

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CLOSING DOWN

**(No. B/1355) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Private Secondary Schools Authority, information as to if the Authority has recommended the closing down of three private secondary schools in 2010 and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken for the timely redeployment of all the teaching and non teaching staff.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) that in the context of its annual exercise for the registration of schools to operate as from the next school year, there are three existing private secondary schools namely Bradley College, Byron College and Grand Bois College which do not satisfy one of the conditions for registration in that they have a school population which is below the maximum threshold of 150.

Strictly speaking, these schools should not have been registered to operate in January 2009. However, following representations from the Federation of Union of Managers of private secondary schools to the effect that they resent an abrupt closing down of any school at the beginning of the year, the PSSA has agreed to a softer approach by listing these schools for closing down in 2010 only, thereby giving the Managers concerned a moratorium of one year to plan and prepare themselves for the eventual closing.

My Ministry and the PSSA will ensure the redeployment of all students to allow them to continue and complete their secondary schooling in another educational institution where vacancies exist and as near as possible to their place of residence.

As regards the staff, it has up to now been the practice to absorb all teaching and non-teaching staff in MEDCO and to redeploy them in either MEDCO schools, State secondary schools or other sectors where their services may be required. These arrangements stand good.

## SC & HSC EXAMINATIONS – *OPERATION ESCARGOT* – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

**(No. B/1356) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students who sat for the Cambridge School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate examinations recently, he will state the number thereof who either came late or were unable to attend the examinations on the day the *operation escargot* was held, indicating the remedial actions that have been taken in relation to these students

**Reply:** Due to the irresponsibility of the NGO dealing with consumer protection, in particular, a certain Mr Jayen Chellum, a fleet of lorries obstructed the traffic on the motorway at peak time on Monday 03 November 2008. The above situation had a direct impact on the traffic flow at such a peak time and obviously passengers entering or transiting through Port Louis were penalised.

I am informed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) that on Monday 03 November 2008, two papers were scheduled for the School Certificate examinations and five for the Higher School Certificate examinations.

As regards the HSC examinations, two papers were set for the morning session as from 08:00 hrs namely, Accounting and Psychology and three other papers namely, Computing, Spanish and Spanish Language for the afternoon session starting at noon. It was only at the afternoon session that one candidate missed the exams and five others reached the examination centres late. The late comers were granted corresponding additional time.

For the School Certificate Examinations, the paper “Business Studies II” was scheduled from 09:00 hrs to 10:45 hrs for which four (4) candidates reached the examination centres late and two (2) others missed the exams altogether. No extra time could be granted to the late candidates as MES had not been informed in time of the *Operation Escargot*.

As regards candidates who missed the examinations or were not granted extra time, MES has made a request to the CIE for special consideration to be given to them as per the CIE rules in view of the fact that their non-attendance or lateness, as the case may be, was due to circumstances beyond their control.

## **FISHING BOAT “AMINA” - FISHING CAMPAIGN - INCIDENT**

**(No. B/1389) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Protection and Security whether, in regard to the fishing boat Amina, which was in difficulty during its last fishing campaign, he will state if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** I am advised by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping that no inquiry has been carried out on the incident that occurred whilst the fishing boat “Amina” was on fishing campaign in November 2008 as this incident does not fall into the category of shipping casualties as defined under section 175 of the Merchant Shipping Act, whereby a preliminary inquiry might have been initiated by virtue of Section 176.

According to records available at my Ministry boat “Amina” left for a fishing trip on 03 November 2008. The boat reached Albatross bank on 06 November 2008 and started its fishing campaign.

On 12 November 2008 at 19.25 hours the Master of the fishing boat called the Harbour Radio and reported that the fishing boat had developed problems in position - latitude 17.23 degrees South and longitude 59.18 degrees East and was drifting southerly at a speed of 1 knot. The Mauritius Ports Authority reported the matter immediately to the National Coast Guard Headquarters which was already aware of the situation.

Following communication between the National Coast Guard and the owner of “Amina”, the latter hired the fishing boat “Dai Fah” for towing. The National Coast Guard monitored the towing operation until both fishing boats reached Port Louis Harbour on 17 November 2008 and kept the owner informed of the operation. All the members of the crew reached Port Louis Harbour safe and sound.

The Fisheries Division of my Ministry recorded a statement from the owner who confirmed that the problem was of a mechanical nature and all its crew reached the harbour safe and sound. In addition, the owner informed that the fishing boat was not damaged during the towing operation.

The House may wish to note that some 754 kilos of fish were caught and landed and have already been put on sale.

## **RODRIGUES -SEA FREIGHT RATES**

**(No. B/1392) Mr J. Von Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd., information as to the sea freight rates applicable, indicating if they are higher when compared to the other destinations and if so, the reasons therefor and (b) if same will be reviewed downwards, following the fall in the price of petroleum products.

**Reply:** Freight rates have been increased by 12.5% on the Rodrigues route as from 24 November 2008. When comparing sea freight rates, the costs per mile on shorter routes obviously turns out to be higher than on longer routes. In addition, we should also take into account limitations of the port of Rodrigues which do not allow for services to be provided by bigger capacity vessels. This would have reduced the cost per mile and permit economies of scale.

It must also be pointed out that there is a clear imbalance of trade between Mauritius and Rodrigues where over 85% of containers return empty from Rodrigues to Mauritius at carrier's costs.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Bunker Adjustment Factor has never been applied on the Rodrigues route. This is being considered by a dedicated team involving the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Mauritius Shipping, Corporation Ltd and my own Ministry.

D36/IF/W04/1

## **MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES – COMMODITIES – PRICING POLICY**

**(No. B/1393) Mr J. Von Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter whether, in regard to the commodities, he will state Government policy in maintaining, as far as possible, the prices thereof at the same level in Rodrigues and in mainland Mauritius.

**Reply:** The same pricing policy which is applied in Mauritius is also applied in Rodrigues, except for the freight element which is an additional component for the price structure of goods in Rodrigues.

The House is aware that the price of only eighteen (18) essential items, similar to those in Mauritius, are controlled under the Rodrigues Price Control Regulations.

Whenever, controlled goods are imported in Rodrigues from Mauritius, appropriate regulations are made for each consignment following an exercise carried out by the Price Control Unit of my Ministry. This is meant to ensure that only the freight element is the add-on in the price structure. The enforcement of the regulation is carried in Rodrigues by Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

### **SUGAR SECTOR REFORM – VRS II**

**(No. B/1394) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the reforms in the sugar sector, he will state –

- (a) the number of employees who have left the industry under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme 2;
- (b) the total amount of money disbursed, and
- (c) the source of the funds.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority as follows -

D36/IF/W04/2

- (a) 6,536 employees have left the Sugar Industry under VRS II;
- (b) a sum of Rs3,054 billion has been disbursed for payment of cash compensation to these employees, and
- (c) the source of funding was from accompanying measures obtained from the EU as well as from contribution by the Corporate Sector.

### **CUSTOMS OFFICERS – REINSTATEMENT**

**(No. B/1395) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Customs Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the number thereof who were under interdiction and have resumed duties from July 2008 to 15 November 2008.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that for the period July 2008 to 15 November 2008, eleven(11) Customs Officers were under interdiction and three(3) of them have been reinstated.

In respect of the reinstated officers, one was reinstated after his case was set aside by the Intermediate Court, while the other two were reinstated after a Disciplinary Committee had heard their cases and decided that a final written warning be administered to them.

### **CITE L'OISEAU – PLAYGROUND – UPGRADING WORKS**

**(No. B/1396) Mr F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the playground situated at Cité L'Oiseau, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if renovation works thereat are being contemplated and, if so, indicate when works are likely to start and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that upgrading works among other fixing of new goal posts, leveling and turfing of the football ground at Cité L'Oiseau have already been undertaken and the playground is in good condition. The Council had also contemplated to fence the football ground, but same could not materialize due to the high cost involved which is to the order of Rs3 m.

mrl/d36w05.01

### **SINGLE MOTHERS – SOCIAL AID**

**(No. B/1397) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the measures taken in the Budget Speech 2008-2009 to allow single women with children to take employment without being disqualified for the social aid, she will state where matters stand.

**Reply:** The Ministry of Finance & Economic Empowerment and my Ministry have worked out the criteria for the payment of the special allowance to be paid to single mothers who have dependent children and are in receipt of social aid or who would quantify for social aid to enable them to place their children in a day care centre and seek employment.

The allowance payable is Rs700 per child per month and the criteria are as follows –

- (a) the single mothers should take up employment in the formal sector and contribute to the NPF and NSF;
- (b) they should have children aged between 3 months and 5 years, and
- (c) their total income including social aid, the special allowance and salary should not exceed Rs7,500 monthly.

As at to date, 31 single mothers have availed themselves of this measure which involved a total number of 37 children.

## **SITES AND SERVICES PROJECT – BENEFICIARIES – TITLE DEEDS**

**(No. B/1398) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Land and Services Project, he will state the number of persons who have received their title deeds as at to date.

**Reply:** I assume that the hon. Member is, in fact, referring to Sites and Services Project.

I am informed that 188 persons have received their title deeds.

## **DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL – AVIAN INFLUENZA – SUSPECTED CASE**

**(No. B/1399) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to avian flu, he will state if a suspected case thereof has been reported on Friday 21 November 2008 at the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

**Reply:** I wish to reassure the House that no suspected case of Avian Influenza was reported on Friday 21 November 2008 at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital.

A lady returning to Mauritius from Indonesia on 19 November 2008 was put under routine surveillance. As she complained of fever on 21 November 2008, throat swabs and blood samples were sent to WHO Influenza Reference Laboratory, UK on Saturday 22 November 2008. The results obtained on 27 November 2008 revealed that Avian Flu H5N1 testing was negative on all samples.

I wish again to reassure the House that this case has been handled according to the standard protocol for ongoing surveillance for communicable diseases.

## **CENTRE POLYVALENT – CITÉ JONCTION, PAILLES**

**(No. B/1400) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the *Centre Polyvalent* at Jonction, Pailles, he will state when it will be put at the disposal of the inhabitants of the region.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that the *Centre Polyvalent* at Cité Jonction, Pailles is, in fact, operational as from 26 April 2007 and is available to the inhabitants of the locality from Monday to Saturday between 12.00 hours to 18.00 hours

## **SHELTER - ASSOCIATION KIDDY PARADISE – MANAGEMENT FEES**

**(No. B/1401) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for G.R.N.W and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Association Kiddy Paradise, which was formerly managing the Ministry's shelter, she will state if it was paid the management fees due, and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** The contract for the management of the shelter of my Ministry was awarded to Kiddy Paradise Association with effect from 01 February 2008 for a period of two years, on the approval of the then Central Tender Board. The contract was subsequently terminated on 11 April 2008 in view of the fact that the Association had failed to deliver services as per the provisions of the Tender Documents.

My Ministry effected payment for the managing fees, including the refund of reimbursable items for the months of February and March 2008 on 13 March 2008, 28 March 2008 and 14 April 2008 respectively.

The advice of the State Law Office was sought as regards payments for services provided for the period 01 to 11 April 2008. These payments were subsequently effected on a pro-rata basis directly to the different service providers, instead of Kiddy Paradise Association, in September 2008. The delay in effecting the payments was due to the fact that my Ministry encountered difficulties in retrieving the related claims from the service providers and same had to be cross checked and verified.

## **BREAST & CERVICAL CANCER - DETECTION**

**(No. B/1402) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for G.R.N.W and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to breast cancer and cervical cancer amongst the female population, he will state the measures taken to detect cases thereof.

**Reply:** I am advised that breast cancer and cervical cancer are the most common types of cancer in the female population in Mauritius. In this respect, my Ministry has initiated a series of measures for early detection of these cancers, thereby ensuring timely action to treat or prevent complications from the disease.

The following measures have been taken -

- (i) screening for breast and cervical cancers as part of primary prevention for all women aged 30 to 65 years. The screening is done routinely at workplaces, schools, health centres, mobile clinics and in the community;
- (ii) women are taught by medical officers how to perform self-breast palpation on a regular basis at home. Those diagnosed with any abnormality or positive finding are referred to the regional hospitals for specialised care and advice, which may include mammography;
- (iii) PAP smear is performed routinely to detect early changes of cervical cancer. Specimen slides are sent to the laboratory for examination and those with positive results are seen at the Colposcopy Unit of Victoria Hospital;
- (iv) sensitization campaigns on prevention and control of breast and cervical cancers are carried out as an ongoing activity in women centres, social welfare and community centres, worksites, health centres as well as in the community settings;
- (v) pamphlets and brochures containing essential information on breast and cervical cancers are distributed amongst the community, and
- (vi) breast and cervical cancer screening is being carried out in Mobile Clinics which are operational within the community.

I wish to point out that the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare is fully involved in national awareness programme related to breast and cervical cancers. That Ministry in collaboration with my Ministry and the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association is carrying out papsmear tests in its fourteen (14) Women Centres and at its Empowerment Centre at Pont Lardier. Some 700 women have already benefited from the programme.

Furthermore, in line with the policy of the World Health Organisation, some time back, my Ministry organised a workshop on the Planning and Development of a National Cancer Control Programme with the participation of international experts. Based on the findings of that workshop, a National Cancer Control Programme incorporating all aspects of cancer control including prevention, screening, early detection, effective therapy and palliative care for the period 2009-2012 is currently being finalised.

It is to be noted that from March 2001 to September 2008, 57,408 smears were taken from 852 sites out of which 2071 abnormal cases were referred to the hospital.

It is proposed to carry out breast and cervical cancer screening in mobile clinics which provide a wide range of prevention programmes. 100,000 persons will be targeted next year.

### **INSULIN SYRINGES - TENDER**

**(No. B/1403) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if his Ministry has recently ordered a consignment of insulin syringes and, if so –

- (a) the quantity thereof;
- (b) the specifications required in the tender;
- (c) the name of the successful bidder;
- (d) the contract value;
- (e) if the specifications have been respected, and
- (f) if the supplier has allowed a discount on the contract value, indicating if Government has accepted same.

*(Withdrawn)*

## QUARTIER MILITAIRE & BETINNELLE – WATER SUPPLY

**(No. B/1404) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Vuillemin and Betinnelle, Quartier Militaire, Bonne-Veine, Quartier Militaire and Quartier Militaire he will state if he is aware of the acute water problems being faced by the inhabitants thereof, and if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** I am informed by the CWA that the regions of Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire and Betinnelle are supplied from the Alma borehole and La Marie Treatment Plant. During the normal period, these regions receive water on a 24-hour basis.

However, as a result of the decrease in the yield of the Alma borehold, these regions are presently supplied 14 hours daily. Furthermore, the water supply is disrupted owing to frequent bursts of an old pipeline which feeds water to Alma Reservoir.

The region of Bonne Veine, which is situated on a high elevation, is supplied from Quartier Militaire Reservoir. As water is pumped directly into the distribution system the supply is seven hours in the morning and afternoon respectively.

I am further informed that the CWA has enlisted the services of a Consultant to advise on a project for the improvement of the water supply in Highlands, Ebène and Camp Fouquereaux which shall include the renewal of the pipeline supplying Alma Reservoir. The consultant is expected to submit the draft tender document by January 2009 and CWA will initiate the procurement process for implementing the project.

## LA PRAIRIE – STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. B/1405) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the State land at La Prairie, he will state if he has received any applications for the lease of part thereof and, if so –

- (a) the names of the applicant/s, and
- (b) if any letter of reservation or intent has been issued and, if so, indicate –
  - (i) to whom;
  - (ii) the date thereof;
  - (iii) the terms and conditions thereof, and
  - (iv) the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** In regard to part (a) of the question, my Ministry has received six applications for lease of State land at La Prairie from the following promoters -

- (i) Kite Surf Village;
- (ii) Jean Roland Desvaux de Marigny;
- (iii) *Maitrise de Chantier et Ingenierie*;
- (iv) Gamma;
- (v) Les Anges du Sud, and
- (vi) Brightsphere Ltd.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, no Letter of Reservation or Intent has been issued in favour of the six applicants.

However, in the context of a land exchange mechanism for the construction of a bridge, to replace the existing causeway which is flooded in times of torrential rains, at Macondé, a Letter of Intent has been issued on 29 January 2008 in favour of Baie du Cap Estates Company Ltd over 4A89 of State land at Pas Géométriques La Prairie. The terms and conditions of the said Letter of Intent are, *inter alia*, as follows:

- (i) Government of Mauritius acquiring 4A89 67/100 of freehold land at Macondé from Baie du Cap Estates Company Ltd at a nominal value of Rs150;

- (ii) Baie du Cap Estates Company Ltd withdrawing the case of appeal lodged against Government regarding the acquisition of 4A89 67/100 of freehold land at Macondé ;
  
- (iii) The seaward side of the site of an extent of 1A74P should be left undeveloped and used for landscaping purposes only whereas the portion being on the landward side of an extent of 3A15P would be leased for a tourism related project;
  
- (iv) The payment of a refundable reservation fee of Rs250,000
  
  
- (v) The rental will be at the rate of Rs150 per arpent per annum for a period of 60 years.

#### **BETINNELLE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - BRIDGE – HANDRAILS**

**(No. B/1406) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the bridge at Betinnelle, Quartier Militaire, he will state if he will consider re-instating the handrails thereat.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the repairs to the damaged handrails at the bridge of Betuel Road, Vuillemin has been programmed to be undertaken during the second week of December 2008.

#### **BRAMBA KUMARI ROAD, PROVIDENCE – RESURFACING**

**(No. B/1407) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Bramba Kumari Road at Providence, Quartier Militaire, he will state if he will consider the advisability of having it resurfaced.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that patching works have already been effected on 12 November 2008 to the Bramba Kumari Road which was badly damaged. As regards the complete re-surfacing of the road, the Council is exploring possibilities of undertaking same.

## **MAMADE ELAHEE MUNICIPAL STADIUM – WATER LEAKAGE**

**(No. A/24) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mamade Elahee Municipal Stadium along Coringa Street, Cité Martial, Port Louis, he will state if he is aware of the leakages of water from the irrigation pipes thereof and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that there is no leakage in the water outlets side the Mamode Elahee Municipal Stadium along Coringa Street, Cité Martial, Port Louis. In fact the problem is caused by the water run off through the pipes discharging the water on the road.

I am informed that a request has already been submitted by the Council to the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit for the construction of a drain of 165 metres along Rosan and Coringa streets in order to catch and direct the run off water to the nearest existing drain.

I am also informed that the upgrading of the existing channel along Coringa Street behind Mamode Elahee Municipal Stadium is also included in the project and the waste Water Management Authority is also envisaging to deviate the sewer line along Coringa Street.