), it is now proposed to seek consultancy services only for projects which have been approved for implementation and for which funds have been earmarked.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can I know from the hon. Minister how the consultants were being chosen, whether it was through tender exercise?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was through tender exercise.

TOURISM FUND - PROMOTERS

No. I B/41) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the Tourism Fund set up in October 2003 under the Finance and Audit (Tourism Fund) Regulations 2003, state if all promoters have contributed thereto and, if not, will he state who are the promoters who have not done so.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X.L Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question.

The Tourism Fund was set up under the Finance and Audit (Tourism Fund) Regulations 2003 to finance the implementation of –

- (a) infrastructural works in connection with tourism development projects in Mauritius, and
- (b) such other associated works for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas in which the projects are being implemented.

It is to be noted that all expenditure from the Fund has been effected to meet infrastructural works and no money had, to 04 July 2005, been spent on works for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas where projects were being developed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that not all promoters have paid their contributions to the Tourism Fund.

I am further informed that under the Bel Ombre Integrated Hotel and Leisure Development Project, there are five hotel promoters. In accordance with their lease agreements, three of them, Pristine Resorts Ltd (namely, Telfair Golf and Spa), Pariaka Hotel Ltd (namely, Heritage Golf and Spa), Salt Lake Resorts (namely, Voile D'Or), are expected to pay Rs12.5 m., Rs12.5 m. and Rs25 m. respectively. However, it was agreed that Salt Lake Resorts would deduct Rs1,120,000 out of its expected contribution of Rs25 m. for expenses incurred on the re-routing of the irrigation system for five vegetable growers at Bel Ombre.

Pristine Resorts Ltd and Pariaka Hotel Ltd have paid their contributions in full, while Salt Lake Resorts has paid only Rs12.5 m. Therefore, the latter still owes Rs11.38 m. as from 05 November 2004, and this, despite several reminders.

The other two promoters Temsa Holiday Resorts and Naïade Resorts have not yet signed their lease agreements, and accordingly their contributions are not yet payable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in respect of the St Felix Integrated Hotel and Leisure Development Project, there are three hotel promoters. Only one promoter, namely SPA On the Shores has signed its lease agreement and has paid its contribution of Rs25 m. to the Fund.

The other two promoters, namely St Felix Sugar Estate and Partners (being Société Pointe aux Roches, Société Plage Bleue, Société Beau Bain and Société Du Sud) and St Felix Worldwide Resorts Ltd (being Groupe Ouest Concassage) have not yet signed their lease agreements.

I am further informed that since promoters tend to delay unduly payment of their contributions, it has been decided that contributions should be settled in full upon signature of the lease agreement.

I am advised that provisions exist in the lease agreement to enforce compliance to its terms and conditions. Accordingly, my Ministry will liaise with the Ministry of Housing and Lands to ensure that actions are taken to recover the outstanding amount from Salt Lake Resorts.

FAIR TRADING & COMPETITION ADVISORY COUNCIL – SETTING UP

(No. I B/42) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, having regard to the Competition Act 2003, he will state if an Office of Fair Trading and a Competition Advisory Council have been set up.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Competition Act was passed in the House on 01 April 2003. Subsequently, only sections 4, 8 and 9 of the Act have been proclaimed on 10 August 2004 to allow the setting up of the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Advisory Council.

The objective of the Act is to establish the legal framework for the control of restrictive business practices with a view to enhancing competition in Mauritius through measures designed to promote efficiency, adaptability and competitiveness in the economy for the end purpose of widening the range of customer choice in obtaining goods and services at a fairer and more competitive price.

Concerning the setting up of an Office of Fair Trading, the scheme of service for the post of Director of Fair Trading is, at present, being finalised by the Ministry of Civil Service affairs. Once the Director is recruited, the Office of Fair Trading and a Competition Advisory Council will be set up.

This Government is committed to check monopolistic practices and profiteering tendencies as well. In the absence of true competition in certain sectors where the market leaders enjoy monopolistic power and play the role of price fixers, market failures do occur.

Monopolistic condition not only allows a few to practice profiteering but it is also seriously eroding consumers' purchasing power and it leads towards increase in poverty. Government is, therefore, duty-bound to check on abuses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is working towards the establishment of a Competition Commission. This Commission will ensure that fair business practices become the order of the day.

Mr Mohamed: If I am to understand correctly, therefore, the answer of the hon. Minister, in spite of what was in the previous Government's programme, what he is saying is that nothing was finalised. Is that what he is saying and that nothing was set up as far as the Competition Act of 2003 is concerned?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, my answer is "no", nothing has been done and I can assure the hon. Member that the Competition Commission will be set up as at paragraph 89 in our programme.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 2 - HOUSING PROJECTS

(No. I B/43) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether there has been any housing project for Vallée Pitot, Château d'Eau, Bangladesh, Tranquebar and Ward IV in Constituency No. 2 and, if so, will he give the number of houses built during the period September 2000 to July 2005 and if not, state whether there are any housing projects in the pipeline for these regions.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has not been any housing project for Vallée Pitot, Château d'Eau, Bangladesh, Tranquebar and Ward IV in Constituency No. 2 during the period September 2000 to July 2005.

In fact, Sir, I am informed that a plot of State land of the extent of 2.06 A was proposed for housing development at Corner Raoul Rivet and Cook Streets. However, this plot of land has subsequently been vested in the then Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for the construction of a new State Secondary School and a playground for the school. This project has not yet been implemented and I am informed that the said Ministry is currently working on a planning exercise regarding the construction of the new school.

As regards the last part of the question, the House may further wish to know that the NHDC has received around 7000 applicants from persons within the Port Louis region. An exercise is currently being carried out at my Ministry for the identification of appropriate sites in Port Louis and its vicinity including constituency No. 2 to satisfy part of this demand.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the hon. Minister state to the House how many squatters in those regions have been regularised with water and electricity facilities given to them?

Mr Dulull: I need notice of the question, Sir.

PORT LOUIS - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

(No. I B/44) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he is aware that some areas in Port Louis are not provided with a proper sewerage system and, if so, will he look into the matter and consider coming forward with a project at the earliest.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that almost all the areas of Port Louis are sewered and that a few areas only remain to be sewered.

Government is presently implementing a project for the provision and rehabilitation of sewerage facilities in the northern part of Port Louis, including the Paul Toureau region and in the southern part including Cité Borstal and Cité Vallijee to cater

for these regions. Some 850 housing units are concerned. My Ministry is implementing the rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure programme on a priority basis. Under this programme, it is planned that sewerage facilities to these areas of Port Louis will be provided in due course. Tenders are presently being evaluated and works are expected to start by October this year.

Sir, in addition, there are some 70 cases where requests for the extension of the public sewerage system have been made. These requests are being attended to and tenders for these works are expected to be launched by September 2005.

Because of the nature of the problem, I am personally monitoring the situation to make sure that the implementation does not suffer any delay.

BLACK RIVER SAVANNE /BEL OMBRE & ST FELIX - ROAD REALIGNMENT

(No. I B/45) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether, in regard to the realignment of part of the Black River Savanne Road B9 at Bel Ombre and St Félix he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain -

- (a) the name of the contractors to whom the works were allocated by the Road Development Authority,
- (b) the total amount disbursed by the Ministry to date to the Authority for payment to the contractors for works executed,
- (c) if there is any agreement between Government and the hotel promoters under the Integrated Resort Scheme for realignment cost and, if so, the amount paid to date to the Tourism Fund by the hotel promoters of Bel Ombre and St Félix.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications(Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows -

With regard to part (a) of the question, the main contractors are General Construction Ltd for the realignment works of part of the Black River Savanne Road B9 at Bel Ombre and A & J Maurel Colas/Rehm Grinaker for the realignment works at St Felix.

Regarding part (b) of the question, as at to date, the amounts disbursed by the Tourism Fund to the Road Development Authority are Rs62.6 m. and Rs102.2 m. that is a total of Rs164.8m. The total estimated costs for the two projects inclusive of associated works are Rs78.8 m. and Rs153.7 m. respectively, that is, Rs232.5 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the projects at Bel Ombre and St Felix do not fall under the Integrated Resort Scheme.

However, one of the conditions of the lease agreement between Government and the hotel promoters is that each promoter has to contribute an amount of money to the Tourism Fund. Six promoters were expected to contribute Rs25 m. each. The other two promoters were expected to contribute Rs12.5 m. each.

However, it was subsequently agreed that one of the two promoters, namely Salt Lake Resorts would deduct Rs1.12 m. out of its expected contribution of Rs25 m. for expenses incurred on re-routing of the irrigation system for five vegetable growers at Bel Ombre. Total expected contribution from the promoters is therefore Rs173.88 m. instead of Rs175 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, to date, the amount paid by the hotel promoters at Bel Ombre and St Félix are Rs37.5 m. and Rs25 m. respectively; therefore, a balance of Rs111,380,000 is still outstanding.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what measures he intends to take to recuperate that sum of money?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned in my previous reply, a substantial part of this money is in fact payable upon signature of the lease agreement. The balance that is outstanding is due from one promoter and measures have to be taken to recuperate this sum.

BLACK RIVER SAVANNE /ST FELIX - ROAD REALIGNMENT

(No. I B/46) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the realignment of part of the Black River Savanne Road B9 at St Felix, he will state -

- (a) if there has been any agreement between Government and St Félix Sugar Estate concerning land exchange for the hotel sites and the realignment and, if so, will he give details thereof, and
- (b) the name of the lawful owner of the land strip on which the new road at St Félix has been constructed.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, in respect of the realignment of part of Black River Savanne Road B9, there exists an agreement between Government and St. Felix SE concerning exchange of land for hotel sites and the realignment of the coastal road. This agreement follows the approval in October 2003 of the Integrated Plan for Tourism and Leisure Development at St. Félix which provides, *inter alia*, for an exchange of land

between Government and St. Félix SE, to 3 hotel sites, a compact public beach and a major road deviation.

A letter of intent was issued to St. Félix SE on 25 November 2003 by my Ministry and provided for the following in favour of St. Félix SE -

- (1) an industrial lease, for hotel development (Hotel Site No. 1) over an extent of 15A34 at Union St. Félix, comprising 11A84 of uncommitted Pas Géométriques; 2A56 of public beach to be deproclaimed; and 0A94P of public road to be deproclaimed, and
- (2) an industrial lease over 5A19 of *Pas Géométriques* Bel Air for the development of a hotel (Hotel Site 2), that, however, would be built together with existing lessees - Société Pointe aux Roches, Société Plage Bleue, Société Beau Bain and Société du Sud.

In addition to usual conditions, the grant of these leases to St. Félix SE was made subject to certain specific conditions including -

- (a) St. Félix SE ceding to Government the following portions of lands -
 - (i) 20 Arpents for road realignment;
 - (ii) 14A07 P for hotel development site (Hotel Site No. 3)
 - (iii) 0420 P Turning Bay, and
 - (iv) 5A50 P for public beach and social facilities.
- (b) St Félix SE arranging for -
 - (i) provision of a jetty for a fish landing station;
 - (ii) designing and landscaping of the new public beach including the earthworks for the recreational area, and
 - (iii) contribution of Rs25 m. to the Tourism Fund for the purpose of community development and road infrastructure.

I wish to reiterate that the offer for grant of leases together with the land exchange mechanism was made subsequent to the approval by the former Government of the Integrated Plan for Tourism and Leisure Development at St Félix.

The lease in respect of Hotel Site No. 1 was signed in favour of Spa on the Shores Ltd, the nominee Company of St. Félix SE on 27 January 2005; and the Rs25 m. has already been paid to the Tourism Fund.

The jetty for the fish landing station has not been implemented following consultation made under the Chairmanship of the then Minister of Fisheries and in accordance with the recommendations of the fishermen of the locality.

The new public beach is presently under implementation, but the works by St. Félix SE are behind schedule.

The lease in respect of Hotel Site 2, in favour of a new company to be formed by St. Félix SE, Société Pointe aux Roches, Société Plage Bleue, Société Beau Bain and Société du Sud has not been implemented, given that the above Company and Sociétés have not yet submitted the Certificate of Incorporation of the new Company.

With respect to Hotel Site 3, a letter of reservation was issued to Groupe Ouest Concassage on 09 August 2004. The plans were cleared by my Ministry on 14 June 2005 subject, *inter alia*, to all clearances being obtained.

As regards part (b) of the question, the lawful owner of the land strip on which, the new road at St. Félix has been constructed is the "Government of Mauritius".

ROSE BELLE S.E. – EX-WORKERS – RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

(No. I B/47) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether Government proposes to have a residential development scheme for the ex-workers of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board under the VRS Scheme of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act and, if so, will he state –

- (a) whether the plots of land to be allotted to such workers are clear of dense vegetation and are not level and, if so, whether these will be considered as part of the infrastructure works being undertaken, and
- (b) when the plots will be handed over to those entitled thereto.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, since 23 December 2001, 523 persons are still waiting for their plots of land. I am advised by the Sugar Estate that it has identified three plots of land at Union Park, two at Rose Belle and one at Gros Billot for the residential scheme. The sites are occupied by vegetation and are unevenly levelled.

The contracts for the infrastructural works on these sites were allocated at the beginning of this year, that is, in February and March 2005, almost four years after the retirement of the workers.

It is worth noting that 73 male workers were aged 55 and above, 209 female workers were 60 and above. In view of their age, some of these workers may be overtaken by health problems and may not even have the opportunity to take possession of their plot of land in view of the unduly long delay in handing over the title deeds.

For the information of the House, tenders were invited on 06 December 2004 and the contracts for infrastructural works were awarded for the total value of Rs166,267,776

to two companies, plus Rs2,247,925 to LuxConsult Ltd. for civil engineering consultancy services.

Additionally, the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board has proposed to engage the services of a notary for the preparation of title deeds against payment of Rs7,200 per title deed - total of Rs3,765,600 - as compared to the rate of around Rs4,100 proposed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority for similar title deed in other cases.

As regards levelling works, I have been informed that no survey was carried out to determine the extent of the works. The contracts, therefore, do not explicitly provide for levelling. According to the consultant, the cost of levelling will be met on the contingencies in which a sum of Rs1,350,000 has been earmarked, but this amount will not be adequate.

The title deeds cannot be handed over to the workers until the completion of the infrastructural works. I am advised that the works were expected completed in August 2005, but as at today, only 50% of the works have been completed on five sites and 35% on one site. The works are now expected to be completed in October 2005 and the handing over of title deeds by November 2005.

(Interruptions)

Well, of course, we have requested the Sugar Authority to monitor the situation closely and to report development on a weekly basis on the status of the works and to ensure that the levelling works are carried out to the satisfaction of all workers.

The decisions of the Board regarding the services of the notary will be reviewed and a full scrutiny of the procedures for the award of contracts will be carried out.

**ROADS RESURFACING (LAST GENERAL ELECTION) –
MEETING WITH RDA, OVERTIME, ETC.**

(No. I B/48) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the resurfacing of roads before the last general election, ascertain –

- (a) if a meeting was chaired by the Officer-in-Charge of the Road Development Authority at the seat of the Authority on 13 April 2005 for issuing instructions to the District Engineers of the Authority to issue work orders for each Constituency; and
- (b) if the engineers were instructed to work overtime during the period April-July 2005, and
- (c) the responsibility of the Officer-in-Charge in the resurfacing works.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the former Government had approved various infrastructural works to be carried out in the different constituencies through their respective Parliamentary Private Secretaries (PPS's). The PPS's submitted their requests to the MPI through the National Development Unit.

Subsequently, the requests were examined and a programme approved for each constituency at the meetings chaired by the former Deputy Prime Minister.

The project comprised of resurfacing works, construction of footpaths, drains and provision of handrails.

A meeting was held at the office of the Officer-in-Charge of the Road Development Authority at Vacoas on 13 April 2005 to discuss the programme of works to be implemented. Instructions were given to engineers to issue works' orders for each constituency.

As the supervision of the works in the different constituencies did not fall under the normal schedule of the engineers, that is, maintenance, repairs and upgrading of classified roads, the engineers were instructed to work beyond their normal working hours. This was approved by the Board of the Road Development Authority, including the payment of an allowance.

The responsibility of the Officer-in-Charge of Road Development Authority in the resurfacing works was for overall management and co-ordination.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether it is normal practice, when up to Rs15 m. of the taxpayers' money is being spent in each constituency, to ask engineers to submit work orders based on cost estimates done on visual inspection only, that is, from road to road?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is certainly not the normal practice.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether there are fixed rates established for the works conducted by the RDA?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the engineers concerned did make representations and they were greatly concerned about the standards to be adopted, the ways that the cost estimates have been arrived at, and certainly, they felt it was not their duties to do this type of work.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether those representations were made in writing?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have with me a copy of the representations made in writing. I'll table it.

ASIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS – ALLOWANCE

(No. I B/49) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that no increase in allowance has been effected during the last 5 years to Asian language teachers who attend to teaching after normal school hours and, if so, will he consider the advisability of looking into the matter and take into account the cost of living.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the teaching of Asian Languages, namely Hindi, Urdu/Arabic, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Modern Chinese. Classes for these subjects are run after school hours and in some cases on Saturdays, mostly by registered schools of respective socio-cultural organisations in baitkas, temples, madrassas, kovils and sometimes in Government school premises.

Teachers employed by the socio-cultural organisations include primary school teachers and persons from outside. Supervision of the work of the teachers is carried out by 27 visiting officers appointed from the rank of supervisor/senior supervisor, assistant supervisor and teaching staff holding a degree in the subject concerned.

As regards the allowance payable to those involved in the activity, it should be noted that prior to the 1998/1999 Budget, teachers of Asian Languages received a uniform monthly allowance of Rs500 irrespective of their qualifications. The allowance paid to teachers has evolved as follows –

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quantum (Rs) monthly</u>
1976	100
1987	125
1989	150
1991	300
1997	500

The rates were revised as announced in the 1998/1999 Budget by Labour Government as follows –

University Graduates	Rs2,000 per month
HSC Holders	Rs1,500 per month
SC Holders	Rs1,000 per month

Payment to teachers is made on the basis of twelve sessions of one hour monthly and in cases where the twelve sessions are not completed, payment is made on a pro-rata basis. Visiting officers are paid an allowance of Rs200 per visit up to a maximum of Rs2,400 (12 visits).

I can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that during the past five years, there has been no increase in the allowance payable to teachers as well as to the visiting officers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before contemplating any increase there is need for a general assessment and review of the project in the first instance. My Ministry will have to examine all the implications and come up with appropriate recommendations.

Mr Dayal: In the same breath, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to consider the possibility of reviewing the ratio of teacher to pupil? Because it causes a lot of hardship to such organisations running classes for Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Urdu. Even upper classes in Hindi could not be run because they cannot meet the ratio of 1:25.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this point will be taken into account during the assessment.

UPPER DAGOTIERE - DRAIN WORKS

(No. I B/50) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether in regard to the road in Upper Dagotière, he will state if he is aware that -

- (a) drain works which were to be completed by the beginning of August 2005 are still at the initial stage;
- (b) the processions associated with the *Ganesh Chatturti* Festival will proceed partly along that road, and
- (c) vehicles experience a lot of inconvenience to negotiate that road and, if so, will he use his good offices to speed up matters in connection with that road.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a contract for drain works at Upper Dagotière was awarded on 05 December 2004 to Gamma Civil Ltd. for a sum of Rs16,946,446.

Contractually, the project should have been completed on 14 August this year. However, only 50% of the works have been completed as at today.

The delay in the project has been mainly due to deep excavations, difficult access, ingress of water in trenches, presence of existing water pipes and telecommunication poles and adverse weather conditions.

All these issues have been addressed and the project is now expected to be completed by mid November 2005.

Instructions have also been issued to the consultant and the contractor to ensure that the part of the road expected to be used for the processions in connection with the forthcoming *Ganesh Chatturti* festival is made good for use. My Ministry has impressed

upon the contractor to expedite the works along the Marathi Shiv Mandir road with a view to easing the use of that road by vehicle owners.

MALINGA/CREVE COEUR LINK ROAD - CONSTRUCTION

(No. I B/51) 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 will state where matters stand regarding the Malinga-Crève Coeur link road and when Government intends to start the construction thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Malinga/Crève Coeur Road Project was initially studied in 1994 and the tender documents were prepared in July 1998 by a firm of consultant, namely LuxConsult SA.

In March 2005, Messrs BCEOM was appointed for the review of the tender documents initially prepared and for the supervision of the works. A preliminary report has been submitted and is being studied.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he can lay on the Table of the Assembly a plan of the road showing the other roads as well? I understand that a detailed design was already prepared well before 2000 and land acquisition was already made. We are talking about traffic congestion and I think that opening of this road will ease the traffic flow.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will certainly find out and give the information required, but I would like to draw the attention of the House that we are looking at the overall strategy of decongesting certain hot spots, certain black spots in the country and this is part of the project. We have to discuss it within a global strategy.

L'AVENIR, ST. PIERRE - VILLAGE HALL – CONVERSION INTO HEALTH CENTRE

(No. I B/52) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether the village hall of L'Avenir, St. Pierre, has been converted into a health centre and, if so, will he state -

- (a) who authorised such conversion and when, and
- (b) whether an alternative place for activities generally held in the village hall has been provided and, if so, where and when.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is yet another concrete example of poor planning by the previous Government. Things were done haphazardly on the eve of the elections

without ensuring that proper facilities were provided to the village councillors and to the inhabitants of the locality.

It was only on 26 June 2005 - that is, a few days before general elections - that the then Minister of Health and Quality of Life deemed it fit to inaugurate a health centre at the ground floor of the L'Avenir Village Hall without ensuring that all appropriate arrangements were made for the full functioning of the village council. I am informed that even today the toilet and other facilities at the first floor of the building where village council activities are expected to be carried out, are not yet ready.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on my assumption of duty as Minister, I have taken up the matter...

(Interruptions)

Their voice will not cover mine, please bear that in mind!

On my assumption of duty as Minister, I have taken up the matter with the Moka/Flacq District Council and have given instructions that the situation be redressed urgently. I am glad to report that remedial works have already started.

Dr. Ramloll: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have one supplementary question. It is sheer coincidence that this question is named I B/52. We have heard, Mr Speaker, Sir, of Mahebourg hospital being closed down and opening prior to elections. Now, we hear about the conversion of a village hall into a health centre where activities are held. The question is whether adequate space was made available prior to the conception of that idea, for a pharmacy, for waiting room and parking. This building is situated next to a playground, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to know whether these were taken into account.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, this is an example of mismanagement and poor planning. This is why we are in this mess today.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any meeting was held with the village councillors and, if so, when. I would also like to know whether any request was made from the Ministry of Health for such conversion. Would the Minister use his good office to obtain all documents concerning the subject matter?

Dr. David: I will certainly do that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**HELVETIA/QUARTIER MILITAIRE - HEALTH CENTRES –
UPGRADING**

(No. I B/53) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether his Ministry will arrange for the upgrading of the existing health centres at Helvetia and at Quartier Militaire with a view to providing medical services after normal working hours.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the current policy of the Ministry to provide medical service after normal working hours in all Area Health Centres as follows -

On weekdays from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

On Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 9.00 a.m. to noon.

Such services are already being provided at the Dr. Alfred Quenum Area Health Centre, Helvetia. The services provided are general consultation and Family Planning Clinic.

As regards the Quartier Militaire Area Health Centre, arrangements are being made to extend the services after normal working hours.

Regarding the upgrading of Helvetia and Quartier Militaire Area Health Centres, these are already on the priority list of projects of the Ministry and will be undertaken during the course of the present financial year. The renovation works will include painting, tiling, tarmac, in-built furniture, window openings, plumbing, fencing and boundary wall and provision of gate at both Area Health Centres.

Dr. Ramloll: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Minister of Health for the answer. I would like him to take into account the inconvenience caused to the population of this area because Dr. Jeetoo hospital is the hospital where these people attend to and the present catchment area principle is obsolete. That's why we would like to know whether the Minister could upgrade these two centres.

Mr Faugoo: I will, Sir.

L'ASSURANCE, DAGOTIERE - BRIDGE - RECONSTRUCTION

(No. I B/54) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether the bridge at L'Assurance, Dagotière has been damaged and, if so, will he state -

- (a) if the tender exercise for its repair has been completed, and
- (b) when works are likely to start.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the bridge at L'Assurance, Dagotière collapsed on 16 March 2005 following heavy rainfall. I understand from the Moka/Flacq District Council that approval of the Central Tender Board is awaited for the award of the contract for the reconstruction of the bridge.

The works are expected to start by mid September 2005 and will be completed by mid December 2005.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he can visit the region, because the bridge has collapsed and people have to use an alternative route to go there, that is, from Lower Dagotièrè to L'Assurance. The road from Lower Dagotièrè to L'Assurance is in a deplorable state and the people of L'Assurance would appreciate if the Minister could effect a visit there.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we will organise a site visit on Monday.

PATIENTS (LESS THAN 60% PHYSICAL INCAPACITY) – SOCIAL AID - SURVEY

(No. I B/55) Dr. P. Ramlool (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether in regard to social aid related to patients with less than 60% permanent physical incapacity following ailments and disease, she will state if any survey in connection therewith was carried out between 2000 and 2005 and, if so, will she state the outcome thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am told that no survey has been carried out between 2000-2005 in regard to social aid related to patients with less than 60% physical incapacity following ailments and disease.

I understand the concern of the hon. Member.

It is to be deplored that such a survey has never been conducted and from a policy point of view, such a survey is of vital importance which would have yielded valuable insights on the 7,600 beneficiaries regarding mainly the nature and degree of their incapacity.

In line with our integrated approach on disability, my Ministry is setting up a database regarding such cases, which would ultimately help in appropriate policy decisions.

Dr. Ramlool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Minister for her answer. As we all know, the present 60% incapacity is obsolete. There are many cases where people are physically and mentally unfit to attend duty but don't have 60% incapacity. Can this be reviewed? Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem is that, whenever these patients go to the Medical Board, there is total rejection. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether an

immediate study could be carried out, in order to alleviate the sufferings of so many patients.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will certainly look into the issue.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. I B/56) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the National Solidarity Fund, she will –

- (a) state if there are pre-set conditions that subscribers must imperatively fulfil before any claims thereunder can be favourably entertained, and
- (b) for the period January 2005 to date, table a list of beneficiaries of financial assistance, together with their names and addresses.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, there are predetermined criteria for consideration of application under the National Solidarity Fund Act 1991. Section 4 of the Act lays down the objects of the Fund, which are as follows –

- (a) to provide financial assistance to citizens of Mauritius, residing in Mauritius, who may require surgical operations which can only be performed abroad or in medical institutions in Mauritius approved by the Ministry of Health;
- (b) to provide, with the approval of the Minister, financial assistance directly to individuals who have undergone severe personal hardship.

However, since the setting up in 1999 of the Trust Fund for Overseas Treatment, provision of assistance for surgical operations has been taken over by the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life and the National Solidarity Fund has been providing only one air ticket to one parent accompanying a patient proceeding on medical treatment abroad.

Since 1999, the National Solidarity Fund Board has mainly been providing assistance falling under section 4(b) of the Act, that is, cases of severe personal hardship, which include –

- (i) tragic accidents resulting in loss of life;
- (ii) needy students;
- (iii) victims of natural calamities;
- (iv) repatriation of mortal remains;
- (v) destitute;
- (vi) fire victims;
- (vii) assistive devices;
- (viii) patients suffering from incurable diseases;

- (ix) medical treatment not available in Government hospitals, and
- (x) centenarian.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am arranging for a list of beneficiaries of financial assistance, together with their addresses, to be laid on the Table of the National Assembly.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND BOARD - COMPOSITION

(No. I B/57) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Board of the National Solidarity Fund, she will –

- (a) state who has been its Chairman since January 2004 to date, together with the qualifications and working conditions attached to the post, including remuneration and any other fringe benefits;
- (b) give the composition thereof, and
- (c) give the frequency of its meetings during the above period.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, Mr Kalamazaad Joomun has been chairperson of the National Solidarity Fund from December 2000 to 07 July 2005.

Mr K. Joomun is a HSC holder and was also Chairman and Manager of the Aleemiah College Education Board.

As Chairman, Mr Joomun was entitled to Rs1,125 per Board sitting (not exceeding Rs4,500 per month) and the use of one cellular phone.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am arranging to lay on the Table of the Assembly the composition of the Board for the period December 2000 to June 2003 and June 2003 to June 2005.

Forty-two meetings have been held during the period January 2004 to 07 July 2005.

I have been informed that the last meeting of the Board was held on 07 July 2005, that is, the day of the swearing in ceremony of the newly elected Government.

PETIT RAFFRAY FOOTBALL GROUND - UPGRADING

(No. I B/58) Mr N. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether he has been made aware that the football playground in the village of Petit Raffray is in a pitiable state and, if so, will he make the

necessary arrangements towards upgrading same, including its fencing and the provision of other basic amenities, indicating when and, if not, why not.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the project for the upgrading of the facilities at Petit Raffray football ground, which comprises *inter alia* turfing and levelling of the ground, provision of water points, fencing and improvements to changing rooms dates back to October 2003.

In view of the cost implication, the Ministry of Youth & Sports then agreed to proceed, in the first instance, with the fencing of the football ground. The fencing works were entrusted to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure & Land Transport.

In July 2004, following a meeting at the Ministry of Environment and NDU, it was agreed that the NDU would undertake the project. However, there was no positive follow-up regarding this project.

As I informed the House in my reply to PQ No. I B/7, an audit of all existing sports facilities is being carried out by my Ministry and the report is expected by the end of the month. This will form the basis for the implementation of relevant projects relating to upgrading of our sports infrastructure. The upgrading of the facilities at the Petit Raffray football ground will also form part of the exercise.

At 1.02 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

ROSE BELLE – MARKET FAIR

(No. I B/59) Mr N. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether there was any project for the construction of a market fair at Rose Belle and, if so whether it has been delayed and the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Question I B/59 and I B/60 together.

I am advised that tender for the market fair project at Rose Belle was launched in January 2005 and received in March 2005. However, due to major deviation from tender requirements by tenderers, no contract was awarded for the project. A second tender was launched in May 2005 and received in July 2005 and at present, the tenders are being evaluated by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping.

The contract for the construction of traffic centre was awarded to Transinvest Ltd on 04 March 2005 for the sum of Rs27,818,437.90.

I am informed that works are scheduled for completion at end of November this year. As at today around 29% of the works have been completed and the latest report states that works are on schedule.

ROSE BELLE – TRAFFIC CENTRE

(No. I B/60) Mr N. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether there was any project for the construction of a traffic centre at Rose Belle, and if so, whether it has been delayed and the reasons therefor.

(Vide reply to PQ I B/59)

MAURITIUS/EUROPEAN UNION – FISHING AGREEMENT

(No. I B/61) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes): asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether in November 2003, the EU Commission Fisheries Division released EUR 300,000 for financing projects identified to empower fishermen.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mauritius has a Fishing Agreement with the European Union since 1990 to allow EU fishing vessels to fish in Mauritius waters subject to financial contributions to Mauritius agreed upon under protocols between the two parties. The Fourth Protocol under this agreement for the period 03 December 1999 to 02 December 2002 was exceptionally extended for a further period of one year till 02 December 2003.

Under this Protocol, 50% of the financial contribution was to be credited to the Government revenue and the remaining 50% to the then Ministry of Fisheries for its Scientific and Technical Programme.

Accordingly, out of a total of euros 412,500 obtained for the period December 2002 to December 2003, 50% was directly credited to Government revenue in 2003.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether in this *pays le mieux géré au monde*, this money was indeed used for that purpose, and if not, why not?

Dr. Boolell: In respect of information obtained from reliable sources, it seems that the amount, which was credited to Government revenue had been used to acquire fleet of cars for the SIDS Conference

DAYOT CO LTD - SHOOTING AND FISHING LEASE

(No. I B/62) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether a shooting and fishing lease was granted to Mr C. K. W. and Mr A. B., and, if so, when.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the records at my Ministry and the initials mentioned to in the question, the lease refers to an application made by Dayot Co. Ltd, which was subsequently changed to Domaine Le Cerf. An application for the shooting and fishing lease was made by Dayot Ltd on 24 May 2004 over a portion of land of 500 arpents at Grand Bassin.

In its application the company itself explicitly stated that it had been occupying the land since 2000 without holding a shooting and a fishing lease, that is, it intended to start an eco tourism activity and a “*table d’hôte*” and proposed to develop the land with the help of investors. Though the occupation and exploitation of the land since 2000 was illegal and the normal procedures required that legal action be forthwith initiated against the company, nevertheless, on 23 December 2004, the then Government took the decision to grant a shooting and fishing lease to the company.

A letter of intent was issued on 23 March 2005 informing the company that Government had approved the grant of a lease of a portion of land of 505 arpents for a period of 7 years starting from the 01 April 2005. The then Government not only condoned an act of breach of the law but also regularised a situation of illegal occupation of the land. The more so even though the Commissioner of Police indicated that one of the Directors did not have a clear police record, in fact, he is of shady character and he was involved in a spate of violence, specially during the electoral campaign.

It further provided that a settlement regarding the previous investment made in the land be reached within a period of 6 months. On 05 May 2005, a formal letter of approval was issued to the company. As regards the use of land for eco tourism and “*table d’hôte*”, approval was conveyed for these activities, though they do not fall within the purview of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act. In fact, the Attorney General’s Office has advised in no uncertain terms that it was not legal in order to grant a shooting and fishing lease to carry out these activities.

I wish to inform the House that after taking cognizance of the disturbing facts regarding this case, on 29 July 2005 Government had decided to withdraw immediately the letter of intent issued to the company.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say whether he proposes to retrieve all shooting and fishing leases for reallocation to other purposes?

Dr. Boolell: The hon. Lady can rest assured that when the opportunity arises, we will do the needful.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is inextricably linked to deer farming, can the Minister say whether he proposes to review the policy regarding deer farming?

Dr. Boolell: It's not relating to deer farming. In fact, it's relating to somebody who was close to them.

(Interruptions)

He was involved in a spate of violence, condoned by the then Government. If it is the policy of this Government not to grant similar licences, we will take appropriate measures and we are not going to condone any illegal activities, the onus was on them; they have failed and they have failed abysmally.

(Interruptions)

SOOKUN GAYA PRIMARY GOVT. SCHOOL - INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. I B/63) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he has been made aware that the classrooms, toilets and other infrastructure at the Sookun Gaya Primary Government School in Constituency No. 18 are in a pitiable state and, if so, will he consider taking the appropriate remedial measures.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, a survey was carried out at Sookun Gaya Government School on 12 August 2005 by the Directorate zone 4, and I am informed that the general state of the school is good. The classrooms as well as the toilet block are in a good state, except for the roof in one classroom which is leaking and one defective cistern tank in the toilet block. Moreover, the school has requested that a staircase be closed.

Measures have been taken to replace the defective cistern tank before the resumption of the third term on 18 August 2005. The classroom leakage and staircase closing will be effected together around mid-September 2005 and completed some two weeks later.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the state of affairs with the roof leaking has been the case since the last five years? And whether there has been any attention to Sookun Gaya Primary Government School during the last five years?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as Sookun Gaya Government School is concerned, no urgent priority works were identified at the school for the financial years - 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.

TOURISM AUTHORITY - LICENCES - APPLICATIONS

(No. I B/64) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External

Communications whether he will give the number of applications for permits and licences pending at his Ministry as at 04 July 2005 and state whether that number has now gone down and, if so, by how much.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the number of applications at the Tourism Authority awaiting processing as at 04 July 2005 was 1057 for tourist enterprise licences, 300 for pleasure craft licences and 3056 for skippers licences, making a total of 4413.

On assuming office on 08 July, I became very concerned with the state of affairs which was causing a great deal of frustration amongst applicants. I considered that situation to be totally unacceptable whereby persons who want to create wealth, generate employment and thus contributing to economic growth should find so many obstacles on their way. Consequently, I asked the Tourism Authority to take appropriate and urgent measures to expedite matters regarding the processing of these applications; this included

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- (a) redeployment of staff from my Ministry to the Tourism Authority;
- (b) streamlining of procedures and improving on the processes involved in examining applications, and
- (c) meeting of the Licencing Committee to be convened once every week. A representative each of Health, Fire and Police authorities now sit on this committee to follow up and report on outstanding applications.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am now satisfied that the above measures have borne fruit. As at to date the Licensing Committee of the Tourism Authority has dealt with 417 applications, some of which dating as far back as July 2003. We expect that by mid-September 2005 we will be able to process some 400 additional Tourist Enterprise Licences making a total of some 800.

With respect to the huge number of outstanding applications for skippers licences, I am also pleased to announce that I have asked the Tourism Authority to organise training courses for the applicants on a decentralised and regional basis in order to attract greater numbers. It is expected that within a period of six months, all applications for commercial operations would have been cleared.

Furthermore, I have observed that the annual renewal of licences was causing undue hardship to licensees; people having to travel long distances and having to wait for a very long period of time in queues to pay their licences. With a view to facilitating the life of our citizens, I am pleased to announce that following consultations held with the Mauritius Post Ltd., the latter has agreed for licensees to pay and renew their Tourist Enterprise Licences as well as Pleasure Craft licences at the Post Office of their respective locality. I expect this new arrangement to be operational as from next month.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that the hon. Members and the public at large will appreciate that these measures are in line with Government philosophy aimed at putting people first.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister - given that we were talking about a very important pillar of our economy - to enlighten the House as to why there were so many *dossiers* pending at his Ministry? Was it a result of gross negligence or incompetence?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a variety of reasons, but I think we have now put good order.

MON DÉSSERT/MON TRÉSOR H.E - PHASING OUT

(No. I B/65) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether he will state if a decision has been taken regarding the phasing out of the Mon Désert/Mon Trésor Housing Estate and, if so, will he state whether -

- (a) the drawing of lots for the granting of land has been effected;
- (b) when the inhabitants thereof will receive their title deeds.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that -

- (a) the decision to phase out Mon Désert Mon Trésor Housing Estate was taken in 1996;
- (b) this housing estate comprises 133 housing units and each beneficiary is eligible to a lot of approximately 6 perches;
- (c) the beneficiaries have agreed to the proposed site which is in the close vicinity of Plaine Magnien;
- (d) the drawing of lots exercise for the above site was effected on 23 June 2005.

As regards part (b) of the question, before the title deeds are handed over to the beneficiaries, infrastructure for water supply, road and drainage network and electricity supply have to be completed. I have been advised that the Central Water Authority is currently on site to carry out water supply works which would be completed by November 2005. The National Housing Development Company Ltd is presently carrying out a survey of works before undertaking the tendering exercise. The road and drainage works are expected to be completed by May 2006 and the electricity supply by August 2006. It is expected that the title deeds would be handed over in 2006.

I must inform the hon. First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien that I have impressed upon the authorities to do the needful and to expedite matters.

MAHEBOURG FISH LANDING STATION - OPERATION

(No. I B/66) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether he intends to review the operations of the fish landing station in Mahebourg, the administration of which is vested in the Mauritius Fishermen Co-operative Federation.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that fishermen landing their catch at the fish landing station in Mahebourg have complained to my Ministry that the jetty was too high for the embarkation and disembarkation of their fishing equipment and landing of their catch. I am informed that the initial design of the jetty had to be modified and the platform elevated due to construction problems. Steps were consequently added to allow fishers to get access to the platform. My Ministry is liaising with State Property Development Company to address this issue.

In addition, the fishermen have also complained that they were facing difficulties to navigate at low tide due to shallow water. My Ministry is presently looking into the matter.

The building has in the fish landing station at the Mahebourg waterfront was constructed by the State Property Development Company Ltd. to accommodate the *Maison des Pêcheurs* managed by the Mauritius Fishermen Co-operative Federation as well.

As regards the fish landing station, I am informed that it is used to record attendance and catch of fishers by Fisheries Protection Officers who monitor the station on a 24-hour basis. The facilities provided at the station include electricity supply, water supply, daily cleaning of the fish shed and security services on a 24-hour basis.

One hundred and sixty-seven fishers grouped in cooperative societies are registered at the fish landing station.

Wire mesh has been installed by the Ministry to close air vents of the fish shed to prevent pigeons from entering and causing damage.

At this stage, it is not proposed to review the operations of the fish landing station.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that meetings chaired by the then Prime Minister were held in 2004 among all stakeholders concerning the operation of the fish landing station?

Dr. Boolell: Sir, I am aware that a meeting was chaired by the then Prime Minister on 17 May 2004 and all the stake players were present; and following views expressed by the fishers, they impressed upon the Government of the day that they should keep the fish landing station. We are going to do the needful and see to it that the interest of the fishers are protected.

Mr Varma: May I also, Mr Speaker, Sir, ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that it was decided at that particular meeting held in 2004 chaired by the then Prime Minister that the Mahebourg Fish Landing Station would be managed by a *comité de gestion*?

Dr. Boolell: I am aware. We are looking into the matter with all the stake players to take on board the views expressed; and in the light of decisions made and taken, we will see to it that it is implemented.

PLAINE MAGNIEN – BUILDING SITE LEASES

(No. I B/67) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether the leases of the portions of land on which stand the houses of the inhabitants of Daila and Solitude in Plaine Magnien have been renewed, and

- (a) if so, whether Government will continue renewing such leases, and
- (b) if not
 - (i) whether the inhabitants will be proposed alternative sites to build their houses anew,
 - (ii) whether such alternative sites have been identified, and
 - (iii) whether the inhabitants will be adequately compensated.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that no building site lease has been granted at Solitude in Plaine Magnien. However six building site leases have been granted at Daila in Plaine Magnien.

All the six abovementioned sites form part of the Master Plan for the Airport of Mauritius. My Ministry is liaising with the External Communications Division of the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications as to whether it is proposed to go ahead with the implementation of the Master Plan. In the affirmative, alternative sites for lessees will be identified. Otherwise the leases will be renewed.

As regards part (iii) of the question, the question of payment of compensation does not arise at this stage.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the leases of these plots of land are usually renewed in the month of June every year?

Mr Dulull: Based on information made available, normally the leases should have been renewed, but up to now this has not been the case.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the leases would be renewed or not?

Mr Dulull: We will look into the matter and should there be any need to renew, we will do so.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister when the Ministry of Housing and Lands will look into the matter? Because the people of these localities are pressing upon the authorities to get their leases renewed.

Mr Dulull: Well, as a caring Government, we do feel that it is a primary concern and the matter is being dealt by the Ministry.

MARE D'ALBERT - MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX

(No. I B/68) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether Government proposes to build a multipurpose complex at Mare d'Albert to house the social welfare centre, the area health centre, the post office, the women's centre and the village hall.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am replying to the question with your permission.

My Ministry had received a request from the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions on 21 April 2005 for the implementation of an integrated project comprising a new social welfare centre and other social amenities at Mare d'Albert.

However the project has been kept in abeyance due to lack of funds.

The project will be reconsidered for implementation during the current financial year subject to availability of funds.

Mr Varma: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether he is aware that a letter was sent to the concerned Ministry regarding a project of a multipurpose complex in Mare d'Albert?

Mr Bachoo: I have got a copy of the letter with me, Sir. But as I have mentioned, it all depends on the availability of funds in the forthcoming Budget.

HADJ PILGRIMAGE - 2005

(No. I B/69) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state the measures that are being taken for the organisation of Hadj pilgrimage this year.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, as per existing regulations, the Islamic Cultural Centre has the responsibility to arrange for the organisation and supervision of Hadj.

The organisation of Hadj involves a number of activities, namely flight arrangements, accommodation in the Holy lands, licensing of operators, training of Hadjis and issue of visas.

The Islamic Cultural Centre Board, which has been reconstituted, will tackle these issues immediately.

But meanwhile, the ICC has continued with the training of the Hadjis through the Hadj Awareness Programme (HAP) which started in May this year.

I am also advised that the ICC proposes to send a high level delegation to Jeddah soon to discuss issues relating to quota, the Hadj visas and necessary logistic support in Saudi Arabia for the Mauritian pilgrims.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first tell you that this issue is above politics.

(Interruptions)

Just listen, it is a very sensitive issue!

(Interruptions)

The fact is that it is too late now; I know it very well because since twenty years, I have been responsible for that. I am asking the hon. Minister – I know she will not be able to give an answer because it is not a very easy matter. According to my information from Saudi Arabia, it is very, very late. I would like to know when the Hadj Mission would go to Saudi Arabia to discuss the issue of lodging and visa?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I better wait for the coming back of the substantive Minister, but I want to assure the hon. Member also that the new Board which has just been constituted is looking into all urgent matters and corrective measures will be taken immediately.

ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE TRUST FUND BOARD - COMPOSITION (2005)

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(No. I B/70) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if a new Board has been constituted at the Islamic Cultural Centre for the year 2005.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Board of the Islamic Cultural Centre has already been reconstituted.

Mr Soodhun: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Chairman has been designated or the full Board because the Board normally is being constituted

with the consultation of the social organisation. I would like to know the composition of the Board.

Mrs Bappoo: The composition of the whole Board has been reconstituted, I would just like to table a copy of the composition of the new Board.

**CAMP CHAPELON/PLAINE LAUZUN
– TRUNK ROAD – SECURITY MEASURES**

(No. I B/71) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the difficulties arising out of the traffic flow and its consequences on security at the level of the access to Camp Chapelon and Plaine Lauzun from the trunk road and, if so, will he state what measures he intends to take in this regard to the above.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, I am informed that there is a high volume of vehicles using the access to Camp Chapelon and Plaine Lauzun from the motorway and vice versa.

The main intricacies observed are that vehicles have difficulty to exit on the motorway due to the geometry of the access and that vehicles going towards Camp Chapelon tend to travel at high speed.

Having been made aware of this problem by the inhabitants of the region, my colleague, the Minister of Local Government and myself, immediately carried out a site visit on Wednesday 03 August. Thereafter, I have instructed the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to undertake a detailed survey with a view to redesigning the access in order to facilitate vehicles exits on the motorway as well as recommending other mitigating measures to enhance safety.

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the Minister whether there is a technical report on all the issues. I know that the barriers of the access on the trunk road were closed due to some technical problem, especially when Government increased the speed limit. I think there must have a technical report on all these issues. Will the Minister lay on the Table of the Assembly copy of that report?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will certainly have a look at the report. Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem in that region is, as I said, the geometry. It is in a curve and there is high speed traffic. Between safety and access there is a problem. We are going to try and mitigate this problem.

Mr Barbier: We know about the problem, but can we have a copy of this technical report?

LA TOUR KOENIG HEALTH CENTRE – EXTENSION WORKS

(No. I B/72) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether there is a project for the extension of the La Tour Koenig Health Centre and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following a petition made by the inhabitants of the locality on the 06 of December 2001, action was initiated at the level of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the extension of the Michael Leal Community Health Centre at La Tour Koenig. This is yet another glaring example of mismanagement and poor planning, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In fact there have been three PQs on this matter, which have been answered. If I were to give a short answer to the question, I would have said that as matters stand today it is as it was back in 2001, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The MPI was requested to implement a project to extend the existing health centre. Since 2001, the MPI did the drawing of the extension project, prepared the tender documents, sought for approval from all the institutions and authorities and at the 11th hour they came up with a feasibility report to say that the project was not recommended. This is why I say we are back to where we were in 2001. This is one of the examples of how business was conducted in the last Government.

Mr Jugnauth: The real problem was with the MPI.

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: The real problem was with the then Government, Mr Speaker, Sir. The MPI was part of the Government. The problem was with the previous Government.

In fact, this shows glaringly the pace at which public projects were being conducted, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the Minister what he is proposing now to cater for this project?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as my friend has said earlier, as a caring Government, we are going for an alternative solution. We are looking for a premises to

let in order to cater for the people in the meantime until we come up with a proper project.

SOUTH EAST HIGHWAY - COST, CONTRACTOR, ETC

(No. I B/73) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the construction of the South East Highway, ascertain –

- (a) the total cost of the project;
- (b) the contractor to whom the project has been allocated;
- (c) the progress of works achieved to date, and
- (d) if Government intends to stop the work in progress and, if so, whether any compensation is payable.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that with regard to part (a), the estimated cost of the project is Rs655 m. inclusive of VAT.

As regards part (b), the contract has been awarded to Beijing Chang Cheng Corporation in January 2004;

With regard to part (c), to date the progress of work achieved is around 15%.

In regard to part (d), so far no decision has been taken to stop the works. As the House may be aware, a high-level committee of all stakeholders has been set up under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs to re-examine, among other things, the submissions of "Nature Watch". A first meeting of officials was held on 08 August 2005. Further meetings will be held shortly involving all stakeholders.

Mr Bérenger: The contractor is progressing from Plaine Magnien up to Ferney Estate and the Ferney forest which is behind the Estate. Can I know what distance is the contractor from Ferney?

The Ag. Prime Minister: They have not progressed from Ferney to the forest yet, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: I understand then that the contractor has not yet reached either Ferney Estate or the forest which is behind Ferney Estate. Does the hon. Ag. Prime Minister know what distance is the contractor from Ferney? How many days or weeks of work before reaching Ferney?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware of this information. I will provide it to the House.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether the progress of work achieved so far is according to schedule?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is about three months.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether in case works stop, what amount of compensation has to be paid to the contractor according to the contract?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is premature to speculate. We will wait and see what decisions are taken and I will provide the information to the House.

Mr Dowarkasing: The Ag. Prime Minister has a different view in respect to the actual track ...

(Interruptions)

May we know at this stage where matters stand?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We went on a site visit to see for ourselves and report to Government and decision will be taken by Government. Whatever else that the hon. Member has read in the press is pure speculation.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether there is a report on the environment impact, and, if so, will he lay copy of that report?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Which environment impact is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr Dowarkasing: The environment impact report prepared in that case.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have no problem in laying down the report.

**SIVANANDA AVENUE/MALARTIC STREET, CUREPIPE –
TRAFFIC LIGHTS**

(No. I B/74) 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 state if any provision has been made for traffic lights at the junction of Sivananda Avenue and Malartic Street, Curepipe, and, if so, will he state when will works start.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, civil works have already been completed and the traffic lights will be operational before the end of September 2005.

**NATIONAL PENSIONS FUND - BUILDINGS -
SECURITY SERVICE**

(No. I B/75) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether she will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the security service of the buildings falling under her Ministry and under the National Pensions Fund, ascertain to whom it has been entrusted and indicate -

- (i) the duration of the contract;
- (ii) who signed the contract;
- (iii) the amount of the contract, and
- (iv) if the contract of the former contractor has been terminated before the agreed contractual date.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that security service is not directly contracted in respect of the nine buildings owned by the National Pensions Fund and located at Port Louis, Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Pointe aux Sables, Mahebourg, Plaine Magnien, Goodlands, Piton and Triolet.

Instead recourse is had to a maintenance contract, COGESTIMO Ltd., wherein security service is subcontracted.

As regards the buildings falling under the Ministry where security service is contracted, there are three in number, namely, the Recreation Centre for the Elderly at Pointe aux Sables, the Bois Savon Settlement at Ste Croix and the Probation Quarters at Beau Bassin. The information sought in respect of these buildings are as follows -

Building	Contractor	Duration of contract	Amount of Contract monthly

			Rs
Recreation Centre For Elderly Pointe aux Sables	Top Guard Ltd	Contract has expired on 30 June 2005. Is being renewed on a month to month basis pending clearance of the Central Tender Board	41,745 (exclusive of VAT)
Bois Savon Settlement	Top Guard Ltd	Contract has expired on 28 February 2003. Is being renewed on a monthly basis pending clearance of the Central Tender Board	27,552 (exclusive of VAT)
Probation Quarters at Beau Bassin	New Security Guards Ltd	Contract has expired on 31 October 2004. Extended to 31 August 2005. New tenders have been launched.	9,315 (inclusive of VAT)

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry signed all the contracts with representatives of the contractors and no contract of any former contractor has been terminated before the agreed contractual date.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether contracts have been allocated to Capital Security for any buildings falling under the aegis of her Ministry?

Mrs Bappoo: As I said before, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the Maintenance Contractor who goes for all the subcontracting for subcontractors. If more information is needed, I need a further notice of the question in order for me to give the hon. Member further details on it.

Mr Dowarkasing: Will the hon. Minister table a list of all the subcontractors in a very near future?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, I will, Sir.

CITE LA BRASSERIE – SEWERAGE PLANT

(No. I B/76) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will state if his Ministry and the Wastewater Management Authority are in presence of a request to pull down an unused sewerage plant at La Brasserie and, if so, will he state what measures he intends to take.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, in October 2004, the “*Forces Vives*” of Cité La Brasserie approached the Ministry with a request that the disused Treatment Plant at La Brasserie be pulled down as the structure not only constituted an eyesore but was also a potential source of danger for the inhabitants of the *cit *.

In line with the request, the Wastewater Management Authority looked into the possibility of incorporating the works for the pulling down of the treatment plant as a variation under the ongoing contract for the sewerage works at La Brasserie. A quotation was sought from the contractor and was transmitted to the Central Tender Board for consideration and approval. In March 2005, the Central Tender Board informed the Ministry that the demolition of the disused treatment plant could not be executed as a variation order under the ongoing contract.

Conscious of the potential threat which this structure represents to the inhabitants in the surrounding area, I have caused the matter to be looked into. The land where the structure stands at present is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. I have initiated discussions with my colleague, the Minister of Housing and Lands and together we are looking into the various options with a view to finding a solution for the demolition of the structure at the earliest possible date.

Mr Dowarkasing: I thank the Minister for his initiative.

HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. I B/77) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain –

- (a) the number of housing units built for medium, low and very low income citizens for each of the years 1995 to 2005;
- (b) the number of such housing units delivered annually during those years, and
- (c) the number of such units presently under construction as well as the approximate termination date of those units.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, the detailed information requested for is being compiled and will be placed in the library of the National Assembly as soon as it would be ready.

However, from information available so far, construction was completed in respect of some 3,521 housing units during the period 1995/2000 and 4,852 houses were delivered during the same period, while construction in respect of 2,318 has been completed from 2001 to July 2005 and 3,258 housing units have been delivered during the same period. 1,373 units are currently under construction.

Dr. Husnoo: Out of all these houses that were built from 2000 to 2005, can the Minister tell the House how many houses were built in Constituency No. 3, please?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note with much regret that during this period not a single housing unit has been constructed or delivered in Constituency No. 3.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Lauthan is a Member of that Constituency and was then a Minister.

Mr Lauthan: Can the Minister inform the House whether the main reason is the unavailability of land in this Constituency?

Mr Dulull: I have requested an audit of the State land in Constituency No. 3 and I wish to inform the House that State land is available ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lauthan: Can we know from the hon. Minister if land was available, how many housing units were constructed between 1995 and 2000? More lands were available then.

Mr Dulull: Well, we are a Government looking into the future.

(Interruptions)

Like I mentioned, we are a Government looking into the future but then, I request the hon. Member to be patient and the result will be apparent.

Mr Lauthan: The hon. Minister has just informed us that land is available. Could he mention one or two examples where these lands are available?

Mr Dulull: Based on the recent audit on State land in Constituency No. 3, State land is available behind the Goomany Government School.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

SCHOOL BUSES(PRIVATE) – OPERATION AS AT 01 JULY 2005

(No. I B/78) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will give the number of private school buses in operation as at 01 July 2005.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that as at 01 July 2005 there were 699 public service vehicle (contract buses) licensed for the conveyance of school children.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag.Minister whether these buses are allowed to do other activities than those of transporting students?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Out of 699, approximately 45 are allowed to do other activities.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. I B/79) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the list of 38 secondary schools tabled in the National Assembly on 09 August 2005, he will give the number of schools where the following phases have been completed –

- (a) Phase 1;
- (b) Phase II, and
- (c) Phase III

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, further to my reply given to PQ I B/28 of last week, I wish to state that the outgoing Government has claimed on numerous occasions that it has, over the past 4 ½ years, doubled the number of colleges.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a college will normally consist of the following amenities: classrooms, art room, one laboratory, demonstration room for each science subject, i.e, Chemistry, Physics and Biology, computer room, library, workshops for Home Economics or Design Technology, administrative rooms for the Rector, the staff and so on; sick bay, canteen, toilets and playground facilities.

The information I have already provided clearly indicates that except for RTI (boys and girls and Bon Accueil State College) which have been completed, the remaining colleges are still incomplete. As a result, in many cases students, who were registered at a particular college which appeared on the admissions' list of colleges, have had to be accommodated elsewhere under very difficult conditions, over a period of more than 2 years. In January 2006, this situation is very likely to continue. Students

proceeding to Form IV will be facing difficulties with regard to the non-availability of Science laboratories and workshops in many cases.

Due to severe bottlenecks and delays in the overall construction programme engaged by the previous Government, phased construction of colleges has had to be resorted to.

Phase I, normally, comprises one block of 12 classrooms and one toilet block and this phase has been completed in only 30 colleges.

Phase II comprises either another block of 12 classrooms or an administrative block or a science block, depending upon the lay-out of the site. It may also refer to all the works left to be done after a first phase has been completed. Only 20 schools have gone through Phase II.

Phase III involves the full and final completion, i.e, the availability of all amenities mentioned at 2 above.

If we take into consideration the information provided at para 2 above, it is clear that out of the 38 colleges, 36 have not yet reached the full and final completion stage.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be factually incorrect to claim that the number of colleges between 2000 and 2005 has been doubled.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF SO 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.

Question put and agreed to.