

TELEPHONE TAPPING – REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/938) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to telephone tapping, he will state –

- (a) if he has recently received representations from a honourable Member of Parliament and the media, in connection therewith, and
- (b) if such practices are resorted to by the National Security Service.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I be allowed at the outset to remind the House that section 3 of our Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual which also covers the right of the individual to protection for the privacy of his home and other property. However, we must make sure that the Police have the powers and tools they need to carry out their functions, especially to safeguard our national security, and, at the same time, we must also ensure that those powers and tools are not used inappropriately. They have to operate within the framework of the law of the country and strike the right balance between supporting law enforcement and respecting privacy.

Coming to the specific question, let me refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/424 at the sitting of 09 May 2006 wherein I stated that telephone tapping is a clear violation of fundamental rights of free speech, except under certain very specific situations, where it is rightly provided by our laws in the interests of the sovereignty of the State, national security and public order and for which there are already established parameters. Since then, there has been no change in our policy in regard to telephone tapping.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of any representations having been made to me recently in regard to telephone tapping. Besides, no such complaints have been reported to the Police.

I am also informed by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority that as at to date, the Authority has not made any recommendation to authorise interception of telephone message to the Minister responsible for the subject of information technology and telecommunications pursuant to section 3(2) of the ICT Act 2001 nor has any operator so far referred to it any message under section 32(5)(b) of the Act for written directions.

I wish to inform the House that when the Police wish to resort to telephone tapping in connection with criminal proceedings, whether pending or contemplated in Mauritius, they have to go to a Judge in Chambers to obtain the appropriate order. This is resorted to only when it is necessary, and, even then it has to be justifiable.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have just been discussing earlier about modernising and completing the legislation as per in relation to elections. But in that case of telephone tapping also, like in other countries, for example, the United Kingdom, have provided for specific legislation, including watchdogs, institutions to which members of the public can turn to - and it is working, it is raised regularly in the House of Commons. Does the hon. Prime Minister not feel that we should provide for such safeguards and watchdogs also here?

The Prime Minister: The suggestion is good on paper, Mr Speaker, Sir, but the problem in Mauritius is otherwise. We know this because there was a case – I can say that to the House – where we wanted to go to a Judge in Chambers to have the telephone tapped for somebody who was, we think, clearly involved in criminal activity.

(Interruptions)

But, the procedure, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that we have to go and swear an affidavit, we have to go to do this and to do that, and people have to type their affidavit. By the time all this is done, the person would probably have known that his telephone is about to be tapped and he will cancel. This has happened in the past and that is why we have to be careful about how we can keep it, make it swift, do it quickly and, at the same time, keep it within the minimum possible people. That is what I think.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two questions. What guarantee the Prime Minister is giving to Members of Parliament that their telephone is not tapped? There is a problem. When I talk to my friends – a few, not many - on the other side, their first reaction is: “*pas cause lors telephone*”. This is my personal worry. I have very few good friends on the other side, but this is a problem. Everybody knows, even people of the press. Now, we are starting to talk to people of the press. I think the hon. Prime Minister, who is the most informed person in Mauritius, must give a guarantee and make a solemn affirmation to the House that there is no tapping as far as political opponents are concerned. I am not saying the Prime Minister. We all know that there is modern technology and all sorts of apparatus. I still remember one good friend who, when we enter his office, puts a small apparatus *pour*

brouiller la piste. This is where I started worrying. I still remember *la rue Desforges*. I am asking the hon. Prime Minister at least to clear the air as far as this issue is concerned.

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

The Prime Minister: I feel a lot of sympathy for the hon. Member because I, myself, even though I am Prime Minister, I am very careful. I speak the minimum. You can see my bills for mobile phone. I practically never speak on the phone because you get this reaction. I find, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in Mauritius the trouble is the minute you speak to somebody, he will go and speak to somebody else and you get to know what is happening without even having to do anything else. I have good friends on the other side too. Even when I was also Leader of the Opposition, I felt I have said something to somebody, I get the impression the other side knows. But, in fact, when you question, he has talked to one person, that person has gone and talked to another one. Very often, this is how a lot of information is given. I suppose in the press also you get a lot of information, not all true, but sometimes somebody is speaking to somebody. I must tell you also what happens sometimes and I tell members of the press to be careful. If you see what I was saying about the code of conduct, very often, some people say something on purpose to somebody else, making him believe that this is what “x” or “y” has said. Sometimes people take this up believing it to be true. In fact, it is not true.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he still has an adviser? I think he had an adviser who was an expert on these IT or communication matters, somebody who was very professional. Can we know whether this person is still his adviser?

The Prime Minister: He is still my adviser, but he has not anything to do with tapping. He looks at security issues because he is in that field to ensure that everything is secure. Even the Prime Minister’s Office has to be checked to make sure. I did say to the House that in 1995 I did find a bug in my office.

Mr Ganoo: How can the hon. Prime Minister then explain that he knows every move of the Opposition and ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I will not allow this question!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the former Minister of IT mentioned about the purchasing of a bug detector. Can we know whether this has already been purchased?

The Prime Minister: I think this question was put in the National Assembly and I did answer this. As far as I remember, it was a long time ago. This again was done to make sure that there is no bug in his office.

MONTEBELLO – ROAD ACCIDENT - INQUIRY

(No. B/941) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the road accident which occurred in the morning of Tuesday 08 September 2009, at Montebello, involving a lorry and a bus, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the outcome of the inquiry.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. B/941 and B/951 together as they relate to the same issue.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 08 September 2009 at about 0647 hrs, a road accident occurred along the New Trunk Road, Montebello, Pailles, involving an articulated motor vehicle carrying 20.07 tonnes of sugar and belonging to the Constance La Gaité Sugar Estate and a NTC bus, both proceeding towards Port Louis in the same direction. Both vehicles were seriously damaged and four passengers in the bus were unfortunately killed. Let me, once again, express my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of this tragic accident.

The Police initiated an immediate enquiry into the accident. The lorry driver was tested negative for alcohol. The two drivers were admitted to hospital. The lorry driver and the bus driver were arrested on their discharge from hospital on 14 and 17 September 2009 respectively. They appeared before the Port Louis Division III Court on the day following their discharge from hospital on a provisional charge of “Involuntary Homicide by Imprudence”.

The lorry driver was released on bail on furnishing a surety of Rs20,000 and signing a recognizance of Rs100,000. The bus driver was also released on bail on furnishing a surety of Rs20,000 and signing a recognizance of Rs50,000 with condition to report to the Vacoas Police Station every Saturday. Their next appearance before the court is on 17 February 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the lorry and the bus were examined on the spot on the day of the accident by a panel of experts

comprising the Police, the Mechanical Engineers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping and the Forensic Science Officer of the Forensic Science Laboratory. The lorry was again examined on 09 September 2009 by the same panel of experts at the Pailles Police Station.

On 10 September 2009, after such examination, the vehicle was handed over to Constance La Gaité Sugar Estate to be kept in its garage under lock and key with the undertaking not to interfere with the lorry. It is, I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, the normal practice for the Police to hand over any vehicle involved in an accident to its owner after they have examined it.

However, following further consultation between the Police Vehicle Examiner and the Mechanical Engineers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, it was decided to verify certain specific components of the vehicle. These components were removed on 14 September 2009 at the garage of Constance La Gaité Sugar Estate in the presence of the representative of the Sugar Estate and the Motor Surveyor of Swan Insurance and were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

The police have, in the course of its enquiry, recorded the statements of seven persons including that of the two drivers. It is awaiting the Medico-legal Report from the Police Medical Officer and the medical reports of the injured persons from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to complete its enquiry. Thereafter the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions would be sought.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not the first time that we have witnessed such fatal accidents. Government is, however, concerned about the number of fatal accidents on our road network. It is precisely in this context that I am myself chairing a special unit set up within my office, to work in close and constant consultation with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping and other stakeholders to consider measures that could be taken to further reinforce road safety. Following a high level meeting under my Chair, the Police and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping are already implementing a series of measures in that respect.

The police have taken the following measures -

- (a) With effect from 21 September 2009, all goods vehicles whose unladen weight exceed 3500 kgs are prohibited from going into certain roads between 0630 hrs and 0930 hrs on weekdays;
- (b) A Highway Mobile Patrol Scheme has been set up to operate round the clock along the highway from Grand Bay to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport. A team of eight traffic riders supported by two highway patrol cars cover the stretch of the highway;

A team of eight traffic riders supported by two highway patrol cars cover the stretch of the highway and this has been done for 24 hours with different slots for each of them.

- (c) Speed check exercises have been intensified along the highway by day and night, and
- (d) The Traffic Branch is being re-organised and a Standing Operating Procedure is under preparation in respect of serious cases of road accidents.

In addition, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping is reinforcing the existing legislation to further enhance road safety by first -

- (a) making it compulsory for heavy vehicles to be fitted with a speed limiter. A moratorium will be given to owners of heavy vehicles for the implementation of this measure, and
- (b) providing for the operation of Vehicle Examination Stations by Private Operators. These stations would have to meet state-of-the art infrastructure and equipment requirements as well as manned by fully qualified personnel.

Other measures to ensure that our roads become safer are being considered. I wish to assure the House that the issue of road safety remains high on our agenda.

Mr Jhugroo: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Government is trying to review the driving tests before issuing licences to lorry drivers or good vehicles or buses.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry; this question does not arise from the answers that the Prime Minister has given. The question is related to the accident and not to the policy on driving licence.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether some

sort of black box later referred to as a tachometer was collected from the scene of the accident and whether the same tachometer was sealed from the time it was collected?

The Prime Minister: From what I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the police have done all the procedures that need to be done, and whatever they have taken has been sealed and taken. As I said, though after having examined the vehicles, after having satisfied themselves that they have examined the vehicles, they had discussions and decided then further to take some parts from the vehicles, which they did according to what procedures laid down.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether pressure was exerted on officers of the MPI to modify their report?

The Prime Minister: How can the hon. Member say something like this? It is beyond me! That is the kind of allegation that made people lose confidence in all the institutions. That is not true! I don't know where the hon. Member got this information! That is absolutely not true! Who can put pressure on whom? The Member thinks people have died and we are going to put pressure, somebody is going to put pressure? How can the Member make such an allegation? I am disgusted!

Mr Mohamed: I have looked into the law surrounding the Road traffic Act, the National Transport Authority issues and also all the law pertaining to construction of buses in Mauritius. I have found that there is no code for construction of buses...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, the question is not relevant. We are talking about a particular accident. We are not talking about the policy about buses etc.

Mr Mohamed: The question talks about the outcome of the inquiry by the police, and I was going to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he could ask the police to enquire into the aspect as to whether those buses are properly constructed. This is what my point is: whether the Prime Minister could ask the police to enquire into whether the bus and the lorry that were involved in the accident - since both were built in Mauritius; the body was built in Mauritius - are road worthy or not, since in Mauritius there is no test for road worthiness and crash tests for those vehicles.

The Prime Minister: Personally I think, Mr Speaker, Sir - I am just saying my personal opinion - it is wrong to bring buses and then try to modify them, because there is a lot of safeguards going into the building of a vehicle and this also is being looked at including a code if need be.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister just said that the lorry was handed over to Constance La Gaieté after first examinations were carried out. This has been the practice, he has just pointed out. Does the hon. Prime Minister agree that the practice of handing over a vehicle involved in an accident should be reviewed?

The Prime Minister: I understand the point, but the other difficulty is whether you can you keep the lorry. If the court case takes four years, do you keep the lorry for four years? That is the problem. Once they are satisfied that they have done what was needed, even if they have to relook at it, they will have access. There is also a problem with how many things can you park in a police station, but I will ask the police to look at that also.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister first, how was this decision to ban heavy lorries from 6:30 to 9:30 arrived at? Who was involved in that decision and were there any consultations? Secondly, since we've learnt that, last Friday, apparently - days after the accident - a committee - one more - has been set up, can we know what is that committee, who is going to chair it, what are the terms of reference, and whether it is going to review this decision of banning heavy lorries from 6:30 to 9:30 in the morning?

The Prime Minister: That High Level Committee was already started by hon. Minister Bachoo. They are also looking at all complaints. Of course, there is a question on this later on, but I can say what I know. There have been complaints. Of course, we expected to have complaints about lorries not being able to travel early in the morning. There is an economic cost to that, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are well aware of this. Some people have written to me also to say that we should review that decision. On the other hand, the peak hours is the time we have noticed that all these major accidents are happening; fatal accidents that we have to bring down. Until we put more safety measures in place, we wanted to make sure that, at least, for the beginning, there is no such traffic during the peak hours. The High Level Committee, which is chaired by the hon. Minister, is looking at that aspect as well, because we know there is an economic cost, but we have to balance it with the risk of fatal accidents early during the day where there is a high peak flow. But we are looking at that, provided we take other measures. This is coming, and that is why I have also put this unit in my office to look at other policy decisions that have been taken. For example, there was a question earlier on how it gives licences to bus or heavy vehicles.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether, recently, the Minister or the Prime Minister has met representatives of the Joint Economic Council, and

whether he has got representations on that particular time frame and if any decision is to be taken soon?

The Prime Minister: I have not met them, but I believe the hon. Minister has met them.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he finds it judicious that the vehicle should be handed on the 9th and that the team carrying the enquiry should go to the garage at Constance La Gaieté to remove a certain number of parts of the vehicle the day after? Is that a current practice?

The Prime Minister: Well, it was not handed over on the 9th; it was handed over the 10th. They examined the vehicle on the 8th and on the 9th and, on the 10th, after further examination, they handed over the vehicle to Constance La Gaieté. I am told that is the practice, because once they feel that they have all the information, there is no need. But that is why it is put under lock and key. That is why the owners have to ensure that it is kept under lock and there is no interference; that is why the insurance people also have to come there, and that is why if they need specific parts, they go and get these specific parts. If, for some reason, there has been any kind of tampering with these parts, it will be known.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding this examination at the garage of Constance, is it not because the MPI did not have the expertise or the equipment to remove parts that this lorry was sent to Constance? Because there they do have equipment and expertise to remove these parts. Is it not the main reason why this lorry has been sent there?

The Prime Minister: This is not the information I have. They had the equipment, but they did not think at the time that there was need to look at it. But when they thought they should, they took those parts and examined them.

Mrs Martin: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that he was thinking of telling the lorry owners to equip themselves with speed limiters. Can we know whether a specific time frame has already been decided and a date given to those lorry owners so that they would be indeed able to equip themselves with those limiters?

The Prime Minister: As I said in my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to give a moratorium. That is being done, and I know the hon. Minister is coming up with regulations for that.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to measures to prevent accidents, is there the possibility

of installing cameras as it is done in Europe, in other countries on highways as a deterrent? I think there is a shortage of preventive road signs on the motorway.

The Prime Minister: I tend to agree with the hon. Member. Again, we have to be stricter on many aspects and not just on this. That is why I have set up this special unit. I am taking on board somebody who has done very well in the past, and he is going to become an adviser. I can mention his name; it's a former policeman, Mr Buntipilly, who is coming to the office. We also have to educate people. We are going to do lots of things. I want to do it personally, because I also love driving and I know how many bad drivers there are in this country.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm that there were contradictory reports as regards to the road worthiness of the vehicles, when you compare the report of the owners at *Constance La Gaité* and the report of those who carried out the inquiry?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to prejudice the inquiry. If I mention anything, I might prejudice the inquiry. Let the inquiry carry on, we'll see.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Prime Minister to see to it whether MPI does have the necessary equipment to remove parts from these lorries, such as the brake booster, the cylinder and the exhaust brake?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that they have the equipment, but I will pass on what the hon. Member has said to them.

LONG MOUNTAIN, CRÈVE COEUR, CONGOMAH AND NOTRE DAME – LARCENY CASES –2006-OCTOBER 2009

(No. B/942) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to larceny, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and now table the number of reported cases thereof committed in the regions of Long Mountain, Crève Coeur, Congomah and Notre Dame, since 2006 to date, on a yearly basis, indicating the number of arrests effected to date in connection therewith.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member as submitted by the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there is a shortage of staff at Long Mountain police station?

The Prime Minister: I have not been told that there is a shortage, but that is for the Commissioner of Police to look at. I know that he is re-organising the police, and he is looking at other things as well.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister consider having a second police vehicle for this Long Mountain police station?

The Prime Minister: I am told that this is already being done. They have just purchased vehicles.

AGALEGA - MISS J. E.– ALLEGED RAPE

(No. B/943) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) 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 as to if a case was reported to the Agalega North Police, to the effect that, on or about 01 September 2009, one Miss J. E. was allegedly victim of a rape and, if so, if any arrest has been effected in connection therewith, indicating -

- (a) the date of the arrest, and
- (b) if the suspect has been transferred to Mauritius and, if so, when.

The Prime Minister: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 03 September 2009, one Miss J. E., aged 23, residing at Ste Rita Village, Agalega South, reported to the Agalega North Police Station to the effect that on 01 September 2009 at around 09 00 hours, she was raped at her place by one Mr J. J. F., aged 20, residing at the same address.

On the same day, Miss J. E. was examined by the Government Medical Officer posted at the Agalega North Health Centre.

On 04 September 2009, the accused, Mr J. J. F., was arrested and detained in Agalega. On the same day, he was examined by the Government Medical Officer at Agalega North Health Centre. The police draughtsman and photographer also attended to the case.

Both Miss J.E. and Mr J. J. F were transferred to Mauritius by the next available flight of the Dornier aircraft on 17 September 2009. On 18 September 2009, a provisional

charge of rape was lodged against Mr J. J. F. before the Port Louis Court Division III. He was released on bail on the same day after having furnished a surety of Rs10,000 and a recognizance of Rs50,000. He will next appear before Court on 17 February 2010.

POLICE OFFICERS - PROMOTION - CRITERIA

(No. B/944) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the criteria being used for the promotion of police officers in the grade of Sergeants to that of Inspectors.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of police that promotion in the Police Force falls under the purview of the Disciplined Forces Services Commission and is governed by Regulation 19 of the DFSC Regulations as well as Standing Order No. 16 of the Police Force. Recommendations for promotion are made to the DFSC by the Commissioner of Police when vacancies arise.

All Police Sergeants who have completed two years' service in a substantive capacity as Sergeant are eligible and may apply to sit for the competitive examination to the rank of Inspector of Police, which is conducted by the DFSC.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, subject to vacancies available in the grade of Sub-Inspector and Inspector, Police Sergeants posted to specialised units of the Force such as NCG, SMF Engines Squadron and Dog Unit, may be considered for promotion to such ranks on the basis of their experience, qualification, merit and seniority by the DFSC upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Police.

Police Sergeants who have been successful in the competitive examination are considered for promotion in the first instance, in a temporary capacity as Inspector of Police, depending on the availability of vacancies.

Furthermore, Police Sergeants who are nominated with the approval of the DFSC to follow approved training courses of about one year's duration or more in Military Academies abroad or in other recognised institutions or academies may, on successful completion of such courses and subject to the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, be considered for promotion as Inspector in a temporary capacity for one year in the first

instance. Thereafter, they are confirmed as Inspector of Police in a substantive capacity, whenever this is available.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that sitting and passing the examination is one important aspect of the exercise. The Commissioner of Police then has to go through the whole list to check whether any police officer, who has passed the examination, is not under suspension or has not committed any serious offence in the meantime, or has not shown gross negligence in the exercise of his or her duty.

It is now expected that, with the verification exercise which is nearing completion, the whole exercise will be completed by mid-November.

GOODS VEHICLES – OPERATION AT NIGHT

(No. B/945) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the heavy goods vehicles, he will state if he will consider the advisability of taking measures to provide for these vehicles to operate their activity of transport of goods from warehouses at night, as preventive measures to avert accidents.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the terms and conditions of workers involved in the transportation of goods and materials in heavy vehicles for some specific sectors are governed by the Road Haulage Industry (Remuneration Order) Regulations 1989, as amended. There is no restriction in these regulations regarding night work, provided there is a break of at least ten hours between the cessation at work and its resumption.

Furthermore, there is no restriction under the Road Traffic Act for goods vehicles to operate at night.

As the House is aware, Government is encouraging extended hours of economic operation through the 24 by 7 concept, which will be beneficial to our economy in this globalised world. The Human Resource Development Council has taken a laudable initiative in this context and sensitised the business sector throughout the media. However, this paradigm shift in our culture will take time, and more sustained efforts need to be carried out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is probably referring to a recent decision to further restrict the hours of operation of heavy vehicles following this tragic accident, as they just mentioned, on the motorway. The restriction of heavy vehicles along the motorway and some specific roads has been, as I said, subject to some contentions. On 18 July 2000, goods

vehicles of unladen weight 3.5 tons were prohibited to use the M1 motorway between Phoenix roundabout and Quay D roundabout, and A1 road between 0730 hours and 0900 hours as weekdays. As from 17 October 2006, heavy vehicles are prohibited to use Ebene Road from Vandermeersch Street to the motorway, and Julius Nyrere Street from Rose Hill police station, Ebene Road to the motorway between 0730 hours and 0900 hours.

This restriction has allowed all the composite sectors of the economy as well as traffic activities to continue without restricting the activities of heavy vehicles to operate at night only.

This measure, as I said earlier, obviously has an economic cost. We must balance this against the greater risks of serious accidents during these times when traffic flow, as I was saying, is at its peak. But, as I said, a high level committee, which Government has set up to review the Road Traffic Act, is also actively considering this issue.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking especially of goods vehicles carrying equipment for road construction, and I think that the Prime Minister is aware. Everywhere we can see big lorries carrying equipment, thus causing a problem of traffic congestion. I will make an appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to consider these categories of goods vehicles, at least when they use to carry big equipment for road construction, as many roads are under construction. So, this can be done at night instead at daytime.

The Prime Minister: They are also subject to these restrictions, but the hon. Member wants to make sure that they are travelling only at night. That is basically what the hon. Member is saying.

Mr Soodhun: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/977, B/980, B/982 and B/986 have been withdrawn. Hon. Jhugroo!

NTC – BUS ROUTES - RELINQUISHMENT

(No. B/968) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the bus routes that will no longer be served by the National Transport Corporation, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation the list thereof, indicating the date on which they will take effect, and
- (b) state the measures that will be taken to ensure bus services along these routes.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the precarity of the financial situation of the National Transport Corporation where the latter was suffering from a negative balance of around Rs15 m. monthly between its current revenue and expenditure, the Corporation embarked on the implementation of a Recovery Plan aimed at reducing costs and generating extra revenue.

In this context, on 24 April 2009 the National Transport Corporation applied to the National Transport Authority for the relinquishment of eight highly non-profitable bus routes as follows –

Route No.	Description of Route
176	Flacq – Port Louis
221	Rivière du Rempart – Flacq
5/5A	Quatre Bornes – Baie du Cap – Chamarel
71	Port Louis – Poudre d’Or
8/8A	Souillac – Baie du Cap/ Rivière des Galets
14/14A/14B	Curepipe – Rose Belle – Pavé Citron
34	Curepipe – Bois Chéri
79	Rose Belle – Bois Chéri

Following arrangements made by the National Transport Authority, bus operators of the Flacq Bus Owners Co-operative Society have started operating along Route 176 (Flacq - Port Louis) and Route 221 (Flacq - Rivière du Rempart) with effect from 21 September 2009. On the other hand, three buses belonging to individual bus operators which were operating between Quatre Bornes and Baie du Cap have extended their services up to Chamarel (Route 5/5A) since 21 September 2009.

The National Transport Authority is at present discussing with the Bus Owners Co-operative Society (North) for the complete taking over of bus services along Route 71 (Port Louis – Poudre d’Or) which is being served jointly by the National Transport Corporation and three individual bus operators.

Route 8/8A overlaps with route 133 (Curepipe - Choisy). As the existing services were erratic on route 8/8A, they were supplemented by route 133. The National Transport Authority is looking into the advisability of cancelling this route. In so doing, the Corporation will be requested to provide short services, in case of need, in order not to penalise the public.

Existing operators are not willing to take over routes 14/14A, 34 and 79 as bus operation is adversely affected by competition from *taxi trains* and *taxi marrons*. The Authority is exploring other alternatives available, including the issue of licences to new operators and the operation of low seating capacity buses.

I wish to assure the House that the Corporation will be maintaining its services along these routes, until suitable alternatives are found.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Minister, as the NTC has a particular timetable, whether the individual bus operators are observing the same timetable?

Mr Bachoo: We have given instructions to the NTA inspectors to see to it that the timetable is properly observed and until now we have not received any complaint.

CHILD ABUSE CASES

(No. B/969) **Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to cases of child abuse, she will obtain from the Child Protection Unit, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since 2007 to date, indicating the actions taken by her Ministry and the Unit in connection therewith.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of cases of child abuse reported to the Child Development Unit of my Ministry for the past three years is as follows –

(a)	2007	3,523
(b)	2008	3,397
(c)	2009 (Jan to Sept)	3,663

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that as soon as a case of child abuse is reported to my Ministry, a first-hand assessment of the situation followed by a site visit is effected by officers posted at the Family Support Bureaux covering the locality to ascertain whether the child is in immediate danger and needs to be removed from his/her living environment.

Where the child is found to be in immediate danger, the District Magistrate is informed and an application for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is made in accordance with section 4 of the Child Protection Act. The child is thereafter sent to a place of safety under the responsibility of my Ministry. Psychological and medical support are provided by psychologists of my Ministry and medical officers of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Moreover, as regards cases of sexual abuse where the parents are the perpetrators or are refusing to give support to the victim, the latter is immediately removed to a place of safety. In such cases, officers of my Ministry assist in the recording of the statements of the victims and accompany them for medical examination and for spot reconstruction, if the need arises.

Follow-up is ensured by the officers and necessary support services are provided to the victims for their rehabilitation and reinsertion into their family and society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reassure the House that my Ministry is very concerned about cases of child abuse and a 24-hour on call service is provided to attend to emergency cases.

A Protocol of Assistance in respect of assistance to victims of sexual assault between my Ministry, the Police Department and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is also put in place whereby rapid service through first hand counselling, assistance in recording of statement, medical examination and intervention is ensured.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to this, my Ministry has embarked on a forceful sensitisation campaign whereby children are made aware of their rights and are empowered to voice out any attempt of abuse or violence that may have been perpetrated on them by relatives, teachers or friends.

These Information, Education and Communication campaigns are carried out jointly by my Ministry and the National Children's Council not only for children but also for

parents, teachers, police officers, NGOs and the Civil Society who have an important role to play in combating child abuse.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has also initiated a series of other measures to curb the problem of child abuse and these include -

- (1) The National Parental Empowerment Programme whereby parents are equipped with appropriate skills so that they are empowered to manage their parental problems.
- (2) The Child Mentoring Programme.
- (3) A Joint Monitoring Committee and a common Plan of Action with the *Brigade des Mineurs* in view of implementing –
 - (a) crackdown operations in high risks areas, and
 - (b) surprise checks and visits in guest houses, boarding houses and *pensionnats*.

It is to be noted that since January 2008 to date, 498 crackdown operations have been effected.

- (4) The Community Child Protection Programme which is a formal forum set up district-wise trickling down to grassroots so as to ensure community development with respect to children protection and welfare.
- (5) The Foster Care System which aims at providing the opportunity to children victims of abuse and/or neglect to live in a substitute family.
- (6) The setting-up of a Drop-in-Centre at Bell Village to provide specialised services with a view to ensuring the recovery and rehabilitation of victims of Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children. My Ministry will also be proceeding with the laying of the foundation stone for the construction of a Residential Drop-in-Centre at Grand River North West next month.
- (7) The provision of care and accommodation to children victims of abuse and neglect in Residential Care Institutions run by Non-Government Organisations which have been declared as a place of safety.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to these programmes, my Ministry has also amended the Child Protection Act in December 2005 to make provision for all cases of child trafficking,

abandonment and abduction to be dealt with by officers responsible for child welfare and development. Tougher penalties have also been provided for in case of contravention of the provisions of the law.

Furthermore, my Ministry is coming up with a Consolidated Children's Bill, which the Prime Minister himself is very keen at and it aims at domesticating the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to ensure promotion of the rights and protection of children in a consistent, coherent and holistic manner.

Mrs Grenade: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number mentioned by the hon. Minister is very alarming. May I know the timeframe allocated for the protection of these abused children and for their follow up?

Mrs Seebun: There is no specific timeframe for recovery as it is dealt on a case to case basis and on the gravity of the abuse. Some may take a short time for a few psychological sessions and some may take a very long time. So, we cannot just generalise it.

Mrs Grenade: Mr Speaker, Sir, in November 2008, the hon. Minister mentioned in PQ No. B/1200 that as a preventive programme, there is a regular awareness campaign in primary and secondary schools. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of primary and secondary schools which have been covered up to now?

Mrs Seebun: I do not have the exact figures right now; maybe I can give it to the hon. Member later during the day.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned a series of measures, but true it is, despite of the measures, that the number is increasing. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she has made an evaluation of the measures implemented since she is in office and what has been the conclusion, if ever, such evaluation has been made?

Mrs Seebun: At my Ministry's level certainly we are carrying out an evaluation to ensure that child abuse is not on the increase.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker Sir, in view of the increasing number of cases of child abuse, will the hon. Minister say whether there are specific units or at least a small private room which has been set up in some hospitals where a child victim of abuse can at least be examined in all discretion by the Police Medical Officer, receive psychological treatment and receive medical treatment at the same time and, if so, will she say in what hospitals these units have been set up?

Mrs Seebun: In all the main hospitals we do have a special ward. We have, in fact, put up a protocol with the Police and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to ensure that children, victims of abuse, are treated differently. They do not go to the Casualty.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given us the figures of the child abuses for the past three years. From these figures, if one makes a rapid calculation, it means that every day about eight children have been abused in this country for the past three years. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she has the figures of the number of cases for each of the three years referred for prosecution and where successful conviction has been secured?

Mrs Seebun: Unfortunately, I do not have it at hand, but I can certainly give it. This is referred to the court and it normally takes time.

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Minister does not have the answer, she has just to say that she that she needs notice of the question.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker Sir, the hon. Minister has given figures about the number of child abuses. Can I know from those figures how many incest cases are there? How is the child abuse issue being tackled with the Ombudsperson's Office?

Mrs Seebun: We work in close collaboration with the Ombudsperson's Office and we have a common plan of action. Of course, the Ombudsperson is equally concerned.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister with regard to the figures of child abuse that she has referred to in the answer, is there an increase in the number of children being abused or is it because there is an awareness that more are coming forward and more are being detected and it is not an increase in the number of being abuse. The distinction should be made.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member and this is actually the case. We are encouraging children to come and voice out if they are victims of abuse. This is why we are getting more cases to attend to.

Mrs Martin: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister was asked about the number of incest cases and she did not reply to it. But I wanted to ask in relation with that question, since she mentioned that children are threatened within their natural environment, their homes themselves, whether she has the average number or the figure of the number of children who have been removed from their immediate environment within that period of time frame that she has given?

Mrs Seebun: I do not have the exact figure.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir, does not the hon. Minister think that one of the main causes of this problem is the lack of parental skills. Will the hon. Minister state what measures are being taken by her Ministry to educate parents on such issues?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Parental Empowerment Programme has recently been put in place and it is giving its results.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Grenade!

SCHOOLS – TEACHERS - AGGRESSION

(No. B/970) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to cases of aggression against teachers within the school premises, he will state the number of reported cases thereof to his Ministry, since July 2007 to date, at the primary and secondary levels respectively, indicating the actions taken to prevent such aggressions.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, as from July 2007 to date, there have been 28 reported cases of aggression against Educators within the school premises. Out of these 28 cases, 14 are at primary level and 14 are at secondary level. These include both verbal and physical aggressions involving mainly -

- (i) students and Educators, especially at secondary level, and
- (ii) parents and Educators, especially at primary level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry views with much concern the issue of aggression against Educators and has taken the following measures to prevent same -

- (i) access to school premises is controlled and Heads of schools have been advised to restrict access to unauthorised persons;
- (ii) students involved in such cases are referred to the School Disciplinary Committee which decides on the sanction depending on the gravity of the case. Punishment for aggression may lead to rustication from secondary school for a specific period of time;

- (iii) the matter is also taken up by the Head of School in the morning assembly so as to send a strong deterrent signal to the student community. In some cases, students are referred to the Educational Psychologist for counselling;
- (iv) for some extreme cases, schools enlist the collaboration of the “*Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs*” and “*the Crime Prevention Unit*” as well as the “*Child Development Unit*” for a closer monitoring and follow up. Sensitisation programmes on indiscipline and violence are being sustained in the schools on a regular basis with the support of these institutions;
- (v) in cases of aggression of teachers by parents, the matter is normally referred to the Police for enquiry. When such cases occur and it is felt that the security of the teacher is at stake, police presence is requested on the school premises and in the vicinity of the school, and
- (vi) schools are being encouraged to organise extra-curricular and co-curricular activities so as to allow students to channel their energy and efforts to interesting activities and thus create a better school climate.

My Ministry is also working with the State Law Office. I am personalising regularly liaising with the Attorney General with regard to the Juvenile Offenders (Amendment) Bill and the Reform Institutions (Amendment) Bill where proposals will be made for amendments regarding undisciplined students.

Mr Speaker, Sir, We have to reckon with the fact that that this issue cannot be tackled by the school alone but requires the involvement and participation of all stakeholders including the PTA, the Students Council, teachers and the Pastoral Care Committee. During my recent meeting with representatives of Students’ Council of State Secondary Schools on 2 September 2009, I stressed the need for students to contribute towards the creation of a fully disciplined school environment and to the promotion of an educational system which will not only foster their intellectual development but also help them become good and law-abiding citizens.

With a view to achieving this objective, I am proposing to appoint a committee to work on the introduction at school level of a “*carnet scolaire*” for each student in respect of whom a record will be kept on his/her behaviour, conduct, achievement and performance which will be monitored. This proposal will, of course, be subject to discussions with various stakeholders of the education sector. I intend to introduce the system early next year.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, among the 28 cases which the hon. Minister has just mentioned, I bet there are many cases of aggressions of children/students against their teachers. This is a serious societal problem that we have. Does not the hon. Minister think that there is need to have an in-depth sociological study to know the real sources of the problem?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, insofar as schools are concerned, some work is being done already. We are constantly monitoring at the same time, doing an in-depth study with the help of our psychologists. I agree that we have to follow along the line that the hon. Member is saying.

Mr Gunness: In the case of the 14 aggressions in primary schools, I understand it is aggression by parents on teachers. Can I know from the hon. Minister since 2007, how many enquiries have been completed, how many have been sued in the court and what is the outcome, if any, if the hon. Minister knows?

Mr Gunness: In the case of the 14 aggressions in primary school, I understand it is aggression by parents on teachers. Can I know from the hon. Minister, since 2007, how many inquiries have been completed; how many have been sued in court and what is the outcome, if any which, the Minister knows? In how many schools there was a need for Police to be posted after the aggression?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a question that will need a long answer, and I don't have all the information. In fact, I will see to it that whatever information we receive can be given to the House.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister consider, in cases of violence of pupils upon teachers, an amendment to the law whereby parents are somehow held liable for the wrongdoing of their children thereby acting as more of a deterrent and continuing the good education and work being done, at home whereby - I say it again - parents are held liable somehow?

Dr. Bunwaree: I fully agree with the suggestion. Firstly, it is going to be taken up in the *carnet scolaire* of the child, and secondly, as I said, I am liaising regularly with the Attorney General to see how this can be taken on board.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are cases where there have been actually rustications of students for violence, that is, they have been removed from the school?

Dr. Bunwaree: I cannot answer offhand, but I don't think there has been any so far. I try to see to it that this is not the case as far as possible.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether in the 28 cases mentioned any agressed teacher has been admitted to hospital for wounds and blows?

Dr. Bunwaree: There has been, but I can give further information if a proper question is put.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how many of these cases he has mentioned are related to the consumption of alcohol?

Dr. Bunwaree: Direct relation has not been found in particular cases, but there could be the influence of alcohol in certain cases. Here again, if a proper question is put, we can look into the details and come to the House.

Mrs Martin: The hon. Minister mentioned the introduction of a *carnet scolaire* for students for conduct reporting. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether this *carnet scolaire* is intended to act as a deterrent, whether it is going to have any bearings upon the marks of the students? What is the reflection that has been behind the introduction of this *carnet scolaire* and when does exactly the Minister intend to initiate the discussions between the different stakeholders in order to put forward the *carnet scolaire* which he intends to put forward in January?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think it is something that is already taking place in many countries. In fact, in Mauritius, in schools which are not ours, we have the use of *carnets scolaire*. Hon. Bodha, I think, made mention of a list of 35 parameters on which students are noted and I mentioned that it is going to keep some sort of record of the behaviour, the conduct, the achievement, the performance of the child. I think we have given enough explanation. What is going to happen is that this will follow the child from Standard I till he leaves school at HSC or School Certificate or whatever class the child decides to leave school. It is going to follow the child from the beginning to the end. Of course, as I said, if the child or the parent happens to do something which is not acceptable, this will appear in the *carnet scolaire* and then at the time when the leaving certificate will be given, it will be taken care.

RÉSIDENCE RICHE-LIEU - FOOTBALL GROUND

- TOILET BLOCKS AND CHANGING ROOMS FACILITIES

(No. B/971) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether he is aware that the contractors have not completed the construction works for the installation of toilet blocks and change rooms as facilities for the football ground found at Résidence Riche-Lieu and, if so, will he state when same are expected to be completed.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Black River District Council that the construction of the toilet block and changing rooms at the Résidence Riche-Lieu football ground has been undertaken by the contractor of the Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile Limitée as part of its corporate social responsibility. These works were completed in October 2008.

I am also informed that the company has planned to complete the lighting of the football ground by the end of February 2010 before handing over the whole facility to the Black River District Council for management and maintenance.

Mrs Grenade: Is the hon. Minister aware that all amenities have been stolen and everything has to be done over?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, that was the responsibility of the CNT and I am glad I must commend what the CNT has done in that area.

At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY HEALTH INSPECTORATE – STAFF RECRUITMENT

(No. B/972) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the incident which occurred at a work place in Ebène whereby the scaffolding structure collapsed, he will state if he is aware of the shortage of staff to visit the sites of work and, if so, indicate if his Ministry proposes to recruit additional staff for the conduct of surprise checks.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like, first of all, to inform the House that my Ministry acts promptly as soon as any serious accident is reported. With regard to the accident at Ebène to which the hon. Member is referring, as soon as the news were broadcast on the radio in the morning of Monday 14 September, four officers of my Ministry proceeded to the site of the accident and were already there at 09.45 a.m. to start their enquiry.

It is a fact that there is an acute shortage of staff at the Occupational Safety Health Inspectorate of my Ministry. This shortage of staff has resulted from the non-filling of vacancies which is particularly due to the dearth of qualified persons on the labour market. Recruitment exercises conducted by the PSC in 2007 and 2008 have resulted in only four persons being appointed. Some officers who were in post have also left to take employment in the private sector.

The PSC will be invited to proceed with a fresh recruitment exercise as soon as the new scheme of service for the post of Occupational Safety and Health Officer, which has been amended to take on board the recommendations made by the PRB in its 2008 report and in the errors and omissions report 2009, is prescribed. I am informed that the prescription process is in its final stage.

New cohorts of qualified persons from the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology of Mauritius have joined the labour market recently and hopefully the next recruitment exercise will be more fruitful.

Mr Soodhun: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir and I thank the hon. Minister because I have no quarrel about what he said in Parliament. I am fully aware of the situation. I would just want to know from the hon. Minister whether an inquiry has been carried out and is there any result from it. Has a decision been taken especially in the specific case we are referring to?

Mr Chaumière: Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that an inquiry has been carried out on the site of the incident itself. The report of the inquiry will be useful for what will happen afterwards because we have to decide whether there will be prosecution or not. It is up to the State Law Office to decide whether there will be prosecution.

**VACOAS CLUB ROAD COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE –
CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/973) Mr Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the former Health Centre, found at La Route du Club, in Vacoas, which has been closed down, he will state the reasons therefor, indicating if he is aware of the difficulties being faced by the inhabitants of the region as a result thereof and, if so, the remedial measures he proposes to take.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has embarked on a massive programme of embellishment and construction of hospitals, area health centres and community health centres to the tune of Rs3 billion.

I am informed that the Vacoas Club Road Community Health Centre (CHC) was housed in an old wooden structure which was in a deplorable state and represented a source of potential hazard to both patients and staff. It was closed down for the construction of a new building.

Consequently, action was taken to divert patients attending the Vacoas Club Road CHC to the nearest health service point which is La Caverne Area Health Centre (AHC) located within three kilometres from the point of residence of any person living in the catchment area of the Vacoas Club Road CHC. The construction of the new building will start shortly. The contract has already been awarded and the works will be of a duration of twelve months.

**CIRCONSTANCE, ST PIERRE - MUSLIM CEMETERY AND
INCINERATOR**

(No. B/974) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether in regard to the construction of a Muslim cemetery and an incinerator on a portion of land of 3 *arpents* 48 *perches* at Circonstance, St Pierre, acquired by Government, he will state when works are expected to start, indicating the duration thereof.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that a plot of land of the extent of 3A 48p at Circonstance, St Pierre has been acquired from Mon Désert Alma Limited for the extension of the Muslim cemetery and construction of an incinerator with parking facilities.

I am further informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that the deed of sale is presently being finalised and thereafter arrangements will be made for the vesting of the land in my Ministry for implementation of the project. However, the owner of the land has granted permission to enter the land to start preliminary works which comprise clearing and fencing of the site, and submission of plans for approval.

The House may wish to note that there is a standing sugar cane crop on the site and the Moka/Flacq District Council is awaiting its harvest by Mon Désert Alma Limited before starting the preliminary works.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Minister to liaise with the relevant authorities so as to speed up matters because they have to take the dead even as far as Port Louis or Flacq because the Muslim cemetery at Circonstance, St. Pierre is full.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are liaising and hurrying.

MOUNT ORY, MOKA - CREMATION GROUND

(No. B/975) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the installation of a cremation ground at Mount Ory, Moka, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that, following a site visit effected on 15 July 2009 with representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, a plot of land of the extent of 25 perches was found suitable for acquisition in respect of this project.

I am now informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that the Water Resources Unit has advised that the site identified is not suitable as there is a risk of water contamination in the adjoining river particularly during rainy periods as the site borders Rivière Profonde. On the other hand, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has pointed out that it would be advisable to look for an alternative site being given that the proposed location is within view of existing residential dwellings and a primary school and the inhabitants are likely to be exposed to environmental nuisances arising from the activities of the proposed cremation ground.

I am informed that an alternative site is being identified.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the degree of civilisation of a nation also depends on how it treats its dead. Since the year 2000, people of the region are looking for a cremation ground. Actually, there is a plot of land which has to be acquired – call it a compulsory acquisition – and it is already being used as cremation ground. Can this piece of land be acquired and the cremation pyre be upgraded?

Dr. David: I'll certainly look into it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/981 has been withdrawn. Hon. Dayal!

ALMA - SUB HALL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/976) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, he will consider using his good offices to obtain, from the Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate, authorization for the construction of a sub hall at Alma.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Verdun Village Council had made a request for a plot of land at Alma to Mon Desert Alma Sugar Estate for construction of a sub hall. However, since no response has been received, I propose to convene a meeting with the Moka/Flacq District Council in order to discuss the way forward.

BASSIN LOULOU, ST. JULIEN D'HOTMAN- UPGRADING

(No. B/977) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Bassin Loulou, at St. Julien d'Hotman, he will state if his Ministry will consider the upgrading thereof by –

- (a) the construction of a retaining wall;
- (b) effecting terracing works;
- (c) the fixing of handrails, and
- (d) the construction of a platform.

(Withdrawn)

BUILDINGS - PATRIMOINE NATIONAL

(No. B/978) **Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the buildings listed as *patrimoine national* which have been renovated since 2005 to date, he will state if any of them has had its original structure modified and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) purposes thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that apart from a specific case concerning the Dr. O. Beugeard Government School which was partly demolished in 2007, none of the buildings listed as National Heritage which have been renovated since 2005 to date, has had its original structure modified.

The Dr. O. Beugeard Government School, also known as Edith Cavell Government School, will be restored and refurbished to preserve its original characteristics.

Works will be conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping in close collaboration with the National Heritage Fund which has already approved all the drawings and proposals for the renovation.

Mrs Martin: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I ask him, when I speak of modification of the existing buildings, I also speak of the interior of the building, has there not been any building listed as *patrimoine national* where the inside of the building has been modified, not the exterior, but the inside?

Dr. Bunwaree: Which building?

Mrs Martin: I am asking precisely the hon. Minister...

Dr. Bunwaree: If a proper question is put on one specific building, I may come forward with it, because, generally speaking this is the reply that I have given.

Mrs Martin: Can the hon. Minister say whether the list of the existing buildings is updated and, if yes, at which frequency?

Dr. Bunwaree: I can mention because there are not too many buildings which have been renovated since 2005 and then if the hon. Member has specific questions she can come next week with them. Martello Tower, La Preneuse, Government House, Port Louis, General Post Office, Aapravassi Ghat, Dongeon, St. Louis and Citadelle. These are the lists of

buildings which have been renovated since 2005. Now to go into the details of the interior and so on, if specific questions are put on one of these building, I will reply with pleasure to the House.

Mrs Martin: The Minister has just mentioned La Citadelle and he has said that the interior has been modified. Can I ask the hon. Minister, before modifying the structures, whether the stakeholders have been consulted and whether they agree to this?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't know whether they have been consulted or not, but they must have been aware. In fact, for La Citadelle, additions have been made to address the issue of water leakage within the stone walls of La Citadelle. These, I am informed, are reversible. The National Heritage Fund which has the responsibility of overseeing all these additions has authorised the additions and has made a detailed documentation of the site before they started the works and will carry out another similar exercise after completion of the works. Concerning the question of all stakeholders, whether discussions have taken place, I will have to look into the matter, but I am almost sure, they must have been made aware.

Mrs Martin: The interior, for example, of La Citadelle has been modified also to accommodate commercial shops, I believe. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this does not, in fact, put into jeopardy, the original cachet of La Citadelle itself?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will have to transmit this question to the National Heritage Fund, but I can give the assurance to the House that they work with seriousness, they know what they are doing. But if there is a particular point that is being raised by the hon. Member, I will take it into consideration and see what has been the outcome.

IAN PALAH BUS STATION - CUREPIPE – SECURITY MEASURES

(No. B/979) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Ian Palach Bus Station, in Curepipe, following the accidents which have occurred thereat over the past months and with a view to enhancing the security on and around the premises, especially the north wing, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the relevant authorities, information as to the measures that will be taken to prevent the recurrence of such accidents, indicating the details thereof, including the time frame for their implementation.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that following the accidents which occurred at the Ian Palach Bus Station, consultations were held with all concerned stakeholders including the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and Police Authorities with a view to reinforcing the security measures in place at the bus station.

I am informed that the following measures have already been implemented –

- (a) the fixing of handrails along the boundary of the Ian Palach North Bus Terminal from Curepipe Market to Malartic Street and along the green space of Jerningham Street up to corner of Leclézio Street;
- (b) the creation of pedestrian pathways from Malartic Street up to Ian Palach North and two flattop pedestrian crossings, one at Malartic side of Ian Palach North and the second one at the market side of Ian Palach north, and
- (c) transfer of Bus Terminal for five routes from Ian Palach North to Ian Palach South in order to provide additional space at Ian Palach North for alighting bays.

I am further informed that the street lighting network in the traffic centre is currently being reviewed and all hawkers at the Bus Terminal have been relocated to ensure the free movement of travellers.

Mrs Martin: May I ask the hon. Minister whether any specific measure is envisaged for the alighting of passengers, especially when we know that we have a problem at the Ian Palach North, when there are lots of buses and people alight just anywhere? Can we know whether any measure can be taken so that the passengers are, at least, made aware that they have to alight at a certain point and not just anywhere along the road which can cause accidents?

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that I have answered that question, but if there are other measures taken by the Municipality of Curepipe, I will let the hon. Member know.

Mrs Martin: The hon. Minister is perhaps aware that when the passengers alight from the bus, they have to cross near the market place or Ian Palach South, there is a road

which they have to cross where the buses go through. Is there any measure that has been taken into consideration in order to make that crossing place safer?

Dr. David: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a lot of measures have already been taken. If there are additional ones, I shall certainly contact the Municipality of Curepipe and bring it to the House or to the Member.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the light of all the measures that have been envisaged by the Municipality of Curepipe, he has stated in this House he is fully satisfied that onwards all precautions have been taken for the safety of passengers in that region?

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you can never be hundred percent satisfied, but measures are being taken to ensure safety.

ABBE DE LA CAILLE STREET, CUREPIPE - OPEN DRAINS

(No. B/980) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that there exist open drains in the impasses, along the Abbé de La Caille Street, Curepipe, thus representing real hazards to the inhabitants thereof and if so, will he state if remedial works will be carried out thereat and, if so, when and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

NHDC HOUSING COMPLEX, DAGOTIÈRE – SEWERAGE PROBLEMS

(No. B/981) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, he is aware of the sewerage problems existing at the NHDC housing complex at Dagotière, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Withdrawn)

RÉDUIT - RAIN WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM

(No. B/982) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, he is aware of the problems caused by the absence of a rain water drainage system at Réduit, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Withdrawn)

VICTORIA HOSPITAL - MRS B. S. J. - DEATH -

(No. B/983) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the death of one Mrs B. S. J., at the Queen Victoria Hospital, on 11 August 2009, he will state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/983, B/984 and B/985 together as they are all related to the same subject matter.

I wish to inform the House that, for ethical and confidentiality reasons, it would not be possible for me to give medical details pertaining to such cases. This is in accordance with section 300 of the Criminal Code and section 25 of the Data Protection Act 2004.

In line with existing policy, all cases of alleged mismanagement or medical negligence referred to my Ministry, are investigated into by a technical team composed of consultants within the speciality concerned under the chairmanship of one Regional Health Director. The report of the Enquiry Committee is then examined by a high level technical committee chaired by the Director General Health Services and consisting of all Directors Health Services. In some cases, in the light of the findings of the Enquiry Committee, disciplinary action as appropriate is taken by my Ministry in line with the PSC Regulations. In other cases whenever it is deemed necessary, same are referred to the Medical Council for an in-depth inquiry for determination of either mismanagement or medical negligence.

Preliminary inquiries have been carried out by officers of my Ministry in respect of the three abovementioned cases and all of them have been referred to the Medical Council for in-depth inquiries.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to ask the hon. Minister - he has mentioned the code of conduct or code of ethics - that when Fact Finding Committees are being set up if this report is not made public, whether the next of kin of those deceased are being made aware of the findings of such report.

Dr. Jeetah: I concur with the hon. lady and I can make arrangements that the next of kin can meet with the Director General for him or her to be informed of the output of the inquiry.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2006 there was a lady who passed away following a delivery and the Ministry of Health set up a Fact Finding

Committee which was presided by a Magistrate. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this report - because this was a Fact Finding Committee - will be made public or whether the findings of this report have been forwarded to the next of kin in such case?

Dr. Jeetah: I am not aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Maybe the hon. lady could come with a substantive question.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since we have experienced such cases during the last years, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any disciplinary action has been taken against any practitioner during the past years?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to look into the matter. If the hon. Member puts a substantive question, I shall certainly provide the right information.

FLACQ HOSPITAL - MRS N. K. J. – DEATH - INQUIRY

(No. B/984) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the death of one Mrs N. K. J., at the Flacq Hospital, on 19 August 2009, he will state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/983)

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - BABY P. – DEATH - INQUIRY

(No. B/985) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the death of one Baby P., on 05 June 2009, at the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/983)

BABIES - SUB-STANDARD VACCINES - INJECTION

(No. B/986) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware that sub-standard vaccines, which may prove detrimental to health, are presently being injected in babies and, if so, state the date of their importation.

(Withdrawn)

**JINFEI PROJECT – INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS, TERMS & CONDITIONS
OF AGREEMENT**

(No. B/987) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the ex-Tianli Project, now Jing Fei, he will state the -

- (a) amount of money spent by Government as at to date on infrastructure works;
- (b) reasons why Tianli did not turn up, and
- (c) if the terms and conditions of the agreement with Jinfei are the same as those with Tianli and, if not, indicate the changes.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House would recall that, in reply to a number of questions regarding investments from China for the setting up of the economic and trade cooperation zone at Terre Rouge-Riche Terre, I had stressed the fact that Mauritius had to compete against many other African countries to seize this business opportunity. I also mentioned that Tianli had been offered much more favourable terms and facilities in other African countries such as zero corporate tax, financing of on-site infrastructure facilities and land free of charge. In fact, these were the initial requests made by Tianli to set up the economic zone in Mauritius. However, after protracted negotiations and discussions, we reached an agreement that was acceptable to both parties to implement this massive project.

Insofar as infrastructure is concerned, during negotiations between Government and the project promoters, the latter have undertaken to finance the on-site infrastructure at their own cost, i.e. the totality of the on-site infrastructure, and the cost is approximately Rs2.5 billion. To develop a zone of such size, it is imperative that the promoters are comfortable with the availability of basic utilities and supplies such as road, water, power, telecommunications and wastewater. In this regard, Government has undertaken to upgrade existing roads, build a new link road at a cost of Rs170 m. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these facilities will benefit the entire region.

In addition, providers of public utilities have to invest upfront to make water, power, wastewater and telecommunications available for the implementation of the project.

It must be noted that the pre-financing of these utilities will be recovered through charges for the services that will be billed to users and operators of the zone.

It should be pointed out that all these infrastructural facilities will benefit the entire region, more specifically the residents in the surrounding locality and not only the Jinfei project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, insofar as part (b) of the question is concerned, Tianli Enterprise Group is still in the project shareholding.

The ex-Tianli project was expected to contribute decisively to the achievement of our objectives of economic growth and job creation in line with Government's strategy of openness in the economy. This objective has not changed with the Mauritius Jinfei Economic & Trade Cooperation Zone Project.

The objective of the project has been reinforced with two very strong companies, namely the Taiyuan Iron & Steel Group Co Ltd (TISCO) and Shanxi Coking Coal Group Co Ltd (Shanxi Coking) from the Shanxi Province China joining the project as shareholders.

TISCO's main business activity is manufacture of steel and stainless steel products and is the no. 1 world producer of stainless steel. The company's annual turnover is about USD14.7 billion, i.e. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, twice our GDP. It employs 45,000 people.

The second shareholder, Shanxi Coking, its main business is the production of coal. Its annual raw coal production is 65.8 million tonnes with a turnover of USD10.3 billion, i.e. 150% of our GDP. It employs 150,000 people. TISCO and Shanxi Coking are the two largest companies in Shanxi Province, China.

Tianli Enterprise Group main business is trading. Its annual turnover is USD 294 million, and it employs 1,000 people. Tianli, as the House is aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is present in Mauritius since 2003 in the textile sector with its spinning operations. The company has invested USD35 million and created 300 jobs.

The new shareholding structure of Jinfei – I understand Jinfei means corporation between Shanxi and Africa - is presently constituted of the following shareholders -

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Taiyuan Iron & Steel Group Co. Ltd | 50% |
| 2. | Shanxi Coking Coal Group Co. Ltd | 30.2% |
| 3. | Tianli Enterprise Group | 19.8% |

It is following the joining in of these two top Chinese companies that the project's name has changed to the Mauritius Jinfei Economic & Trade Cooperation Zone Project.

Furthermore, the China Africa Development Fund (CADF), which was set up by the Chinese Government to support the setting up of economic and trade zones in Africa, is expected to become an equity partner in the project. It is also envisaged that the China Development Bank will provide financing options to Chinese businesses to set up in the Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone.

I wish to add that a project of this magnitude could not be undertaken lightly or in haste. Both the Governments of the People's Republic of China and Mauritius have given their full support to its implementation. The project was given a boost and sealed following discussions between our hon. Prime Minister and His Excellency President Hu Jintao during the latter's visit to Mauritius in February this year.

The project, which represents no doubt the largest single development project in our country, requiring foreign direct investment to the level of Rs25 billion, was launched on 16 September 2009.

As regards part (c) of the question, with the change in the project shareholding structure, the promoters have set up two new companies – one investment company in China and one company in Mauritius for the project implementation. With these changes, new agreements were signed between Government and the two companies. In the agreements, Government has ensured that the interests of Mauritius are safeguarded and that the Jinfei Project is developed according to the laws of our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the underlying principles of the project have not changed, that is, the promoters will set up an economic and trade cooperation zone, the investment has to be of foreign capital, employment provided to our local people in the zone, and the promoters will develop the on-site infrastructure at their own cost.

In substance, the Jinfei Project has essentially remained the same; it will have an industrial zone, a trade and logistics zone, a business and information zone, and a hospitality zone. Moreover, acting as the facilitator and enabler of economic activities, Government will allow activities to be developed in the zone in line with the dynamics of the international business environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the wake of the global financial crisis and the economic recession, the following changes have been brought to the agreement -

- The construction period has changed from 5 years to 8 years, with the project to be implemented in two phases.
- The lease period has remained at 99 years. However, the rental would now increase by 50% every 15 years as against an increase of 50% every 10 years.
- Companies from China and from other countries outside Mauritius will be allowed to operate in the zone - initially only companies from China would have been allowed.
- Initially, it was agreed that leasehold rights may be pledged only with banks in China. Now, for the construction and development of the zone, the project promoter is authorised to pledge leasehold rights to banks outside Mauritius and, for the business operations, the companies may pledge their leasehold rights to banks in and outside Mauritius.
- Initially, it was agreed that Government will construct the new access road and upgrade the Riche Terre road, now the Baie Du Tombeau Road also will be upgraded.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will certainly note that with amendments brought first to allow other companies from China and outside Mauritius to operate in the zone, and for the leasehold rights to be pledged with local banks as well, will contribute significantly towards broadening the base of the development zone and for stronger linkages to be built with the local banking sector.

In addition, as it is generally the case for all mega projects, for greenfield investment, project promoters request for numerous incentives such as concessionary rental charges, favourable investment incentives, attractive tax policies, tax breaks and investment in offsite infrastructure. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this case, Government has, however, acted responsibly by providing some concessions in terms of rental conditions, as has been the case for many projects in the past.

We have also ensured that the agreement provides firm commitment in terms of foreign direct investment flows, local job creation and export earnings. It must be noted that all companies in the zone, including the main project promoters, will pay corporate tax at 15%.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether the agreement between Tianli and the Government of Mauritius had a confidentiality

clause, those new agreements with the new shareholders and the Government of Mauritius? Has the Government of Mauritius again agreed to confidentiality clauses?

Dr. Sithanen: Yes, there is a confidentiality clause, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Article 11. As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will reveal information on all questions that are put to me. The Chinese do business in a different manner than other people. They have insisted on this confidentiality clause, but I am willing to give information on the three main issues where concession can be made. They are -

1. On off-site infrastructure.
2. On taxes.
3. On the concession that we have given on land.

Mr Bérenger: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is provided for in the new agreements as far as passports are concerned?

Dr. Sithanen: It is the same as in the old agreement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me inform the hon. Leader of the Opposition that there is already in our Legislation a requirement that, for a given level of investment, investors are eligible to become residents in the first instance and permanent residents in the other instance. However, because the investment is about US \$750 million, nothing has been given up to now. So, theoretically, they are eligible to US \$750 million divided by US \$500,000. We are not going to give that amount. A limited amount of these facilities would be given to the promoters.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me. I heard references to coal, steel, iron industries and so on. Is there any risk to the environment? Are there any risk? Are the EIA procedures followed?

Dr. Sithanen: Two things, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First, in the agreement they have to meet all the requirements for the EIA. In fact, they have submitted the EIA to the Ministry of Environment. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that there are many companies in the world that are huge, but that diversify. The fact that they are in coal does not mean that they are going to invest in coal in Mauritius. Maybe in steel probably they could process some steel and convert them into light industrial goods to be exported to Africa. These are the two biggest companies in the world. I mean there are many organisations in the world that start in one particular sector and then they diversify in other sectors. They will have to meet the requirement for an EIA like any other organisation or any other company that invest in our

country.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioning Rs170 m. I think on road, but he did not mention any figure for utilities. Can we have the figure for utilities?

Dr. Sithanen: What applies to this organisation applies to all other organisations that come to invest in our country when we started the Export Processing Zone. You can't have an Export Processing Zone without the supply of electricity, the supply of water and the supply of wastewater. This is an investment that has to be done by each of these providers of public utilities and I said in my reply that they will get the money back when they will charge fix charges and variable charges. So, this is an ongoing exercise that will last basically for another six or seven years. They will supply these facilities as and when it is required. The only one where we have made the investment is basically for the road and for the road also, as I have mentioned, this will benefit the entire region, the entire locality, in addition to the services that will be provided by Jing Fei.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding employment in the Agreement, can we know what is the percentage of Mauritians that will be employed in the projects undertaken by the companies?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even though we have the habit of being focussed on numbers, this is a project that is going to be spanned over eight years time. It is difficult to know precisely how many jobs would be created directly, how many jobs would be provided indirectly, and how many jobs would be provided by what the Economists call the multiplier effect. We think that it is going to be about 35,000 to 40,000, depending on the activities in which they are and this is once we reach the cruising altitude and all the four pillars have been developed. We agreed with the promoters that even in the construction and development phases, though it is difficult for them - they had a discussion with me yesterday, they find it difficult to recruit people - we have told them that they have to recruit a certain number of people. For people who live there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have already recruited some local people. We have also discussed with them that they have to use some local contractors and sub-contractors and, in addition to that we have told them also that for the legal services, for the financial services, for banking and for security – *le service de gardiennage* - they are using Mauritians. We have some minimum guarantees that are there. But let me tell my hon. friend that they are finding it difficult to recruit people. My

colleague, the hon. Minister for Labour knows that there are jobs that are available, but we know that many Mauritians don't want to take some of these jobs. If the hon. Member wants me to give a figure, I think it is going to be quite high; how much exactly will depend obviously on these activities.

Mr Gunness: With regard to the electricity supply, can we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the company will produce their own electricity in that region or it will be from the CEB?

Dr. Sithanen: Not now. I think that probably the confusion arises, because in the second phase one of the pillars that they will develop is renewable energy. China is becoming very strong in renewable energy. So what they have suggested is that one of the potential areas of development would be renewable energy, but in the construction phase, obviously, they will have to rely on the CEB and because it is a major project the CEB will have to set up a substation there just like they have set up substation in the EPZ zone.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether requests have already been put in for construction materials to be imported, including sand and macadam?

Dr. Sithanen: I don't know about sand and macadam. I don't know whether my hon. friends realise the size of the investment that will take place there. There is no way that the local cement factory can supply that. We are talking of a development of 500 acres, so obviously they will have to bring in their own materials from abroad; because there is no way even for steel. There is no way that our local supplier will be able to do this. The same thing will apply for Highlands. The day we develop Highlands there is no way that cement and steel can be supplied from Mauritius.

Mr Gunness: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister saying now that in the zone companies outside China will also be entitled to operate there? Can I know whether there is any firm outside China which has shown interest up to now?

Dr. Sithanen: There will be. There are even Mauritian companies that want to go there. Let me try to explain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When China set up the CADF (China Africa Development Fund), the idea was to support China enterprises into Africa, that is why in the initial contract, in the initial agreement we could not get them to change this condition. They said that they are using money from China and it has to be for Chinese enterprises that will use Mauritius as a bridgehead to export to Africa. In the second one we told them that it

is better to broaden the scope of the investment and it might be easier also to attract business from countries other than China and they have accepted that. What is going to happen now is that they have started to do marketing in China and with the support of the Board of Investment they will have to start marketing basically for firms to come and to set up in the zone.

The Deputy Speaker: I have been very fair, but I would not like the question to become like a Private Notice Question for 30 minutes. I have seen five people asking for questions; the last five questions were from hon. Guimbeau ...

(Interruptions)

Then come with a Private Notice Question, please! We cannot have that at Question Time! So, hon. Guimbeau, hon. Lesjongard, hon. Ganoo, and hon. Guinness last! There are so many. We start like that.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister why is it that in Mauritius, there is a confidentiality clause while in other African countries where there have been such projects, all the framework agreements have been made public. Why is it that in Mauritius the framework agreement is not made public?

Dr. Sithanen: It is very simple, I asked that question also. It is a commercial decision by them; they don't want the information to be revealed to the competitor. I have tried my best to do it and, in fact, as I stated in reply to hon. Guinness, there are three areas where we can give concessions hon. Guimbeau - infrastructure, taxation and land and I am willing to reply on all three of them. Let me say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the case of land, they would be paying land much more than others have paid for lower investment. Obviously, I don't want to release their names. I can give you cases of hotels, EPZ or even others, but I am not going to reveal the names where they have paid less than 50% of what Jing Fei is paying and we are talking of an investment of \$750 m. So, I have all these figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have also given the information on off-site infrastructure and on off-site infrastructure after negotiation, they have been willing to contribute Rs100 m. and they are doing all the on-site infrastructure which is approximately Rs2.5 billion.

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance agree that this mega project will in time have a very negative impact on small businesses operating in the capital city of Port Louis and in its suburbs?

Dr. Sithanen: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are three components to that project; one is FDI, the second is jobs and the third is export earnings. I have stated in my earlier reply that they are going to export the equivalent of \$200 m. once it reaches its cruising altitude. They have not come for the Mauritian market, my dear friend; they have come for SADC and for COMESA. We had to compete with other countries in SADC and COMESA to get them. They are interested in 1 billion market. That is why they are setting up there. It is going to be for the export market. In fact, in the short term, all the SMEs, especially those that supply are going to benefit in terms of outsourcing.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come, again, on this question of infrastructure. The hon. Minister has said clearly that the promoters will bear the cost of on-site infrastructure. Can he give us an idea of what will be the total value of the off-site investment as far as infrastructure and utilities are concerned, especially for the water sector because, as we all know, a lot of investments will have to be made to provide water to this big zone? So, what is the total cost of the off-site infrastructure?

Dr. Sithanen: In fact, in the discussion, one of the reasons why there has been a slight change in the architecture of the project is that we wanted them also not to use a lot of energy and a lot of water. There is ongoing work that needs to be done at La Nicolière and there is some additional work that needs to be done in order to supply them with water. But, as I said, in the case of water, electricity and telecom, it is an investment that has to be made in order to supply these services and this is not being done by Government; this is basically a client-supplier relationship. Tomorrow, if there is going to be a big investment by A, B, C, it is the responsibility of this provider of services to make sure that these are available and they will be paid for this. So, this is an investment that is being made and they are going to recoup this investment by charging to the operators and to the developers and it is going to be done over a period of eight years.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has just mentioned that in the new agreement with Jing Fei, there are concessions with regard to land and corporate tax. Should we...

Dr. Sithanen: No, not corporate tax.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: You did mention tax.

Dr. Sithanen: No, there is no concession on corporate tax.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Minister mentioned three elements.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put her question and the hon. Minister will answer it.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I understood it was land tax among others. Should we understand that in the new agreement with Jing Fei, these are further concessions that have been made to Jing Fei than those which were in the original agreement with Tianli?

Dr. Sithanen: Maybe I did not express myself properly. What I did mention is that usually there are three areas of concession that these promoters seek. One is land, two is tax and three is infrastructure. On tax, we have not budged, neither in the first contract, nor in the second one. They are going to pay corporate tax like any other company in Mauritius at 15%.

With respect to off-site infrastructure, we are providing the road network, but, as I said, this road network is going to be of benefit to people in the region also. The area where some concession has been made is basically on land. Here also I have said it very clearly, they are not getting a better treatment than other investors with lower level of investment, far fewer jobs and far less export earnings have obtained in the past. I have checked and this is true for tourism, EPZ and even for filling stations. But, we had to give something. Zambia was giving them free land, investing in infrastructure and zero corporate tax. We also have two big players that have joined this consortium.

I don't know whether my friends in the House realise it, to get a company where the turnover is twice the GDP of Mauritius to come and invest in Mauritius, you don't get that everyday round the corner of every street of our country.

Mr Guinness: I heard from the Minister that the company is making much effort in contributing in on-site and off-site. Can I know from him whether he can ask the company to make an additional effort because we know that the sugar cane planters have been compensated; vegetable growers who are 'non-genuine', that is, those who have left their land idle, we know as we have photos here that we are left with 23 vegetable growers where there is a dispute on the compensation because Government is proposing a compensation of Rs120,000 when the loan that is outstanding is more than that in certain cases? Their lease will end in 2015, which means that it was still on. Apart from the contribution that Government is making, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can request the company as a CSR to put some money so that we can compensate these people adequately?

Dr. Sithanen: It has been a difficult subject and we have done our best and we took the decision sometimes back to set up a committee under the chairmanship of my colleague, the Minister of Agro Industry to see where it is possible to do something.

SUGAR SECTOR REFORMS – DEROCKING & IRRIGATION PROJECT

(No. B/988) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the derocking and the irrigation project initiated in the context of the sugar sector reforms, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sugar Authority, information as to -

- (a) the name of its Project Manager, and
- (b) if irrigation equipment have been purchased for installation in planters' fields, and, if so, indicate the total cost of equipment purchased as at to date.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Mauritius Sugar Authority as follows -

- (a) the name of the Project Manager is Narain Khem Baguant who is an Agricultural Engineer employed on contract since August 2005, and
- (b) irrigation projects under the FORIP have so far been implemented on one site at Albion and two sites at Petite Rivière for a total acreage of 94 hectares. Another project is currently underway at Pointe-aux-Piments on an acreage of 18 hectares. The total cost of equipment purchased for these four projects is around Rs19 m.

I am also informed that a fifth site of an acreage of 140 hectares is now being developed at Le Bosquet, Petite Rivière. Following a bidding exercise, contracts for the procurement of equipment have been awarded in August this year. The cost of equipment is Rs 25.5 m.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I thank the hon. Minister for his reply, but can he say who proposed the actual irrigation system, whether it was done with the collaboration of the Irrigation Authority or was the Irrigation Authority totally ignored in the process?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, all the projects are decided by the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) where the Irrigation Authority forms part of the Committee.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the hon. Minister aware that the actual Project Manager has claimed total ownership of the project?

Mr Faugoo: He is the Project Manager, he manages the project. The project itself is decided by the committee.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Minister just said that tender procedures were made in August for the purchase of equipment. Can he say whether there was a technical committee which examined the bids, who formed part of the technical committee, who chaired the technical committee and who were the members?

Mr Faugoo: I am told, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there was a Bid Evaluation Committee which processes, analyses and assesses the bid, the tender exercise. It is composed of Dr. Seeruttun who is the Research Manager of MSIRI, who is the Chairman of the Committee. There is Mr Sonya who is the Assistant Director of FSC, Farmers Service Corporation. Mr Khoushal, the Accounting Technician of MSA and Mr Jhurry, the Technical Officer of MSA. This is the Board.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Does the hon. Minister have information on the contractor who is actually laying the irrigation equipment and, if so, will he give some information about that contractor, how he was awarded the contract?

Mr Faugoo: I need notice of this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the hon. Minister aware that the Project Manager together with the contractor who is now working and laying out the irrigation equipment did travel together to go, select and purchase equipment for this project?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: So, will he enquire into the matter and report to the House, please?

Mr Faugoo: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

EPZ LABOUR WELFARE FUND - FACT FINDING COMMITTEE - REPORT

(No. B/989) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund, he will state if the Fact Finding Committee

set up to look into the management thereof has submitted its report and, if so, will he table copy thereof.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that, following various allegations made of irregularities at the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund, the EPZLWF Board decided to have an internal enquiry carried out to determine whether the allegations made were substantiated. A Fact Finding Committee presided over by Assistant Manager Internal Control from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment was set up in that context.

I am informed that the Committee has already submitted its report to the Board and, in the light thereof, the Board has instituted disciplinary action against two officers of the Fund. Action has been completed in one case and, in the other, disciplinary action is still proceeding.

In the circumstances, and given also that the fact finding exercise was in relation to matters pertaining to the internal management of the Fund, the hon. Member will agree that it would not be appropriate to table a copy of the report of the Committee.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to differ from the hon. Minister on the question of laying the report on the Table of the Assembly. Because soon we will be voting the Budget and we know that the EPZ Labour Welfare Fund gets a grant from Government. So, I do not see the reason why a copy of that report should not be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Chaumière: It is very simple, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Fact Finding Committee was set up by the Board. The report of the Fact Finding Committee is the ownership of the Board. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a Disciplinary Committee which is on for the time being. I do not think it would be fair for the person who is being heard that the report is being circulated here and there and everywhere. I think for the sake of justice it should remain the property of the Board and let the Disciplinary Committee end up with its process.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is the opinion of the hon. Minister. Will the hon. Minister say whether on the same enquiry, there was formerly a first committee which was set up under the Chairmanship of one Mr Molaye, the representative of the Ministry of Industry, but that report never came out?

Mr Chaumière: I am not aware about that, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Will the hon. Minister agree to look into the matter and let us know?

Mr Chaumière: Certainly, but I am not sure that - we are talking about the same ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been following very closely what is happening and seeing to it that things are being done according to the law. It is not within my knowledge that there have been other committees. There has been a Fact Finding Committee; there has been a Disciplinary Committee which is being presided over by Former Senior Magistrate, Denis Vellien - I think he is the Chairperson of ICTA now - but there has never been question of another committee.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Minister is not willing to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly, is he willing to agree to the request of the unions, at least, so that the unions may know - because it is employees' money as well - at least what is in the report?

Mr Chaumière: Let me apprise the hon. Member and the House as well that the EPZ Labour Welfare Fund is a tripartite fund which is composed of Government, unions and representative of employers.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes!

Mr Guinness: It seems that the hon. Minister is not aware that there was a first subcommittee which was set up to look into the matter. The subcommittee was under the Chairmanship of one Mr Molaye, representative of Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives, which was set up to investigate into the allegation and the Chairman never came up with the report. Can the hon. Minister look into that matter?

Mr Chaumière: I will have a look and then I will come back later.

**MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LANDS/SOLID WASTE RECYCLING LTD. -
LEASE AGREEMENT**

(No. B/990) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Solid Waste Project, he will state if an agreement has been signed between his Ministry and the Solid Waste Recycling Ltd. for the lease of land and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when, and
- (b) the terms and conditions thereof.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Solid Waste Recycling Ltd holds an industrial site lease over a plot of State land of an extent of 8 hectares being part of State land La Ferme at La Chaumière for the setting up of a Solid Waste Project. The lease agreement was signed on 05 March 2007.

The land is leased for the purpose of setting up a Solid Waste Project. The lease is valid for period 10 October 2006 to 30 June 2026 and provides for renewal for four consecutive periods of 10 years each at a rental reflecting the market rental value. The rent for the current period is at the rate of Rs55,000 per annum.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether a letter of retrieval was given to the company in spite of the fact that all permits had already been obtained?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not a letter of retrieval, but there was a notice served by the State Law Office informing that Government was about to cancel the lease and resume possession as there were still some conditions which were not met. Not all the conditions were met, but following representations made by the company, the matter has been put on hold. The company has been given another three months to sign an agreement with the Ministry of Local Government for a contract for the provision of waste and secondly, to start construction.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the hon. Minister aware that in spite of the fact that the promoter was asked to leave and vacate that portion of land, his Ministry requested the same company just afterwards to effect payment? In spite of the fact that no agreement was reached between the parties, his Ministry requested the promoter to make a payment of Rs55,000 regarding the lease of land and that payment was accepted by his Ministry. Up to now, the promoter does not have any information from the Ministry on what is happening.

Dr. Kasenally: That is not quite correct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The promoter paid whatever was due at the time it was due and this is a routine payment which he made, but the legal procedure was already set in action. In fact, the promoter knows everything and to clear all the matter, I got all my officers and the promoter because there were so many dark corners. We sat down and he now knows exactly where he stands namely that, within three months, he has to do whatever he has been told to do within the lease agreement.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Concerning that part which was missing with the Ministry of Local Government, can the hon. Minister say whether now the agreement has been reached between the Ministry of Local Government and the promoter? Is the Minister aware of any development?

Dr. Kasenally: As I said, I am fully aware, he has been given three months to reach an agreement and I hope that within those three months he gets that agreement because the lease has not yet been cancelled. It has been put on hold and he has been given every opportunity because this is an important project. I think it is the duty of everybody, including Government, to act as a facilitator and not as an obstructor towards any entrepreneur who is setting up a big project.

**RODRIGUES - MAURITIUS PRIDE AND THE TROCHETIA VESSELS -
DECEMBER 2009/JANUARY 2010 - TRIPS**

(No. B/991) Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that many Rodriguans, especially those working in Mauritius, wishing to visit their families in Rodrigues for the forthcoming new year festivities, are encountering difficulties to secure seats on the Mauritius Pride and the Trochetia vessels for the period 15 to 31 December 2009, as they are fully booked and, if so, will he consider using his good offices to request the Mauritius Shipping Corporation to increase the number of trips of these vessels during that period.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd that it is a normal feature for more passengers to travel from Mauritius to Rodrigues and *vice versa* during the month of December. They travel either by Mauritius Pride or Mauritius Trochetia.

Consequently, more trips have been programmed on Rodrigues route during the months of December 2009 and January 2010. In fact, a total of eight trips - six by MS Mauritius Pride and two by MS Mauritius Trochetia have already been scheduled.

With these arrangements, Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd considers that it will be able to the greatest extent possible meet the demand. Depending on the situation obtainable, adjustments, as appropriate, will be envisaged.

RODRIGUES – COOKING GAS - SUPPLY

(No. B/992) **Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter whether he is aware of the increasing difficulties being faced by the consumers of Rodrigues for the supply of cooking gas and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken in the short and long terms.

The Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

In September this year, it had been brought to my attention that gas cylinders which are sent on a monthly basis to Rodrigues to be sold by petrol companies get depleted within days of arrival mainly because of a tendency for Rodriguans to purchase 3-5 gas cylinders as buffer stock in their homes. However, at no point in time there was a shortage of cooking gas in Rodrigues.

I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that the prevailing situation may be assigned mainly to the distribution system. However, in a bid to alleviate the problem, the Chief Commissioner, in the RRA Budget Speech of 18 September 2009, announced that the RRA is making arrangements for AEL-DDS Ltd, the supplier of LPG gas to be now also responsible for effecting the distribution of LPG gas all around the island. Further, petrol companies will be pressed upon to improve the supply of LPG gas to Rodrigues.

I am further informed that the RRA is also implementing, amongst others, the following measures:

(1) as from October 2009, only AEL-DDS Ltd will supply gas cylinders to 100 retailers who have been identified by the Consumer Protection Unit, Shop Owners Association, Association des Consommateurs de l'Ile Rodrigues and the Fire Department throughout the island.

(2) licensing for storage of gas and retail selling of gas will be required for retailers engaged in the activity, and

(3) the Consumer Protection Unit will effect regular site visits to monitor the situation.

In the long term, the possibility of the filling of gas cylinders in Rodrigues is being looked into and a feasibility study is under way by the AEL-DDS Ltd in that respect.

**RODRIGUES - SAVING JOBS AND RECOVERY FUND – AMOUNT
DISBURSED**

(No. B/993) Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Saving Jobs and Recovery Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the number of applications received as at to date for Rodrigues, indicating the amount of money disbursed.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to support enterprises in difficulty due to the financial crisis, Government has launched a series of initiatives to be funded from the Savings Jobs and Recovery (SJR) Fund.

As at now, 11 schemes for SMEs have been finalised and are in operation and they are as follows -

- Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) I - for SMEs with turnover below Rs50m.
- Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) II - for enterprises below Rs150m turnover.
- Mauritius Approach - Lending by Commercial Banks to SMEs and equity finance to reduce gearing.
- Transitional Support for Small Companies with turnover less than Rs5 million - DBM.
- Mix of work and training scheme.
- Scheme for Small Hotels and Restaurants.
- Energy Management in Small and Medium Hotels and Restaurants.
- New Micro Enterprise Financing Scheme for Women
- Loan rescheduling of SMEs.
- Scheme for taxi owners operating at hotels under renovation
- Scheme for Mentoring services.

Regarding Rodrigues, as the House is aware, its tourism sector has been most affected. Following discussions with RRA and the stakeholders in Rodrigues a special holiday package for Rodrigues has been devised and is being implemented since August. Accordingly, a decrease in air fares by 33% is being applied. The cost is being met under the SJR Fund. In addition, the cost of passenger service charge which has been suspended is also being financed under the SJR Fund.

So far Rs2 m. has been disbursed and a claim of Rs1.5 m. is being processed for settlement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of the 11 schemes that I have mentioned earlier, there has been a higher interest for the Mix of Work & Training Programme in Rodrigues. In this respect, I am informed that applications have been received from 12 entrepreneurs (11 *Gites* and 1 Hotel) for training of employees as an alternative to laying off of workers. A first batch of 20 employees will be trained. The training cost and a stipend for trainees is met by this fund. It is expected to cost around Rs 360,000.

Furthermore, to enable Rodriguans entrepreneurs and stakeholders to benefit from the various schemes a sensitization campaign was launched nearly a month ago, on Saturday 26 September 2009 at Port Mathurin, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, SEHDA and Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

I am informed that some 250 entrepreneurs attended the one day sensitization campaign. It has been observed that many entrepreneurs who had expressed interest to make use of the schemes need to be mentored to submit a proper business plan.

In this context, SEHDA and National Empowerment Foundation are facilitating the application process of these entrepreneurs.

CITE MANGALKHAN, CITE LOYSEAU AND HENRIETTA – FOOTBALL GROUNDS

(No. B/994) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the projects for the construction of football grounds at Cité Mangalkhan, Cité Loyseau and Henrietta, he will state when they will be implemented.

The Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that Cité Mangalkhan and Cité Loyseau are already provided with football grounds. However some upgrading works are required and the Municipal Council proposes to undertake same during financial year 2010.

As far as Henrietta is concerned, I am informed by the Municipality of Vacoas-Phoenix that the contract for the construction of a football ground on the plot of State land vested in the Council has already been awarded on 08 October 2009. Works are expected to be completed by end of January 2010.

Mr Bodha: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer. May I ask him a specific question as regards lighting facilities at the football ground at Cité Mangalkhan and Cité Loyseau? Can he enlighten the House as to when these projects will be implemented?

Dr. David: That question is not directly connected with lighting facilities, but I'll certainly contact the Municipality of Curepipe to find out what is the calendar for that.

SUGAR SECTOR REFORM - SMALL PLANTERS - REGROUPING & LAND PREPARATION

(No. B/995) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the sugar sector reform, he will state the area where the project for the regrouping and land preparation for small planters has been implemented, indicating the –

- (a) amount of money spent since the beginning of the project, and
- (b) planning for the future.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Field Operations, Regrouping and Derocking Project (FORIP), a major component of the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS), aims at modernising and upgrading the production set up of small and medium planters to enable them to cope with the impact of the 36% cut in the price of sugar through enhanced production at lower costs.

The objective of the FORIP is to prepare and derock 15,000 out of the 20,000 hectares of land belonging to small and medium planters by 2015. As at June 2009, Phases I, II and III have been completed and some 2,400 hectares belonging to some 2,806 planters have been derocked and regrouped. For the period July to December 2009, a target of 900

hectares has been set. It is expected that by the end of 2009, around 20% of the extent targeted under the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS) would have been covered. I am tabling a list of the 98 sites where the FORIP has been implemented as at end of June, this year.

It is relevant to mention that the extent of land derocked and regrouped comprised one of the key performance indicators for the disbursement of funds under accompanying measures by the EU. The target set has been successfully achieved during the past years and this has enabled Government to secure the necessary funds from the EU.

With regard to part (a), the amount of money spent under the FORIP for the preparation and derocking of the 2,400 hectares of land is around Rs399 m. Additionally, an amount of Rs260 m. has been spent under the project for the purchase of equipment by the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation to undertake the derocking and the land preparation.

Regarding part (b), the FORIP for the period 2010-2015 is planned to be implemented on an acreage of 1,500 ha annually. Any outstanding acreage remaining out of the 15,000 ha earmarked will be completed in 2016 and 2017.

The new sites are being identified by the Farmers Service Corporation in consultation with the planters. The project is being implemented under the overall guidance and supervision of the Project Implementation Committee which comprises representatives of my Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment, MSIRI, FSC, SPMPC, Irrigation Authority, Sugar Insurance Fund Board and Mauritius Sugar Authority.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any harvest on land which has already been prepared and regrouped so far?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2008 we are harvesting on land which has been prepared.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the yield on the land which has been prepared and regrouped is better than what it was before?

Mr Faugoo: The yield has gone up by 30%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and the cost is going down by 30%.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are in the regrouped projects any planters or, how many planters there are, how many acreage we are talking about that have been left abandoned and how many years of harvest have these planters lost?

Mr Faugoo: They have not been left over or left behind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is a project which is ongoing. There was a target, we have reached our target. In fact, we have gone further than what the target was initially.

Mr Bodha: Following what hon. Ms Deerpalsing was saying, is the hon. Minister aware that in some cases there has been loss of harvest? May I ask the hon. Minister to make the inquiry about this and to see whether some sort of compensation can be granted to those planters from the funds available, from the accompanying measures of the European Union, because there are planters, in fact, who have lost their harvest?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a new project and I would be the last person to come and say that it is flawless. We have had certain problems encountered and there are certain representations which have been made by various planters on different issues. In fact, when we take the land for preparation, they forego one crop and they are compensated for that one crop. It has happened in some cases where they have lost two crops and we are looking at the issues and we will see how to compensate them for their loss crops.

Ms Deerpalsing: I am afraid I don't think that was the question that I asked. My question was whether the Ministry will enquire about how many planters who have joined the regroupment project whose lands have not - even up to now 2009 - yet even been planted. Therefore, my information is that there are several planters - not only one - who have joined the regroupment project, but their lands have been left abandoned and not even the first crop has been planted and, therefore, this is the second or third year of harvest that they have lost. My question is whether the Ministry will perform a census, an inquiry, about how many of those there are and how many acreage of land is involved in those kinds of regroupment projects.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, initially when we started the project, it was very, very difficult to call the planters to come and join the regrouping project. I must say after two years now, there is a higher demand for regrouping, they want to join in. As far as I know, there is no need for inquiry to be done at the level of the Ministry. As I said earlier, there are in certain cases where instead of one crop, they have foregone two crops. I am not

aware of three crops so far, I am going to look into it, but there are not too many. There was always a list of the people who are waiting, but, as I said, our target in April 2008 was 750, in fact, and we did 1,140 hectares, much more than what was targeted within the capacity that we have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The target for December 2008 was 2,000 hectares and we had completed 2,400, again, an advance of 400 hectares. So, we are moving quite fast and we have a schedule for the coming years up to 2015/2016, as I said, but there are certain flaws, there are certain practical problems which some planters are facing, but I am going to look into it.

Mr Jhugroo: As the hon. Minister is well aware, there are many small planters in the region of Holyrood and Henrietta. Is there any demand for regrouping and land preparation in that region; if not, can I know whether these planters will be regrouped?

Mr Faugoo: I cannot say offhand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I need to look into this. I need notice.

PARA-STATAL BODIES - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(No. B/996) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the public finances allocated to the para-statal bodies, he will state the amount in each case –

- (a) indicating if all of them have regularly submitted their audited accounts, and
- (b) giving details of the financial situation of each of them for the past three years

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, Statutory Bodies are required by law to submit their financial statements to the Director of Audit for auditing and thereafter to lay their audited financial statements in the National Assembly.

Insofar as part (a) of the question is concerned, at Appendix IV A and IV B to the 2007/2008 Report, the Director of Audit has stated that as at 12 November 2008 –

(i) 36 Statutory bodies had not yet submitted their financial statements to the Director of Audit. Some of these Financial Statements date back to the year 2004/2005.

(ii) 80 Statutory Bodies had not yet laid their audited Financial Statements before the National Assembly. Some date back to the year 1991 although certified by the Director of Audit.

However, regarding the 36 statutory bodies which had at that time not submitted their Financial Statements, I am given to understand that large majority of them has now already done so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (b) of the question, information on the financial highlights of each of the para-statal bodies for the last three years as well as financial resources allocated to each of them is being compiled. The information will be tabled once the exercise is completed.

To address the issue of late submission of financial statements by Statutory Bodies, Government has prescribed corrective measures by amending the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act under the Additional Stimulus Package (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 namely -

(i) the preparation by every Statutory Body of an Annual Report that contains among other items the financial statements prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the report on outcome and outputs, duly signed by the Chairperson and the other members of the Board;

(ii) to provide for disciplinary action by the Board against the officer responsible for not complying with the Act;

(iii) the Director of Audit shall, within five months of the date of receipt of the annual report submit its Annual Report thereon and his audit report to the Board;

(iv) on receipt of the Annual Report including the audited financial statements, and of the audit report thereon, the Board shall, not later than one month from the date of receipt from the Director of Audit furnish to the Minister responsible the Annual Report.

Furthermore, the Financial Reporting Act requires the Chief Executive of statutory bodies listed in the Schedule to the Act to submit, within six months of the end of the financial year, a copy of the Annual Report including the audited financial statements and the audit report thereon, to the Financial Reporting Council.

PRIVATE COMPANIES – SECURITY GUARDS – CONDITIONS OF WORK

(No. B/997) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether in regard to the security guards employed by the private companies, he will state if his Ministry has conducted any inquiry on their conditions of work, including contributions to pension schemes and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and, if not, will he consider the advisability of having such an inquiry carried out.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no specific inquiry has been conducted by my Ministry with regard to the conditions of work of security guards employed by private companies. The terms and conditions of employment of security guards are governed by the Security Guards (Remuneration Order) Regulations as amended. I can apprise the House that whenever a complaint is reported at the level of my Ministry in any sector, an inquiry is conducted and actions as appropriate are taken.

As regards contributions to the pension schemes in respect of this category of workers, I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions that there are 17 private companies employing security guards which are registered with the National Pensions Scheme and paying contributions on behalf of their employees. Officers of that Ministry effect visits periodically (at least once in every six months) to ensure that contributions are being paid regularly and correctly.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been apprised of the various complaints that have been registered in the labour offices all around the country regarding the non-regular payment of salaries of security guards and, if so, what measures has his Ministry taken in order to make sure that employees receive their salaries in time?

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, we act every time that we get complaints and we don't conduct inquiries sectorwise, I must say, on conditions of work generally, but whenever complaints have been received from individuals on specific issues. For example, I can give details of cases which have been registered. The number of complaints which have been registered is 121; the number of complaints which have been settled is 44; the number of cases which have been referred to court is 2; the number of cases

withdrawn or rejected is 3; the number of cases referred to the Workfare Programme is 1 and the number of cases pending is 71.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that many of these companies are recruiting people who are above 60 years old. I would like to know whether this is in accordance with law. Those people who are being employed and who are above 60 years old are not being paid their contribution to the pension scheme as, I think, they are not legally entitled to it.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I'll be happy to answer it.

Mr Dowarkasing: One of the conditions of employment is that those who are working for these private companies get the proper training. Has the Ministry ensured that all the security officers employed so far have gone through that training?

Mr Chaumière: As far as I remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is one of the requirements which pertains to the conditions by the Home Affairs. It does not fall under the purview of my Ministry. I think the question should be put to the appropriate Ministry.

CEB – WOODEN POLES - PURCHASE

(No. B/998) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether in regard to wooden poles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if they are still being used and, if so, obtain from the Board, the amount of money spent for the purchase thereof in its last three budgets.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the CEB that wooden poles are still being used.

The amount spent for the purchase was Rs16.78 m. in 2007, Rs21 m. in 2008 and Rs 19 m. in 2009.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Deputy Prime Minister for his reply. I just want to know whether an overall assessment has been made on the importation of these wooden poles to those which have been manufactured locally and whether we have put in a balance. Being given that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for "*Maurice Ile Durable*", is it proper for a country which wants to forge ahead on the environment to keep on importing wooden poles?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether you import it or you use local, it is still using forest wood. So, I am not sure where the question takes us.

Mr Dowarkasing: No, concrete!

The Deputy Prime Minister: The alternative is more expensive; it is more difficult to implement. If you have concrete, it is heavier; it is difficult to put in the forests and the households. So, we use concrete for high voltage. It is difficult to carry concrete ones near houses. So, there is the question of practical considerations.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL, CANDOS – MORTUARY – UNCLAIMED BODIES

(No. B/999) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether in regard to the mortuary of the Queen Victoria Hospital, in Candos, he will state the -

- (a) number of dead bodies found thereat as at August 2009, and
- (b) policy of his Ministry with regard to unclaimed bodies.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the number of dead bodies at Queen Victoria Hospital as at August 2009 was as follows -

- | | | | |
|------|-----------|---|----|
| (i) | Stillborn | - | 25 |
| (ii) | Adults | - | 6 |

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that in line with the Unclaimed Bodies (Burial Regulations), whenever there are unclaimed bodies, the matter is referred to the police and the latter conducts an enquiry to look for the relatives of the deceased.

In case, the relatives do not turn up, the Health Office of my Ministry undertakes a pauper's burial after necessary clearance has been obtained by the police from appropriate authorities.

I am informed that as at 16 October, 2009, there were no dead unclaimed bodies for adult whilst the number of unclaimed bodies for stillborn stood at 14.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House for how long the bodies of the stillborns have been at the mortuary of Victoria Hospital?

Dr. Jeetah: I did request the information myself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir; it is being compiled. I can let the hon. Member have the information at a later stage.

Mr Varma: I have one more supplementary question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What is being done with the bodies of these stillborns? The hon. Minister just stated that there are 14, if I heard him correctly.

The Deputy Speaker: I heard 25.

Mr Varma: 25 as at August, but as at 16 October, the figure went down to 14. What is being done so that the relatives of these stillborns come and claim the bodies?

Dr. Jeetah: I can circulate the protocol for burial of unclaimed corpses, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have got a list of activities that have to be carried out.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister can circulate the protocol.

MON TRÉSOR MON DÉSSERT/UNION VALE HOUSING ESTATES – INHABITANTS - RELOCATION

(No. B/1000) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether in regard to the relocation of the inhabitants of the Mon Trésor Mon Désert and the Union Vale Housing Estates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sugar Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that the inhabitants of the three sugar camps at Mon Désert, Union Vale and Mon Trésor will be relocated to Desplaces, Trois Boutiques and Mémoire, Plaine Magnien respectively.

With regard to the Desplaces site which will accommodate 133 inhabitants, all infrastructural works, i.e. water supply, road and drainage network, have been completed. However, the inhabitants cannot be relocated right now because a cavity has been found on the site during the cut and fill works. A geotechnical study is being carried out under the supervision of the University of Mauritius and the report is expected by the end of November this year. Necessary measures will be taken in the light of the report.

Regarding the sites at Trois Boutiques and Mémoire to be allocated to 23 and 12 sugar camp dwellers respectively, I am advised that infrastructural works for water supply have been completed by the Central Water Authority in May this year.

Tenders for the road and drainage networks have been awarded by the National Housing Development Co Ltd, the Project Manager, in September 2009 for the sites at Trois

Boutiques and Mémoire as well as two other sites at Britannia. The contractor has started work on the sites at Britannia and will thereafter commence the works at Trois Boutiques and Mémoire in April 2010 which are expected to be completed by July 2010. I have requested the Mauritius Sugar Authority to follow up on this project to ensure that the works are completed within the scheduled time frame.

Mr Varma: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As far as the Desplaces site is concerned, can the hon. Minister inform the House when was the cavity found?

Mr Faugoo: I don't have the date, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is any time frame for the study to be completed?

Mr Faugoo: Yes, we are expecting a report by the end of November.

LE BOUCHON & MAHEBOURG - INTEGRATED RESORT SCHEME PROJECTS-

(No. B/1001) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Integrated Resort Scheme projects, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to -

- (a) where matters stand regarding the one proposed to be implemented in Le Bouchon, and
- (b) if any other Integrated Resort Scheme project will be implemented in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and, if so, where matters stand.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to PQ B/389 wherein I informed the House of the details regarding implementation of Le Bouchon Development, an IRS project in Mahebourg. I am informed by the Board of investment that the project will entail an investment of around USD 338 million and is expected to create over 500 jobs. The project will be implemented over 143 *Arpents* of freehold land belonging to the Sugar Investment Trust and 20 *Arpents* of *Pas Géométriques* leased from Government. I understand that a Letter of Reservation for the 20 *Arpents* has already been granted by the Ministry of Housing & Lands on 25 June 2009.

In view of the level of investment in the project, I am further informed that the BOI has requested for a financial comfort from the promoters that they have available funds for the implementation of the project.

Once the proof of funds will be submitted, the Board of Investment will issue the Letter of Approval for the project. This comfort is required as some developers have delayed the implementation of their projects across the world due to the financial crisis.

In respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there is currently no other similar project in the pipeline for IRS in Constituency No. 12.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance for his answer. Can the hon. Vice Prime Minister inform the House whether the Board of Investment has given a time frame for the production of the proof of fund.

Dr. Sithanen: Usually they give a time frame, but I am not very sure on this specific case whether it is three months or less than three months.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to ask the hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he is aware that lot of hopes have been given by certain people to the inhabitants of Le Bouchon and whether he could see to it together with his other colleagues that it is after four years that the inhabitants from Le Bouchon can *trouve in pé la limière*? This is a very special region where there is a problem of land and the SIT has been promising since years, but the project is still “*Anne Ma Soeur Anne*” for these people. Can we ask the Vice Prime Minister to see to it together with his other colleagues as the Budget is coming and we must see action and not only promises?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the three MP’s of the region are looking after their constituencies very well.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking please! Thank you.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, we have made significant progress, but I think it is a very good initiative that the BOI has taken to ask the proof of funds and once this is furnished, the Board of Investment can start in other fields.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/1006 and B/1007 have been withdrawn.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS/EMBASSIES & HIGH COMMISSIONS
– ADVISERS – OFFICIAL MISSION**

(No. B/1002) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether he will state if advisers of his Ministry and Advisers of our Embassies and High Commissions have travelled abroad for any specific mission, since January 2009 to date and, if so, indicate in each case the -

- (a) purpose thereof, and
- (b) costs incurred.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr Raj Virahsawmy, Adviser on Regional Integration of my Ministry travelled to Mozambique from 22 to 28 August 2009 on official mission. The purpose of the mission was to pursue negotiations with the Government of Mozambique and local chiefs for the obtention of 18,500 hectares of land for the production of rice in the Marracuene Province of Maputo, which has been identified within the framework of Government's Cross Border Initiatives.

With regard to part (b) of the question the total cost incurred was Rs81,066.74.

Mr H. Narsinghen, Economic and Trade Adviser posted at the Mauritius Mission to the UN in Geneva attended a Regional Trade Policy Course as Resource person from 08 to 10 July 2009 in Swaziland. All costs of participation were met by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Dr. P. Brizmohun, Economic and Trade Adviser posted at the Mauritius High Commission in Pretoria formed part of two trade and investment missions to Mauritius from 02 to 6 March 2009 and from 21 to 22 May 2009 at no cost to Government.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to come again to the case of Mr Raj Virahsawmy travelling to Mozambique to discuss with the Mozambican Government, do we have a High Commissioner in Mozambique? Is it not the duty of the High Commissioner to do this sort of job?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated, Mr Raj Virahsawmy is Adviser

on regional integration and he was mandated by Government to engage negotiations with the Mozambican Authorities and we know the prowess of a commitment by Mr Raj Virahsawmy who, as former High Commissioner to Mozambique, did deliver on promises and we are about to conclude a strategic partnership with our friends in Mozambique. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over.

At 4.10 p.m. the sitting was suspended.