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UNREVISED

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**SOUKHEE AND GOOLJAR FAMILIES
- COMPLAINTS TO ICAC**

(No. B/96) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the ICAC as whether complaints have been made by the Soukhee family and the Gooljar family regarding abuses and acts of malpractice by attorneys and, if so, will he state the outcome thereof giving details in each case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that inquiries involving complaints by members of the Soukhee and Gooljar families have been completed and have been forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

However, I am advised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption that information on any investigation carried out is privileged and no disclosure thereof is permitted.

Mr Chumroo: May I put an additional question, Mr Speaker, Sir? Will the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether attorneys have sued both Soukhee and Gooljar families for the sum of Rs50 m.?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said that my information is to the effect that the inquiries have been completed and the matter rests with the Director of Public Prosecutions who will decide what course of action should be followed.

Mr Chumroo: My question relates to the case. The fact remains that the attorneys have sued these people.

Mr Speaker: This is a matter between two parties, which the hon. Prime Minister cannot be aware of.

The Prime Minister: If the attorneys have sued them, I don't have to comment on that.

Mr Speaker: As I said, it is a matter between the attorneys and the families. It is a private matter. Next question, please!

TAKUN FAMILY - LAND PRESCRIPTION, COMPLAINT, ETC.

(No. B/97) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the Commissioner of Police as to whether any complaint has been made by the Takun family regarding prescription of their land and, if so, state -

- (a) the date of the complaint;
- (b) whether there has been any arrest by the Police, and
- (c) the outcome of the Police inquiry.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Commissioner of Police that a complaint was made at the Central Criminal Investigation Division by Mrs Soonayna Takun of Sivananda Road, Floreal, to the effect that a plot of land of an extent of 20 perches on which she had been living since her childhood, had been prescribed in favour of one Mr Harry Mungur through an affidavit sworn by widow Banshiram Gangadin and Mr Gangaparsad Bhinda. Mr Mungur subsequently sued Mrs Takun civilly before the Supreme Court, which delivered a judgment in his favour requesting Mrs Takun to leave and vacate the land.

As regards parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the reply is as follows -

- (a) 29 July 2004;
- (b) Mr Gangaparsad Bhinda, one of the two witnesses to the affidavit was arrested on 08 December 2004 for swearing a false affidavit and was released on bail on 09 December 2004 upon furnishing one surety of Rs1,000 and a recognizance of Rs5,000 on his own name. Mrs Gangadin, the other witness to the affidavit, has passed away.

Mr Harry Mungur was also arrested for giving instructions to swear a false affidavit. He was released on parole due to his health and old age, and

- (c) The Director of Public Prosecutions has, on 02 February 2005 advised prosecution against -
- (i) Gangaparsad Bhinda for “Solemnly affirming false affidavit in Breach of Section 195 of Courts Act” and “Giving false evidence in civil matter (oath in breach of Section 278 of the Criminal Code)”, and
 - (ii) Harry Mungur for conspiracy to do an unlawful act to wit -
 - (a) solemnly affirming a false affidavit, and
 - (b) giving false evidence in a civil matter.

I have sought legal advice in regard to the Supreme Court judgement requesting Mrs Takun to leave and vacate the land and to the destruction of the house standing thereon. I have also requested the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups to look into the case and report.

Mr Chumroo: The hon. Prime Minister has said that the house was pulled down on 01 December. All the furniture were thrown out and this in the presence of two ushers and the Police. Now that the Police have seen that it was a false affidavit, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister how these people will be compensated for having been thrown out of their land?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Police and the ushers acted, they acted after a judgement by the Supreme Court. Now, these two persons are being sued before the Court. They are innocent until the Court has found them guilty. We cannot pass judgement like that. It is a tricky situation. I, also, ask myself where does the judgement of the Supreme Court stand, pending the trial - which can take one or two years. And, as I said, people are presumed innocent until found guilty by the Court. It is a tricky situation and that is why I have sought legal advice from the State Law Office to know where matters stand exactly in law regarding the Supreme Court judgement, but also the act of bringing down the house at a given point in time.

In the meantime, it is the intention of Government to help the poor couple who is facing a very difficult situation.

Mr Michel: Since the hon. Prime Minister has referred to the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister what concrete action has been taken insofar as this family is concerned because this matter has taken place last year and we are now in February?

The Prime Minister: We have not been approached in any way unfortunately, neither myself as Prime Minister nor the Trust Fund, nor the elected Members. The first time I have come across this case is when Harish Boodhoo brought it up before public opinion.

(Interruptions)

If it had been brought to my attention a long time back, I would certainly have acted, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Michel: May I ask a question? The Prime Minister said that nobody has drawn the matter to his attention. On my part, I have gone to the NHDC and they promised to give a lodging. Up to now, nothing has been done.

The Prime Minister: The NHDC cannot give a house to somebody who is already an owner of a house. In this case, the couple is saying that it is their land and that the house standing thereon was their property.

I understand that the NHDC couldn't act. When I receive a report from the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups - as I have said I have asked them to look into the case and report - I'll see what can be done.

Mr Chumroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have an additional question. Being given that the Prime Minister, himself, has considered that there were lots of misgivings on the part of Justice in this matter, may we know what plan the Government has to make...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Chumroo, the Prime Minister has said that he has asked for legal advice. He is waiting advice from the State Law Office. In the meantime, he is saying that he has asked the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Vulnerable Groups to look into the matter. We cannot come back again on the same question.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S OFFICE - DRAFTING UNIT

(No. B/98) Mr D. Hurnam (Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if Government proposes to set up a permanent Drafting Unit in the Attorney General's Office and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposal to set up a Permanent Drafting Unit in the Attorney General's Office is, I am given to understand, a commendable one. As a matter of fact, recommendations along that line were made in the Mackay Report on the reforms in the judicial and legal sectors. The recommendations were for the setting up of a distinct unit to be headed by a Parliamentary Counsel and staffed by career oriented lawyers.

However, I am informed it has not been possible so far to establish such a unit due to shortage of, or inability of the Attorney-General's Office to retain experienced lawyers.

Despite these constraints, Mr Speaker, Sir, and in the absence of a Permanent Drafting Unit, the following enactments were drafted by the Attorney General's Office last year -

46 Bills,
216 Government Notices,
47 Proclamations, and
3 Reprints.

I am informed that as and when the human resource situation in the Attorney General's Office improves, the possibility of setting up of a Permanent Drafting Unit will be considered.

Mr Hurnam: Mr Speaker, I have an information to the effect that release courses for drafting have been awarded by the Ministry. Why doesn't Government pool its resources towards those persons who have had release courses in drafting to be assigned a desk regarding drafting in view of the legislature which is getting so complex in these years?

The Prime Minister: I'll take that point with the Attorney General to see whether we can build on that.

(No. B/99) Mr D. Hurnam (Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if the inquiry on the explosion which occurred at Grand' Baie on 25 July 2004 has now been completed and, if so, will he give the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the inquiry on the explosion which occurred at Grand' Baie on 25 July 2004 has not been completed yet. Local and foreign experts have examined the building and the assistance of the South Africa Police Service and of Messrs Rex Stockham, Supervising Special Agent and Ronald Kelly, Forensic Chemist of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation have been obtained to determine the cause of the explosion. Investigations into the case are still ongoing and as soon as the inquiry is completed, the case will be submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his advice on the course of action.

Mr Dullooloo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Police Forensic Science Laboratory, for their part, have completed their inquiry in determining what could be the cause of the explosion and have submitted their report already?

The Prime Minister: The local Forensic Science Laboratory has submitted its written report. We are waiting for the final written reports from both the Forensic Service of the South African Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Mr Dullooloo: Can we know what has been the conclusion of the local Forensic Science Laboratory.

The Prime Minister: No, Mr Speaker. I think that we should look at it globally when all three reports are before us and when the inquiry has been completed.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what is the delay for the FBI report? It is already one year.

The Prime Minister: I cannot order the Forensic Department of the South African Police or the forensic people of the FBI around. They offered their assistance, which has been of great value. We have heard already what they have found, but we want to wait for the final written report before moving ahead.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Has the hon. Prime Minister asked them whether they are going to submit a final report? Why are we waiting for over one year?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, I cannot order them around.

Dr. Ramgoolam: So, we are going to wait for the report in five years time!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I be allowed to reply. I cannot order them around. We are expecting written reports from both authorities and I understand that the written reports are coming.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I must say that the Minister of Tourism already knew the causes of the incident. He mentioned it. Why are we waiting then?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I replied, time and again, that as that explosion took place, there was a priority of priorities to cool things down, to reassure tourists that there was no terrorism dimension to that explosion. My colleague, the Minister of Tourism and I did just that successfully, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, let us wait for the counter report or report by whatever name called from two of the best forensic departments in the world - FBI and South Africa Forensic Laboratory. We will look at all this when we will obtain the final reports.

Mr Dulloo: I have one last question. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the local FSL has determined the use of explosives whereas the two foreign experts, African and FBI, were asked to explore the possibility of gas explosion?

The Prime Minister: They were not asked to explore any possibility. Their assistance was sought as professionals. We are talking about professionals not people who take directives from anybody. They have done their work professionally, we are waiting for their written report, Mr Speaker, Sir.

LA PAIX ST., PORT LOUIS - DRUG TRAFFICKING & ADDICTION

(No. B/100) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the Commissioner of Police as to whether he had, at the end of December 2004, received representations from a group of inhabitants of La Paix Street, Port Louis, regarding “recrudescence of drug trafficking and addiction” in that region and, if so, will he say what action, if any, has been taken and the results thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 05 January 2005, an anonymous letter dated 28 December 2004 was received from a group of persons claiming to be inhabitants of La Paix Street, Port Louis at the Police Headquarters relating to drug trafficking in that region.

The Commissioner of Police immediately forwarded the letter to the Director, ADSU, Anti Drug Smuggling Unit and the Officer in Charge of Emergency Response Service for appropriate action. Police patrol was intensified in the area. Several persons and informers were contacted, but no information transpired.

In the meantime, the local Police, in conjunction with the Alpha Squad, Divisional Support Unit, CID and ADSU personnel are still maintaining patrols during day and night in the region.

I am also informed, Mr Speaker Sir, by the Commissioner of Police that two well known offenders from the region are, at present, detained at the Central Prisons, Beau Bassin and that in 2003/2004, there were 9 arrests of drug dealers and addicts at La Paix Street and 8 convictions in Court for possession of heroin and gandia.

Should the hon. Member or any member of the public have information on drug trafficking in the region, I would invite them to liase immediately with the Commissioner of Police who has assured me that absolute confidentiality will be kept.

PRIME MINISTER - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/101) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will table a list of all the overseas missions he has undertaken since his assumption of office, indicating the duration of each mission and the amount of *per diem* paid to him.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the list of all the official missions I have undertaken since assumption of office is being tabled.

I am also tabling a document giving the rates of *per diem* paid as approved by Government for such missions.

It is to be noted that for official visits, the visiting dignitary is normally provided full hospitality by the receiving Government. In these circumstances, one third of the full subsistence allowance is payable by Government.

GOVERNMENT ADVISERS - EXPENDITURE INCURRED - DECEMBER 2004

(No. B/102) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Advisers recruited by Government, he will give the expenditure incurred on their remuneration for the month of December 2004.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll come back to what I said last week. Recently, and today also, the Member is asking for figures of total expenditure incurred on Advisers on a monthly basis.

Compiling such information entails obtaining for each Adviser not only his salary but other benefits such as travelling allowance, entertainment allowance, duty free facilities, loan facilities, free telephone calls and passage benefits etc.

The hon. Member will surely appreciate that this is a time consuming exercise and requires the mobilisation of a large number of staff only to please the hon Member. Government...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. David: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. Members of Parliament ask questions not to please themselves, but to have facts and figures. The Prime Minister did say that the Member is asking questions to please himself. This is imputing motives.

The Prime Minister: There is no imputing motives at all.

Dr. David: We are asking for your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Order! The Prime Minister said that so much manpower cannot be spent to please the Member. I think the words used 'to please the Member' are not correct. But fall short of imputing motives. The words used are not proper, because the Member is entitled to put questions in the House and the Prime Minister must reply if he has the information.

The Prime Minister: To satisfy the Member. We cannot mobilise, I don't know how many officers just to satisfy that request for information. So, Mr Speaker, Government is not prepared to go that far, instead I am tabling copy of the

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: On a point of order....

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, you allow them to take points of order that are not points of order.

Mr Speaker: Let us see if it is a point of order.

(Interruptions)

It was a point of order, but I ruled that it is not, in fact, imputing motives. This is what I said.

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. You said that if he used the word "please", it is imputing motives.

Mr Speaker: No, I didn't say that. I said, "It falls short of imputing motives." It was a wrong use of word. That is what I said. What is the point of order?

Dr. Jeetah: It is exactly on the same point my hon. friend is making.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! You cannot repeat the same point of order.

The Prime Minister: So, Mr Speaker, I repeat Government is not prepared to go that far. Instead I am tabling a copy of the standard terms and conditions of service of Advisers employed on contract by Government.

And I am informing the hon. Member that at the end of December 2004, there were 218 Advisers, of whom 94 were professionals working in scarcity areas such as Specialists in certain disciplines (Anaesthesia, Surgery) and so on of the health sector, in the Engineering/Architecture/Quantity Surveying fields of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and in the technical grades of certain of the Ministries. This is not new, Mr Speaker. The practice has been since Independence that all Governments have been using the services of professionals, Engineers, Surgeons and so on under the appellation of Advisers. This has always been like that. When I became Prime Minister, I was not happy with that. I informed the House. We are looking into that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister consistently refuses to give details about expenses. Could he tell us how it works, how does it happen in this Government? Do they decide to do whatever they want! Do they have a monthly budget spent on Advisers and what is it?

The Prime Minister: I would advise the hon. Member to look at the standard terms and conditions of the service of Advisers.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Prime Minister confirm that this Government has spent Rs400 m. on Advisers?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: No, Sir!

Mr Dulloo: M. le président, *Le Premier Ministre a dit qu'il est en train de compiler les chiffres.* May I ask the Prime Minister - I won't say pac pac - whether he would give the expenditure incurred for his own personal special Adviser in New York for that particular period, including the end of year gratuity, bonus and everything?

The Prime Minister: Pac pac is one of yours now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! I am calling the House to order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! I do not understand what is so strange in this word "Pac Pac" that it has put the whole House in turmoil!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Hon. Madun Dulloo did, Mr Speaker! So, do I not understand all this noise from the pac pac Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. David!

LAND PRESCRIPTION - COMPLAINTS, INQUIRIES, ETC.

(No. B/103) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, with regard to prescription of land, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police the following information -

- (a) the total number of complaints registered for the past 10 years;
- (b) whether there is a special unit dealing with such cases and, if so, the number of officers attached thereto;
- (c) whether there is any delay in the completion of the inquiries and, if so, why,
- (d) whether Government is considering the advisability of bringing appropriated legislation to prevent abuses and other acts of malpractice.

The Prime Minister: Speaker Sir, the information requested and obtained from the Commissioner of Police is as follows -

- (a) 141;

- (b) The Land and Immovable Property Fraud Squad of the Central Criminal Investigation Division deals with such cases and is manned by 19 Officers, and
- (c) 14 cases reported between June 2004 and 30 January 2005 are pending inquiry. I am advised by the Commissioner of Police that every effort is being made for early completion of these case files.

As regards part (d) of the question, the matter is under consideration.

Mr Michel: Mr Speaker, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this Commission of restitution of land is going ahead?

The Prime Minister: It is going ahead. We have lost some time because I wanted this Commission to travel to South Africa where for a number of years they have had such a Commission. I wanted them to start their work with first hand on the ground information. Unfortunately, we could not find dates that were acceptable to the three members of the Commission as well as to the South African side. I know that the trip has been rescheduled and I am informed that the Commission will be going to South Africa at the beginning of March to proceed with its work.

SALE BY LEVY - NHDC & MHC - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/104) Mr J. C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to applications for Sale by Levy at the request of the NHDC and the MHC Ltd before the Master's Court he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain a list of the cases disposed of in the year 2004, indicating the price at which the houses/apartments were sold in each case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested for is being tabled.

RESIDU, MR JEAN ALAIN - AGGRESSION

(No. B/105) Dr. J. B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information on the circumstances surrounding the aggression of singer Jean Alain Residu in December last, indicating whether an inquiry has been initiated and, if so, whether it has been completed.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that at about 1230 hours on Tuesday 21 December 2004, Mr Jean Alain Residu came across three unknown male persons selling infringed copies of CDs of his music along John Kennedy Street Port Louis near the Life Insurance Corporation building.

Following a row regarding the sale of the said CDs, two of the persons caught hold of him whilst a third one assaulted him with a penknife. He sustained injuries on his face and attended Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

On the same day, Mr Residu filed a complaint at Pope Hennessy Police Station. Prompt Police investigation was carried out and two of the three offenders aged 42 and 30 respectively were arrested. Both were prosecuted for an offence of “assault with premeditation”. On 02 February 2005, they were each sentenced to undergo eight months imprisonment and pay fines of Rs100 as costs.

As regards the third accused, he is still untraceable.

SUICIDE CASES - AGE GROUP 15-49

(No. B/106) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if there has been an increase in the incidence of suicide in the age group 15-49 years during the last 3 years.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the incidence of suicide in the age group 15-49 years during the last 5 years is as follows -

<u>Year</u>	<u>No of Cases</u>
2000	77
2001	86
2002	77
2003	66
2004	68

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad to report that information from the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizens' Welfare & Reform Institutions show that the trend in both completed and attempted suicide have been decreasing since 2001.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Prime Minister whether these figures are reliable, whether relevant information is conveyed to the relevant authority?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker, the figures are reliable. As I said, we have obtained them from the Commissioner of Police, but also from the Minister of Health, cases treated in hospitals and public health institutions as well as from the Minister of Social Security. For example, I will give you the figures for test due to suicide going back to, let us say, 1996. In 1996 it was 153; in 1997 - 122; in 1998 - 155; 1999: 174; 2000: 137; 2001- 113; 2002: 131; 2003: 88.

The same trend appeared as far as persons between 15 and 49 years old. This is the result of the efforts of one and all in the Government Ministries concerned, but also the NGO's (the Non-Governmental Organisations) that do a great job.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON SALE BY LEVY (2004) – EXPENSES INCURRED

(No. B/107) Dr. J. Jhurry (Second Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the 2004 Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy, he will –

- (a) give a breakdown of the expenses incurred;
- (b) state if any allowance was paid to the witnesses who deponed before the Commission and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir,

- (a) An amount of Rs5,528,121.94 cents has been spent in connection with the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy, a breakdown of which is as follows -

	<u>Rs</u>
Purchase of Equipment	73,614.00
Stationery and Petty Expenses	14,712.94
Fees to Chairman & Members	5,000,000.00
Fees to staff	370,000.00
Visit to Rodrigues	69,795.00

(b) No allowance was paid to the witnesses who volunteered to depone before the Commission. As regards witnesses who were summoned by the Commission, no claims have been received.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that section 11(1) of the Commissions of Inquiry Act provides that any witness summoned to attend and give evidence, or to produce books, plans, or documents at any sitting of the Commission, shall obey the summons served upon him in all respects as a witness obeys a summons issued by the Supreme Court, and shall be entitled to such expenses as are allowed to a witness who is summoned to attend that Court on a criminal trial, but the Commission may disallow the whole or any part of such expenses where it thinks fit.

Mr Speaker: Time is up. Next item, please!

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, time is up, we have gone by three minutes beyond that time schedule.

(Interruptions)

**MULLER, MRS MEDGEE - PARCEL POST OFFICE – INCIDENT
28.01.05**

(No. B/112) Mr D. Hurnam (Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if he has received a complaint dated 11 February 2005 from Mrs Medgee Muller of Flic-en-Flac regarding the conduct of two Customs Officers when she called at the Parcel Post Office on 28 January 2005 to collect a postal packet and, if so, whether an inquiry is being conducted in the matter.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I received on 18 February an unsigned copy of a letter dated 11 February addressed to the Comptroller of Customs from the person named in the PQ.

In the letter Mrs Medgee Muller made a complaint regarding an incident which occurred when she called at the Parcel Post Office on 28 January 2005 to collect a postal packet.

The parcel was declared to contain various "used" computer parts (e.g hard drive, graphics card, ram memory, mother board etc) as well as pharmaceuticals.

The officer wanted to know the value of the computer parts and whether the computer parts were new or used. Regarding the pharmaceuticals, the officer requested Mrs Muller to return in the afternoon when an official of the Ministry of Health would be present to examine the goods.

It is alleged, at this point in time, that there was an aggressive remark made towards the officer and the officer responded with the words to the effect that "this is not a Chinese shop".

An inquiry has been conducted into the matter and the Comptroller of Customs had a meeting with Mrs Muller on Monday 21 February 2005 in the presence of the Customs Officer dealing with the postal packet in question.

The Comptroller has warned the officer that such behaviour cannot be tolerated. On behalf of the Customs Department, the Comptroller offered to Mrs Muller his personal apology which has been accepted by the latter.

I am further informed that the parcel was cleared on 21 February 2005 after inspection by an official of the Ministry of Health and upon payment of the VAT applicable.

Mr Hurnam: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that the word was used by one of the officers but, may I correct it to say that - *madame cote ou croire ou été? Dans la boutique Chinois? Ici pas la boutique Chinois.* I can certainly understand that the Comptroller of Customs has, in his own magnanimity offered apologies on behalf of the officers in question. But, has the officers been sanctioned at all?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, an inquiry is under way to find out what exactly has happened. But, in the meantime, in relation to the customer, this matter has been sorted out.

TRIOLET VILLAGE - TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(No. B/113) Mr D. Hurnam (Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether he will consider the advisability of having traffic lights installed at the following junctions –

- (a) Royal Road, D'Épinay and the road leading to Jouvence;
- (b) Royal Road, 9th Mile, Triolet and Bonair Road, and
- (c) Royal Road, 9th Mile, Triolet and Trou aux Biches Road.

The Minister of Housing & Lands and Minister of Fisheries (Mr G. Lesjongard): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am replying to PQ B/113.

I am informed that before providing traffic lights at any site there is a need to carry out a proper survey in order to assess the density of vehicular traffic, the accident risk, the number and type of traffic lights to be installed and the availability of funds as well.

There is already a programme of work which has been established for the whole of Triolet Village with a view to determining the need for putting up traffic lights at the different major junctions located on the main road.

So far, a survey has already been carried out at the junction of Royal Road, with Shrimati Indira Gandhi Road which is found at 9^{ème} Mile, Triolet. The survey has revealed that traffic lights are not warranted there.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will complete the exercise at the three junctions mentioned by the hon. Member shortly. In case the installation of traffic lights is justified, my Ministry will do needful for the provision thereof.

Mr Hurnam: Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue is not regarding Mrs Indira Gandhi Street and Royal Road, Triolet. That is out. We had had this information from the outgoing Minister a long time back. The question is – when was the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit Report concluded on these matters?

The Prime Minister: He is replacing the Minister.

Mr Hurnam: Well, I will take it up with the substantive Minister, thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: I have supplementary information, Mr Speaker, Sir. I understand the Member had put a question in December 2001 and at that time it was stated in the reply that surveys will be carried out at the following places, that is, Royal Road, Solitude, Balaclava, Morc. St. André, Royal Road, Triolet, 9ème Mile, Shrimatee Indira Gandhi Road, Royal Road, Triolet, 9ème Mile, Bonair Road, Royal Road, Triolet, 9ème Mile, Trou aux Biches Road and up to now, Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that only one site has been surveyed.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TRUST FUND - MISMANAGEMENT

(No. B/114) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, with regard to the Committee set up by the Board of Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF) to inquire into the mismanagement by the Officer-in-Charge of the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* he will, for the benefit of the House, now state –

- (a) if the inquiry is complete and, if so, when;
- (b) the date its report was submitted to the Board and, what action has subsequently been taken, and
- (c) whether he will table a copy of the report.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to PQ No. B/114.

Sir, I am informed by the Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF) that the report of the Sub-Committee set up to inquire into the allegations of mismanagement levelled against the Officer-in-charge of the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* (IST) has only just been completed and that a special meeting of the Board of the TSMTF has been convened for Wednesday 23 February 2005 in that connection.

As regards part (c), as my colleague, the hon. Minister of Education and Scientific Research, is not in presence of a copy of the report, the question of tabling a copy thereof does not arise at this stage.

ICT APPEAL TRIBUNAL – SETTING UP, TOTAL EXPENSES INCURRED, ETC.

(No. B/115) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether, in regard to the ICT Appeal Tribunal, he will –

- (a) state the date of its setting up;
- (b) give the total expenses incurred, with a breakdown thereof, since its setting up, and
- (c) the number of cases referred to the Tribunal and the number determined to date.

The Minister of Industry and Medium Enterprises, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs (Mr K. Khushiram): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to this question.

The reply is as follows –

- (a) The ICT Appeal Tribunal was set up on 01 December, 2003.
- (b) I am informed that the total expenses incurred amount to around Rs1.6 m. A breakdown of the expenses is being tabled.
- (c) Four appeals have so far been lodged at the ICT Appeal Tribunal -
 - (i) The Tribunal delivered its determination on 01 September 2004 on the first appeal lodged on 24 May 2004 by City Call Ltd.
 - (ii) The second and third appeals by City Call Ltd and Purdasy & Co Ltd respectively were withdrawn upon motion of Counsel for the Appellants.
 - (iii) The fourth appeal lodged by Purdasy & Co. Ltd on 28 January 2005 is still pending before the Tribunal.

CHAMP DE MARS/BOULEVARD VICTORIA – MONTAGNE COUPE PROJECT

(No. B/116) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the *Montagne Coupée* Project between the Champ de Mars and Boulevard Victoria, he will –

- (a) state
 - (i) the nature and objective of the project;
 - (ii) the name of the firm to which the contract has been allocated;
 - (iii) the initial and final costs;
 - (iv) the total amount paid to date, and
- (b) make a statement on the safety aspect in regard to the works completed so far.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Mr A. Ganoo): Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NDU that the Road widening project at *Montagne Coupée* has been undertaken due to a severe problem of erosion on the slopes and to relieve problems of traffic flow in Port Louis, especially during peak hours.

In order to avoid further erosion and ensure safety of the traffic flow, it was considered necessary to stabilise the slopes.

The project comprises the following components –

- Road widening
- Slope stabilisation
- Construction of a proper drainage system
- Footpaths and handrails
- Street lighting
- Landscaping works

Following CTB's approval in December 2003, the contract was awarded to Transinvest Ltd for the sum of Rs20,859,513 (excluding VAT) on 19 February 2004. There has not been any subsequent increase in the project cost. To date an amount of Rs16,398,900.44 inclusive of VAT has been paid to the contractor.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that all necessary steps have been taken by NDU through the Consultant and

the relevant Authorities to ensure that maximum safety is provided to the road users, both pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

During a joint site visit for taking over of the project a few weeks ago, it was observed that there was an excessive movement of the gabion boxes over an area of approximately 15m in length.

The project has not yet been taken over and the contractor has been requested to attend to all defective works, as per terms and conditions of the contract. These works will be carried out over a period of two months and will have no incidence on the traffic flow and safety of the public.

Dr. Beebeejaun: May I ask the Minister whether he has ascertained that the road has been closed today, yesterday or the day before?

Mr Ganoo: Sir, I cannot give an answer to the hon. Member. But I will ascertain and enlighten the House later on.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I would request the hon. Minister to seek the information, because there is a feeling of danger to the traffic. I gather that this morning the road was closed. I have a picture with me which shows a displacement of the rocks. This causes worry to the public.

Mr Ganoo: There has been a movement in the gabion boxes, resulting in some bulging. That is why the contractor has been called during a site visit. The contractor has been asked to remedy the situation.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Every time it rains, the situation gets worse. The picture that I have with me was taken about a week ago and I gather that with the rain over the weekend, it has got worse. There has been a bulge.

Mr Ganoo: The needful is being done, Sir.

SAFE PROJECT - OPERATION, BREAKDOWN ETC

(No. B/117) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivère du Rempart) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether, in regard to the SAFE Project, he will state -

- (a) when it became operational;
- (b) the number of breakdowns, if any, and their duration in each case, and

- (c) the impact of such breakdowns on the IT operators and call centres.

The Minister of Industry and Medium Enterprises, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs (Mr K. Khushiram): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. With regard to part (a), I am advised by Mauritius Telecom that the SAFE Cable became operational on 08 April 2002.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Khushiram: As for part (b), since its coming into operation, the SAFE Cable has broken down on seven occasions, from December 2002 to December 2004. The duration of breakdowns ranged from 8 minutes to around 15 hours. The details are being tabled.

With regard to part (c), IT operators and call centres which having back-up solutions purchased from Mauritius Telecom or other means of international connectivity such as satellite back-up via VSAT were not affected by the breakdowns.

Operators without back-up solutions met with problems especially with regard to data traffic. Voice calls were not affected.

Under the SAFE agreement, operators having purchased back-up solutions are guaranteed diversion of traffic through alternative cable systems in case of breakdown. The SAFE Consortium has accordingly made arrangements with SEA-ME-WE submarine cable system to that effect.

Mauritius Telecom is conducting an information campaign among IT operators and call centres to highlight the importance of back-up solutions that it offers to all operators.

Dr. Hookoom: May I ask the Minister which company is looking after the maintenance of the SAFE project?

Mr Khushiram: I do not have the information, Sir.

SSS - TEACHERS - RECRUITMENT 2004/05

(No. B/118) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state the number of teachers recruited for State Secondary Schools in 2004 and 2005, indicating the percentage of the recruits who come from private secondary schools.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to that question. It should be recalled that prior to the year 2000 there was an establishment of 1,430 Education Officers (all subjects combined), and the yearly intake was around 75. In view of the expansion of services in the context of educational reforms the yearly intake of Educational Officers started increasing as from 2001 at the rate of around 50 yearly to reach a peak figure of 244 in 2004. For 2005, 170 Educational Officers have been recruited. To date the number of posts on establishment is 2,442 with 2,289 Education Officers in post.

As regards the last part of the question, out of 244 and 170 Education Officers recruited for 2004 and 2005 respectively, 60 and 79 have past experience of work in private secondary schools, that is a percentage of 24.5 and 46.4 respectively - but I am not in a position to say whether all of them were in employment in the private secondary schools just prior to their enlistment by the Public Service Commission.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether this Government views students attending private secondary schools as second class citizens?

Mr Fowdar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the question relates to the recruitment of teachers. It has nothing to do with students.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, nearly 50% of the teachers are poached from the private secondary schools. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether any provision for training was made?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Can the hon. Member tell me whether the recruitment is done by the PSC or the Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: My point, Mr Speaker, Sir, relates to the number of teachers.

Mr Speaker: I want you to tell me whether the recruitment is done by the PSC or the Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, I understand it is my turn to ask questions and it is the Minister that answers.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jeetah, please take your seat! If you are putting a question, I want to have some clarification regarding the question. Can you tell me whether these teachers are recruited by the PSC or the Ministry? If you do not know, keep quiet, please!

(Interruptions)

Next question, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: I still have questions to ask.

Mr Speaker: Order! Please take your seat! I am entitled to ask clarification from a Member who is putting the question for my own understanding. Can you answer the question?

Dr. Jeetah: I wish to ask specific questions relating to the question I gave notice. I want to ask the Minister what provision did he make ...

Mr Speaker: I am not allowing you any question until you give me this clarification.

(Interruptions)

Next question, please!

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order, Sir. If an hon. Member cannot supply the reply immediately, he can come at a later stage.

Mr Speaker: First of all, this is not a point of order. For me, to decide whether this question is admissible, I need the clarification.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, you must know yourself.

Mr Speaker: As far as I know, it is the Public Service Commission which makes recruitment and the Minister is not responsible for the PSC.

(Interruptions)

I do not want you to argue. Please resume your seat!

Next question, please!

(Interruptions)

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

VALLEE DES PRETRES FOOTBAL GROUND – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/119) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the construction of the football ground at Vallée des Prêtres, he will state –

- (a) when the works started and the proposed date of completion;
- (b) the amount earmarked for the project, and
- (c) the amount spent so far.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Mr A. Ganoo): Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NDU that the construction of the football ground started on 05 March 2003, following CTB's approval and was expected to be completed on 04 September 2003. However, the date was revised to 18 June 2004 following extension time granted to the contractor due to bad weather condition and additional works. The contractor has still not completed the works despite repeated instructions.

NDU has accordingly decided to terminate his contract, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract, and to arrange for the early completion of all outstanding works to its approved zone contractor. It is expected that the works will now be completed by the end of May 2005.

Concerning parts (b) and (c) of the question, an amount of Rs2,831,875 was earmarked for the project and, so far, an amount of Rs2,313,791 has been spent.

VALIMIKI ROAD, VALLEE DES PRETRES – DRAINS

(No. B/120) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if it is proposed to construct drains along Valimiki Road at Vallée des Prêtres and, if so, when, indicating the scope of the works and the estimated cost thereof.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Mr A. Ganoo): Sir, I am informed that a request has been received by the NDU from the inhabitants of Valimiki Road, Vallée des Prêtres, for the construction of drains along Valimiki Road I and II in July 2004.

The NDU is actually proceeding with the implementation of drain projects on the basis of a priority list submitted by the respective local authorities, and this project was not included in the first list.

However, it has now been included in the list for implementation during financial year 2005/2006 and our consultant Gibb (Mtius) Ltd has already been instructed to prepare the necessary design and tender documents for the early implementation of the project.

SLABS CASTING – APPLICATIONS & PAYMENT OF GRANTS

(No. B/121) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands and Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the financial support for the casting of slab, he will –

- (a) give the number of applicants who are still on the waiting list, and
- (b) state if there is any delay for the payment of the grant and, if so, why.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, as at today, 29,657 applications have been collected by the NHDC, out of which 23,690 applications have already been processed, approved and payment effected.

Payment in respect of another 517 approved cases will be effected as from today. A further 530 cases have been approved on 16 February 2005, and are being processed for payment.

2,637 cases are still on the waiting list, because these applicants have either not yet reached the level of construction which would enable the

NHDC to process their cases further or they have not yet submitted relevant documents which they have been asked to provide.

I would also wish to point out that 2,333 applications have been rejected as they do not meet the prevailing criteria.

As regards part (b) of the question, Sir, I am informed that there is no delay in the payment of the grant. However, as the payment of the grant implies disbursement of public funds and involves many stakeholders, namely the CAB offices, the NHDC, the Ministry of Housing & Lands and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development, necessary precautions have to be taken to ensure compliance with the established financial procedures.

Mr Michel: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether when some applications have been rejected, the applicants are being informed by the NHDC?

Mr Lesjongard: I don't have the information with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I believe that, whenever cases are rejected, these persons are informed by the NHDC.

CITE MANGALKHAN – DRAINS

(No. B/123) Mr S. Michel (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the project for the provision of rainstorm drains now underway at Cité Mangalkhan, he will state –

- (a) when the works started;
- (b) the estimated cost, and
- (c) whether the roads damaged as a result thereof will be resurfaced.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Mr A. Ganoo): Sir, I am informed by the NDU of the following –

- (a) In reply to PQ A/63 in August 2004, the House was apprised that the integrated development project at Cité Mangalkhan is being implemented in two phases.

- (b) Phase I of the project includes the construction of drains and footpath along Floreal Road, starting from its junction with Sivananda Avenue to the river flowing underneath Allée Brillant Road. This phase, which is being undertaken by the RDA and funded by the NDU, started on 15 January 2004 and it involves a project value of Rs14 m.
- (c) Construction under Phase I has reached an advanced stage and the final part of the project consisting of the connection of the drain to the river outlet will be over by end of April 2005. Once the Phase I is completed, all the roads damaged so far because of the construction works will be resurfaced by the RDA.

As regards Phase II of the integrated project, the consultant Gibb (Mtius) Ltd is finalising the designs of the drain network within the housing estate. The designs are expected to be finalised by end of May 2005.

Sir, furthermore, I wish to inform the House that the Environment Division of the Ministry of Environment and NDU will start landscaping works within the housing estate as from mid April 2005.

STELLA LANE, CITE DEBARCADERE, POINTE AUX SABLES – STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/124) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government & Solid Waste Management whether he will state if Stella Lane at Cité Débarcadère, Pointe aux Sables, is provided with street lighting and, if not, why not.

Mr P. Roopun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that in October 2004, at the request of the NDU, the CEB had provided Stella Lane at Cité Débarcadère, Pointe aux Sables with two electric poles with torsaded cable together with a street lighting conductor. However, I am advised that these have not yet been connected to street lighting network.

I am further advised by the Council that, once the connection of street lighting is made by the CEB, two streetlights would be placed. I have accordingly requested the Council to liaise with the CEB to do the needful at the earliest.

ELDERLY – NATIONAL POLICY

(No. B/125) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions whether he will state if any study has been undertaken in regard to the financial situation of old age pensioners and indicate if any further measures will be taken in their favour.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker Sir, I am not aware of any study having been undertaken in regard specifically to the financial situation of old age pensioners. I must point out that when we talk about the welfare of senior citizens, we cannot limit ourselves to the issue of money alone. Hon. Members will recall that in my maiden speech as Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions, I made it clear that I would not limit the role of my Ministry to that of a mere paying agent. I took a pledge to give this Ministry its full social dimension. It is for this reason that my Ministry came with an Action Plan for the elderly.

The Action Plan caters for the following facets of elderly care –

- preparation for retirements;
- protection of elderly;
- health and nutrition;
- institutional care;
- housing;
- income security;
- employment;
- education;
- inter-generation relationship, and
- social welfare and leisure.

I am happy to say that, since then, a lot has been achieved regarding implementation of the measures recommended in the National Policy for the elderly. Other recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

We should, Mr Speaker, Sir, not lose sight of the fact that all these measures contribute to the well-being of our elderlies. It goes without saying that all these entail costs to Government. If these benefits were to be quantified in money terms, they would far outweigh the BRP being paid to our elderlies. In addition, it would be an affront to common sense to ignore the numerous intangible benefits arising from these measures taken in favour of our old persons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may be referring to the report on the “integration of the elderly in the family” by the National Economic and Social Council with the collaboration of the Centre for Applied Social Research (CASR) of the University of Mauritius. This survey also did not limit itself to the issue of financial situation of the elderly but dealt with the attitudes, expectations and behaviour of Mauritians who are already or about to become elderly citizens.

The terms of reference of the survey are very broad and rightly so my Ministry is studying the findings which give us new interesting insights relevant to the welfare of our elderly citizens and more particularly the recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am satisfied that this survey has been carried out in a very scientific and professional manner and at the same time it is globally very positive as far as the performance of my Ministry is concerned. Just a few points to illustrate what I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir. At Para 1.2.3 and sub paragraph (v) of the report we can read, I quote -

“It is seen however that the authorities have done much effort in implementing innovative measures in its attempt to enhance the living standard of the elderly.”

At para 2.4.1 we can read I quote -

"When viewed against the background of its policies and actions the Ministry has, over the past years, shifted its role from being just responsible for disbursing funds to one involving the formulation and management of a range of projects to support vulnerable groups of citizens. In its drive to diversify the range of support actions, the Ministry of Social Security seems to have been very much guided by the recommendations of the 'Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing'. However, these policy initiatives enumerated in this 'Plan of Action' have been adjusted and tuned to fit with our local requirements."

The last point, Mr Speaker, Sir, on page 25 at para 4.3 I quote -

“The survey reveals the existence of a general feeling of satisfaction among elderly people with the level and quality of support services provided by the State”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in all humility and with due respect to the immense contributions of our elderly citizens to the economic and social progress of this country, let us not be complacent. There are still a lot of things to be done and taking into consideration the impact of all these services on the national budget, I want to reassure the nation and our elderly citizens in particular that Government will leave no stone unturned to implement most, if not all, the recommendations not in a single financial year but in succeeding ones.

Mr Speaker: I reiterate my wish that when Ministers have long replies to make, they better circulate them.

MAINGARD, BEAU BASSIN - SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. B/126) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project at Chasteauneuf Street, Commerson Street and Dr. Reid Street and other streets in the region of Maingard, Beau Bassin, he will state when works will start and indicate the actions, if any, initiated by the Waste Water Authority to attend to emergencies.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that 85 houses along Chasteauneuf Street, are not connected to the sewer system. The WMA will shortly award a new contract for house connection and the works will be implemented under this contract.

I am also informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that about twenty houses along Commerson Street are not connected to the existing sewerage system. Owing to the topography of the region, these houses can only be connected to the existing sewer line in Dr. Reid Street via private properties. The WMA has so far been able to obtain wayleave to connect nine houses. These nine houses will also be connected under the new contract I referred to earlier. The WMA is pursuing negotiations with private owners to obtain the necessary wayleave to connect the eleven remaining houses.

I am further informed by the WMA that about 10 houses in Colonel Maingard Street, Beau Bassin are connected to an existing system which is defective and subject to frequent blockages. For the period of November 2004 to February 2005, 17 complaints of blockages have been received and the WMA had applied remedial measures.

The WMA has carried out a survey for the replacement of the defective pipes. The works will involve the laying of about 24m of pipes and the constructions of manholes. The approval of the CTB is being sought to carry out the works under an ongoing contract.

Given the nuisance value of the problems, my Ministry is closely following up with the Wastewater Management Authority to see to it that the works are urgently undertaken.

Mr Allet: Je demande au ministre s'il peut faire diligence à son officier responsable du projet pour que les travaux commencent le plus vite possible.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said in the last sentence of my answer, I will impress upon the WMA so that the works are urgently attended to.

CITE CHEBEL, HOUSING PROJECT

(No. B/127) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands and Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the housing project at Cité Chebel, he will state -

- (a) the number of houses constructed;
- (b) when the sewerage network will be commissioned, and
- (c) when the houses will be handed over to the beneficiaries.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) the housing project at Cité Chebel forms part of the Firinga Batch II Project which comprises the construction of some 539 very low cost housing units over 8 sites.

The other sites, besides the Chebel site, are Riche Terre, Solitude, Camp La Colle, Mare Tabac, Malherbes, Bonne Mère and Lallmatie.

At Chebel 104 housing units have been constructed.

As regards part (b), the sewerage network forms part of the overall infrastructure works associated with the project which include off-site access

road, on-site roads, drains, footpath, sewerage reticulation, water supply, electricity supply and fencing.

An amount of Rs7 m was initially earmarked for the construction of the off-site access road and a lifting station for the disposal of sewerage from the housing estate. However, there has been a change in the scope of work to include -

- (i) refurbishment works on the Waste Water Management Authority network;
- (ii) additional length of rising main for connection;
- (iii) 1 year operational and maintenance contract for the pumping station; and
- (iv) redesigning of the lifting station to cater for an additional 76 housing units which would form part of the Firinga IV Housing Project.

The works are now estimated at Rs 13.1 m.

The sewerage work is expected to start around March 2005 and the network would be commissioned 6½ months later.

As regards part (c) of the question, Sir, I am informed that the houses will be handed over to the beneficiaries soon after completion of the sewerage works, that is, around mid September 2005.

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - CONSTRUCTION -
JANUARY 1995 TO SEPTEMBER 2000/SEPTEMBER 2000
TO FEBRUARY 2005**

(No. B/128) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will for each of the periods January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date, give a list of the State Secondary Schools built, indicating their location.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. Government embarked, as from the very first month of its mandate, upon an ambitious programme of secondary school construction.

By means of that programme, the Government wanted to translate into action its political will to abolish CPE ranking, regionalise admission to secondary schools and introduce compulsory education up to the age of sixteen.

The first element of this construction programme consisted in the conversion of former State Secondary Schools (Vocational) into new State Secondary Schools catering for Form 1 to Form V students. Thus, the former SSS(V)s at Bambous (Boys), Triolet (Boys), Forest Side (Girls) and St Aubin (Boys) underwent conversion works as early as the second half of the year 2001. Accordingly, they were able to admit their first batches of Form 1 students as from the resumption of studies in the year 2002.

In parallel, the procedures for the construction of new SSSs/sixth Form State Colleges got underway at the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, to name but these three Ministries. The first such school to spring up from the ground was Phoenix SSS in September 2001. During the next three and a half years approximately, the construction of 23 other SSSs and VI Form State Colleges started over the island. I am tabling a list of all these new schools which are operational as at today and issuing either from the conversion works or from the construction works proper.

The following schools which are presently being constructed will become operational very soon:

- (i) Camp de Masque State College (Boys)
- (ii) Port Louis Colline Moneron SS (Girls)
- (iii) Vacoas SSS (Girls).

However, I should like to point that there are six new schools where the construction works proper have not started yet, but they are either at the design stage or at the land acquisition stage. The works are scheduled for implementation during the next financial year. These are: Pamplémousses SSS, Floréal SSS, Beau Bassin SSS, Goodlands SSS, Quatre Bornes SSS and Nouvelle France MGSS.

TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS - PROJECTS

(No. B/129) Dr. N. Issimdar (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance &

Economic Development whether he will give a list of the projects and the schemes implemented by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups on a yearly basis since its inception in 1995 to date, indicating the amount spent thereon and the respective number of beneficiaries.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I wish to inform the House about the history of the setting up of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups.

In the Budget Speech 1995/1996 the then Minister of Finance announced that a new item entitled “*Contribution pour La Lutte Contre l’Exclusion*” would be created in the Budget under the Prime Minister’s Vote, with a project value of Rs500 m and an initial provision of Rs25 m.

In fact, in September 1995 the Trust Fund “*Pour La Lutte Contre L’Exclusion*” was set up as per the Finance and Audit (Regulations) 1995. The main objective was to implement projects and schemes with a view to assisting the vulnerable and needy groups in improving their living conditions and thereby better integrating society.

During financial year 1995/1996 an amount of Rs25 m was provided to the Trust Fund “*Pour La Lutte Contre L’Exclusion*” in the Capital Budget under the vote of the Prime Minister’s Office. I am informed that expenditure by the Trust Fund to finance community-based projects during financial years 1995/1996, 1996/1997 and 1997/1998 amounted to Rs11.6 m, Rs6.6 m and Rs8.7 m respectively, that is the amount of Rs25 m plus interest accrued thereon. During financial year 1998/1999 no disbursement was made at all by the Trust Fund for the implementation of projects to alleviate poverty.

In March 1999 the Trust Fund “*Pour La Lutte Contre L’Exclusion*” was restyled “Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups” under the Finance & Audit Act. The object of the Fund remained the same.

Further, in the Budget Speech 1999-2000, the then Minister of Finance announced that Rs500 m from the Privatisation Fund would be put at the disposal of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups.

However, for the financial year 1999/2000 only an advance of Rs15 m was made to the Trust Fund. I am informed that out of this amount, the Trust Fund financed community-based projects to the tune of Rs9.6 m. Moreover, in the financial year 2000/2001 an advance of Rs35 m was made and projects to the tune of Rs31.1 m were financed.

It is only in the financial year 2001/2002 that an item with a project value of Rs440 m was created in the Capital Budget of the Ministry of Finance as Contribution to the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups.

I am also informed that from financial year 2001/2002 to date Government's grant to the Trust Fund in the budgets has been Rs75 m annually.

For the same period, the Trust Fund has disbursed Rs240.3 m for its Community Based Projects, Loan Scheme to Needy Students attending tertiary education and Micro Credit Scheme.

I wish to inform the House that as from June 2000 to date, the Management Committee of the Trust Fund has approved projects and schemes to alleviate poverty to the tune of Rs328.9 m. Details are as follows –

- 917 Community-based projects to the tune of Rs285.2 m,
- 348 Loan facilities to the tune of Rs20.8 m to needy students attending tertiary education, and
- 822 Micro Credit projects to the tune of Rs22.9 m.

These schemes have directly or indirectly benefited some 87,000 people of our countrymen in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups has thus established itself as a lead organisation in the fight against poverty and exclusion.

The Trust Fund is also implementing an Action Plan for poverty alleviation which was launched by Government in August 2001. This Plan provides a framework for poverty alleviation within which all stakeholders, Government, NGOs (Non-Government Organisations), Civil Society and the Private Sector could operate in a co-ordinated manner. One of its main objectives is to promote a sound and co-ordinated management of poverty alleviation programmes through the adoption of an integrated approach and with the close collaboration of all stakeholders.

Regarding the list of projects and schemes implemented by the Trust Fund on a yearly basis since 1995 to date, same is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as it is ready.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, has there been any study as to the causes of the hardship of these people? I would like also to know the number of people to be assisted in the near future.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, as I have said, every year, we have earmarked, up to now, Rs75 m in the fight against poverty and this will continue definitely in the next Budget. Measures will also be taken in that direction.

CHINESE SPRING FESTIVAL - OFFICIAL CEREMONY

(No. B/130) Dr. J.B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether her Ministry organised an official ceremony in the context of the Chinese Spring Festival and whether she attended and, if not, why not.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, two official functions have, so far, been organised with the collaboration of my Ministry to mark the Spring Festival this year.

Firstly, the cultural show held on Wednesday 09 February 2005 at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture organised by the Spring Festival Committee of the Federation of Chinese Societies; and

Secondly, the cultural show held on Saturday 12 February 2005 at China Town, Port Louis organised by the Municipal Council of Port Louis and the China Town Cultural Association. I attended both functions.

MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES - CATTLE BREEDERS (SMALL) - COMPENSATION

(No. B/131) Mr S. Sakaram (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology & Natural Resources whether he will consider the advisability of compensating small cattle breeders, in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues, who lose part of their cattle as a result of premature death.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Chief Agricultural Officer that there are at present 2010 cattle breeders owning about 6300 heads in Mauritius and 2789 cattle breeders owning 6000 heads in Rodrigues.

A scheme for needy cowkeepers was introduced in 1983 aiming at assisting cow keepers whose animals died as a result of accident, illness or natural calamities. When the Veterinary Officer found that the animal was not

responding to treatment, the owner was advised by the Division of Veterinary Services to send it to the Central Abattoir for slaughter. The owner was then paid a nominal amount by the Mauritius Meat Authority. To provide further relief, such breeders were also given a similar discount as other cowkeepers who suffered from death of their animals. Such discount was in the range of 50-80% of the normal cost price of the animals provided from the Government Livestock Stations of my Ministry.

I am informed that this scheme was stopped in early 1998 because it was too costly to sustain.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: The Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) Ltd. provides loans to the livestock sector up to 80% of the project, at interest rates between 8% to 11% with repayment periods of up to six years, including a one year moratorium. When animals die, the DBM normally on request reschedules the loan by providing a longer repayment period and may also grant additional loans for replacement of the animal to enable cash generation for the servicing of previous loan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already started working on options that could alleviate the hardship of small cattle breeders on premature death of an animal. One of the options is the possibility of extending an insurance scheme for livestock farmers to cover cattle against premature death with subsidies from the Small Planters Welfare Fund.

As soon as a decision is taken, I will inform the cattle breeders and I will also inform the House.

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the Minister whether when the MMM/Labour party was in power, was the decision to restart existing incentives not taken and approved by Cabinet giving better facilities to the cowbreeders?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to read from an answer given by the then Minister of Agriculture, now Deputy Prime Minister, to Parliamentary Question B/748 -

"The Needy Cowkeepers Scheme was abolished in 1998 while the Cash Incentive Scheme and the Milk Productivity Bonus Scheme were abolished in 1999."

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order! Order! Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Dr. Boolell: Why is it that he did not come with new incentives in 2000 and live with existing incentives, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are working on new schemes.

Dr. Boolell: Then why is it that since 2000 they have not come with any new scheme. They have failed and they have failed abysmally, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been working on new schemes. Now, with the Small Planters Welfare Fund, we are thinking of an insurance scheme and all the cattle breeders who have lost an animal, when they came to me...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bodha: ...I referred them to the Trust Fund for all facilities which can be given to them to have a compensation and to have a capital fund to start again their activity.

AIRPORT/ROSE BELLE HIGHWAY- STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/132) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether in regard to the lighting installation along the highway from the Airport to Rose Belle, he will state -

- (a) when the works were carried out;
- (b) the name of the contractor;
- (c) whether the system is in working order and, if not, why not, and
- (d) whether the guarantee period is still valid.

The Minister of Housing and Lands and Minister of Fisheries (Mr G. Lesjongard): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am replying to PQ B/132.

- (a) The provision of road lighting from the airport to Rose Belle was carried out as part of the Construction of the Second Carriageway from Nouvelle France to Plaisance project. The lighting works were executed in the period February to April 2003.
- (b) The main contractor for the works was A. J. Maurel Construction Ltd. and the works were supervised by BCEOM, French consultants. The main contractor was responsible for the whole of the works including the lighting works. However, the contract allowed the main contractor to sub-contract parts of the works. Consequently, A. J. Maurel Construction Ltd. sub-contracted the road lighting works to Sotralec Ltd. with the approval of the engineer.
- (c) The road lighting is in good working condition. However, it has been noticed that whenever there is a fluctuation in the CEB voltage the system is automatically switched off. The system then has to be switched on again thereafter. The matter has already been reported to the main contractor for the installation of a voltage stabilizer and necessary measures will be taken.
- (d) The guarantee period is still valid. Repairs and maintenance are still under the responsibility of the main contractor. Once the works are commissioned by the Electrical Services Division, the road lighting system will be handed over to the Grand Port/Savanne District Council.

**CPE EXAMINATIONS - PERCENTAGE PASS MARK -
2001 TO 2004**

(No. B/133) Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether

in regard to the CPE examinations, he will, for each of the years 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, state -

- (a) the overall percentage pass mark, and
- (b) the percentage pass mark per subject.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to reply to PQ B/133. The overall percentage pass mark for the years 2001 to 2004 was 35% and the percentage pass mark per subject was 30%.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has been a bit quick in answering. Can I ask him whether there has been an increase in the performance of the students since 2001?

(Interruptions)

Mr Fowdar: I don't have the relevant information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Jeetah: I'll come back with another question next week, Mr Speaker, Sir.

IRRIGATION AUTHORITY/MAURITIUS SUGAR AUTHORITY - PROJECTS

(No. B/134) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources whether he will table a list of the projects being implemented by the Irrigation Authority and the Mauritius Sugar Authority since January 2001.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to table a list of projects implemented as provided to me by the Irrigation Authority and the Mauritius Sugar Authority.

May I highlight some of the projects? The first one is the rehabilitation of the Massilia Canal of the Northern Canal System. The second one is the rehabilitation of Souvenir and Solitude Drip Project. The third one is the Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase II, Block 3. Then, we have the consultancy services to strengthen planters' capabilities to participate in operation and management of the irrigation schemes. We have

the consultancy services to implement a training programme for the beneficiaries. Then we have the Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase II, Block 2 and the rehabilitation of existing small scale irrigation projects (Phase II) under IFAD. We have also the Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase II, Block 8A and projects implemented by the Mauritius Sugar Authority. The conversion of the system of irrigation on 770 hectares in Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase I. I am tabling a list of the projects.

Dr. Boolell: The Minister surely is aware that these have been ongoing projects. Can I ask him how many of these projects have been implemented and whether there has been any undue delay?

Mr Bodha: Sir, I have the start date and the date of completion. In the case of the Massilia Canal, the project started in 2002 and was completed in July 2003. Souvenir and Solitude Drip Project started in August 2001 and completed in April 2002. Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase II, Block 3 started in July 2002 and completed in May 2004. Consultancy Services started in February 2003 and completed in August 2003. Northern Plains Irrigation Project, Phase II, Block 2 started August 2003 to be completed in March 2005. The project of IFAD started in November 2003 and was completed this month. Northern Plains Irrigation Project, phase II, Block 8A started in 2004 to be completed next year. And the project of the Mauritius Sugar Authority for the change of system of irrigation started in March 2004 and it will be completed at the end of this year.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that the Minister has not been supplying all the relevant information. The Minister knows perfectly well that when Midlands Dam came on stream, there should have been completion of all irrigation projects to irrigate the fields of the planters. Can he inform the House as to why there has been unnecessary delay with loss of foreign income, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, once we had the Midlands Dam in operation, we had to supply the main feeder to the north. When the water came to the North, we had to create the system in the area and then we can have the system operating in each and every field. So, the project has been going on and on and I think that it is almost completed.

Dr. Boolell: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the unnecessary delay has been due to gross political interference?

(Interruptions)

And this is the reason, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Bodha: This is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are committed to provide the small planters with all the facilities to have a better yield and better revenue.

Dr. Boolell: If Government was committed, there should have been synchronous planning. Since there has been no synchronous planning, it is the planters who have to suffer the ill-planning of this Government!

Mr Bodha: This is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SUGAR INDUSTRY - ACCELERATED ACTION PLAN

(No. B/135) Dr. A. Boolell (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology & Natural Resources whether he will state the measures included in the Accelerated Action Plan for the Sugar Industry for the benefit of sugar cane planters operating in difficult regions.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ. B/41.

Effectively, both the MSA and Landell Mills have been requested to also look at measures for the benefit of sugar cane planters operating in difficult areas. I will give all details when our Action Plan 2005-2015 is ready, which should not be too far away.

BANK OF MAURITIUS - MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

(No. B/136) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to whether the Monetary Policy Committee met recently to consider the interest rate on savings, stating whether any decision has been taken thereon.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the function of the Monetary Policy Committee, as laid down under Section 55 of the Bank of

Mauritius Act 2004, is to formulate the Monetary Policy to be implemented by the Bank of Mauritius and not to set out the interest rates on savings deposits.

The interest rate on savings deposits of banks is determined by the banks themselves under the competitive market conditions and is consequently not the responsibility of the Bank of Mauritius.

The Bank of Mauritius increased on 10 February 2005, the Lombard rate, which is the rate at which it is prepared to lend overnight funds to commercial banks, from 9.7% to 10%. Insofar as changes in the Lombard rate acts to signal the cost of funds on the market, banks are expected to be guided by the direction and quantum of change effected in the Lombard rate and to adjust their deposit and lending rates accordingly.

I understand that most banks have effected an increase in their respective deposit rates following the increase in the Lombard rate.

JEC/NPCC - DOCUMENTS

(No. B/137) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, he will state -

(a) if the documents entitled -

- (i) “A Road Map for achieving meaningful competitiveness” prepared by the Joint Economic Council, and
- (ii) “Competitiveness Foresight”, prepared by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council have been submitted to Government and, if so, when, and

(b) consider the advisability of tabling them.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the document entitled “A Road Map for achieving meaningful competitiveness” prepared by Joint Economic Council was submitted to Government in the context of the Government/private sector meeting held on 12 February 2005.

I am informed that JEC has also released this document to the public in a press conference held on Thursday 17 February 2005.

The document was the basis of the JEC Memorandum for the 2005/2006 Budget Consultations and is presently being examined by my Ministry.

As regards the Discussion Paper on “Competitiveness Foresight” prepared by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC), this has been made public on 16 November 2004 and can be downloaded from the NPCC website, namely npccmauritius.com. The contents of the document are deliberations of a group of stakeholders who participated at a Competitiveness Foresight Workshop from 20 to 24 September 2004. I understand that a book version of the document is being prepared and will be made available to Members of the National Assembly.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS - COMPLIANCE TO SPORTS ACT

(No. B/138) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will table a list of the sports federations which are not complying with the requirements of the Sports Act, indicating the manner in which they are non-compliant and the steps taken to ensure compliance with the Act.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, all federations responsible for the sports disciplines listed under the Second Schedule to the Sports Act are not presently in compliance with sections 8 and 9 of the Act regarding regionalisation of sports in Mauritius. I am tabling a list of the federations.

In accordance with sections 8 and 9 of the Act, every sports federation is required to have more than one registered club in each of the sports regions where it is authorised to operate. In fact, the Act provides that all federations must operate in a total of 13 sports regions listed under the First Schedule to the Act.

When the Sports Act was enacted in December 2001, provision was made for a federation to -

- (i) operate in 13 sports regions;
- (ii) have at least seven clubs in each region, and
- (iii) implement the provisions of the Act relating to regionalisation within two years from the date of coming into force of the Act, that is, 18 January 2004.

At a brainstorming session on sports held in February 2004, sports federations made a plea for additional time for compliance with the Act and for more flexibility with regard to the number of registered clubs required in each region. Accordingly, in November 2004, the Act was amended to enable the federations to comply with the provisions of the Act relating to regionalisation. The amendment provided, *inter alia*, for -

- (i) granting additional extension of one year for implementation of the regionalisation process, that is, until 18 January 2005, and
- (ii) reducing the number of clubs from seven to two per sports region, that is, a total of at least 26 clubs as compared to 91 previously.

On 12 January 2005, the substantive Minister of Youth and Sports held a meeting with all sports federations, in the presence of the Chairman of the Mauritius National Olympic Committee, whereby the requirement of the regionalisation process was once more explained to them.

On 17 January 2005, the Registrar of Associations held an information meeting with all sports federations explaining the course of action that he proposed to adopt and the steps that must be followed by federations to ensure compliance with the Sports Act. On that particular date the Registrar of Associations noted that all sports federations were not in compliance with the Act insofar as regionalisation is concerned.

Following discussions held with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Registrar of Associations on 17 January 2005, it was agreed that the latter would grant a further extension of time to all federations to comply with the Act.

On 24 January 2005, a notice was served by the Registrar of Associations on all sports federations allowing a time limit of three months to remedy the default, that is, until 30 April 2005.

Mr Dulloo: This is the problem we have when we have a Government that is cut off completely from the realities of this country!

(Interruptions)

Provision is made in the law for youth clubs and their federations to comply with, and it is impossible for them to cope. For the past four years we have seen the saga. An extension has been given till the 30 April or so. Will that not be in contravention with the law? Because the law asks for compliance by 18th January. They are already operating illegally. May we know what is being done in order that they be in conformity with the law and with the directives given by the Registrar recently?

Mr Fowdar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the reply was clear enough to say that they have three months more to remedy the situation, that is, until 30 April 2005.

Mr Dulloo: Yes, but this is against the date limit as provided within the law. Therefore, the authorities concerned are acting illegally. What is Government doing to ensure that this latest directive is in compliance with the law, which we have amended over and over again?

Mr Fowdar: Mr Speaker, Sir, let us wait till 30 April and then we'll see the situation.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES - SETTING UP

(No. B/139) Dr. J. Jhurry (Second Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will consider the advisability of constructing -

- (a) a community health centre, and
- (b) a community health club in the following villages and regions -
 - (i) Providence, Quartier Militaire
 - (ii) L'Avenir, St Pierre
 - (iii) Roche Terre
 - (iv) Bois des Amourettes
 - (v) Sodnac
 - (vi) Solferino, and
 - (vii) Arsenal and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Small Enterprises, Co-operatives, Handicraft and the Informal Sector (Mr P. Koonjoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to the question. The present criteria for the setting up of a health centre are the following -

(i) Population

One health care centre should cater for a population of about 5,000 inhabitants.

(ii) Distance

No person should travel more than 3 kilometres to attend a health care centre.

(iii) Transport

A health care centre may be provided in remote areas with a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants where it is established that there are major public transport problems.

According to the above criteria, Providence, Quartier Militaire, Solferino and Sodnac satisfy the necessary requirements. Presently, the inhabitants of Providence, Quartier Militaire attend Quartier Militaire Area Health Centre for health services. Procedures for the renting of a building to house a community health centre at Providence, Quartier Militaire, has already been initiated. Evaluation of offers for the renting of the building is in progress and is expected to be completed very shortly.

The setting up of community health centres at Solferino and Sodnac is included in our implementation plan for the health sector. However, the inhabitants of Solferino are currently receiving health care facilities at Vacoas Community Health Centre and at the community health centre located in the compound of Victoria Hospital. The inhabitants of Sodnac are provided health care facilities at Victoria Hospital and Quatre Bornes Area Health Centre.

As regards the other villages and regions which do not satisfy the criteria mentioned, health care facilities for the inhabitants are already available as follows –

- (a) for l'Avenir, St. Pierre at Dr. Quenum Area Health Centre;
- (b) for Roche Terre at Grand Gaube Community Health Centre;
- (c) for Bois des Amourettes at Old Grand Port Community Health Centre, and

- (d) for Arsenal at SSR National Hospital and Terre Rouge Community Health Centre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has, on December 04, 2004, launched the National Action Plan on physical activity, which aims at encouraging and fostering a culture of physical activity practised among the population. One of the strategies formulated in the plan to achieve this objective is to empower the community to practise physical exercises through community-based activities. In this respect, it is proposed, in the first instance, to set up one health club in each of the five health regions. Thereafter, based on the response from the five model health clubs, other such clubs will be set up throughout Mauritius.

The first five clubs, which will be set up as from mid March 2005, will be located at –

- (i) Dr Quenum Area Health Centre for Health Region 1;
- (ii) Roches Noires Community Health Centre for Health Region 2;
- (iii) Camp de Masque Pavé Community Health Centre for Health Region 3;
- (iv) Nouvelle France Community Health Centre for Health Region 4, and
- (v) Former Wooton Community Health Centre for Health Region 5.

Dr. Jhurry: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a petition from my Constituents, which they have sent to the Minister and which I would like to hand over to the Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Hurnam: On what criteria has the Minister decided to set up a community health centres in the five regions and not in the north?

Mr Koonjoo: I have already replied to the question Sir.

Mr Hurnam: Why has the north been excluded completely from that project?

Mr Koonjoo: I just gave the reply, Sir.

Mr Hurnam: Why has the north been excluded from the project? I have heard about St. Pierre, Nouvelle France, but not any in the north.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the answer a Community Health Centre for Health Region No. 1 is therein included.

**EPZ SECTOR - WORKERS - TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT
- SEP. 2000 TO FEB. 2005**

(No. B/140) Mr M. Dullo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state the number of workers whose employment has been terminated in the EPZ sector from September 2000 to date, giving a breakdown thereof for each enterprise.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I am circulating the information. **(Appendix)**

**SINOTEX LTD./KENTEX LTD
- ACQUISITION, REDEPLOYMENT EXERCISE**

(No. B/141) Mr M. Dullo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Industry and Medium Enterprises, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs whether he will state if Sinotex Ltd. and Kentex Ltd. have been taken over by a new company or other business entities and, if so, will he state their name/s and the progress achieved in the re-employment of all the workers who have lost their jobs due to the closing down of these two enterprises.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Soodhun): Sir, with your permission, I would like to answer this Parliamentary Question. In a letter addressed to me, the management of Kentex Ltd. has indicated that it had conducted a meeting with the workers and announced to them that the negotiation of Kentex's acquisition by a well-established local firm was in process and that confirmation as regards the name of the company and the firm's acquisition will be communicated to them by Monday 21 February.

In the case of Sinotex Ltd., a redeployment exercise was carried out on Thursday 17 February, to help the 913 workers find another employment and to inform them of training and self employment opportunities.

Seven organisations, namely SMIDO, IVTB, the National Handicraft Promotion Authority, EPZDA, the National Women Entrepreneur Council,

the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare participated in the exercise to give advice and to register the workers for training and micro credit projects.

Representatives of 17 private enterprises were present to recruit the workers. They had a total of 1850 vacancies to offer to the 913 workers, that is, there was twice the number of jobs compared to the number of workers.

The factories, which were present and the number of vacancies offered, were as follows -

Factory	Jobs offered
Beachwear Ltd.	30
Bentley Apparel	50
BH Industries	40
Consolidated Fabrics	22
Dallas Garments	80
Denim des Iles Ltd.	200
Firemount Ltd.	95
Jack Tellor Ltd.	30
Le Dakar Ltd.	20
New Island Clothing	135
Richfield Textiles	50
Romisco Ltd.	53
Star Knitwear Ltd.	200
Textile Industries Ltd.	100
Thon des Mascareignes	600
Tropic Knits Ltd.	135
Vieo Industries	10

As the House is aware, the workers are still in employment at Sinotex Ltd until 31 March 2005.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad that the hon. Minister is, himself, answering the question. On another occasion, he said -

'As far as Kentex Ltd. is concerned, let me give you the good news that tomorrow a local investor is going to buy the factory'

this news has been splashed throughout on the media and now we are told that negotiations are going on. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there

have been actual negotiations for the taking over of the whole of Kentex Ltd. meaning lock, stock and barrel including also the re-employment of the workers of Kentex Ltd., whom we have just heard, are still in employment with Kentex Ltd. till the end of next month?

Mr Soodhun: I would like to table a letter from Kentex Garments (Mauritius) Limited wherein the management informed me officially about the negotiation.

Mr Dulloo: Is it confirmed in this letter that the take-over will take place on the 16 February 2005 as stated in the House by the hon. Minister in a very pompous manner?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member should know that it is not like *gâteaux piments*, which are put in the oil and taken out. The factory has not closed down, it will close down on the 31 March and negotiations are going on. The official letter has been laid on the Table. What can I do? I cannot do more than what I have done. If the Member is interested to buy, I am ready to play the go-between negotiation for him and Kentex Ltd. It is not a will, the hon. Member should know that.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we will not reduce this House to the level of the hon. Minister, but following the declaration made in the House by the hon. Minister that the whole Kentex Ltd. will be taken over by a company the next day, workers have been making representations. The hon. Minister should know better that when there is a new venture taking over a company, they undertake to take over the employees; there should be continuity of service. This is why they have an interest in this question. Has there been a taking over on the 16 February? Is he giving an assurance to this House that the taking over by the new venture will ensure continuity of employment of all workers of Kentex Ltd. and will take into consideration their years and conditions of service?