

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**COMPAGNIE THERMIQUE DU SUD LTEE - HIGH POWERED COMMITTEE**

(No. B/1410) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the *Compagnie Thermique du Sud Ltée* (CTDS) projects, he will state –

- (a) if the inter ministerial committee set up to examine the different aspects and components thereof has submitted preliminary findings and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) if a Commission of Inquiry will be set up to carry out an in-depth examination thereof.

**Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities):** On 07 July 2006, Government had set up a High Powered Committee to shed light on all different aspects and components of the *Compagnie Thermique du Sud (CTDS)* Power project, the procedures used and establish whether the principles of good governance were adhered to or not.

The High Powered Committee was chaired by the then Minister of Public Utilities and comprised –

- the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation;
- the then Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications;
- the Minister of Local Government, and
- the Attorney-General.

The High Powered Committee has taken cognizance of all the relevant information and data concerning the CTDS project.

Subsequently, an agreement was signed between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association (MSPA) in April 2008, providing *inter alia* that Government and MSPA will appoint jointly an independent expert or entity of international repute and with the appropriate expertise to review the energy sector with regard to the Independent Power Producers.

International tenders have already been invited to appoint the independent consultant and the bids received on 21 November 2008 are being evaluated. It is expected that the contract will be awarded by January 2009 and that the consultant will submit his report within three months.

### **CEB – GENERAL MANAGER – CAR**

**(No. B/1428) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the car put at the disposal of the General Manager of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the make and model thereof, indicating –

- (a) when was the request made, and
- (b) the cost thereof.

**Reply:** I am advised that the CEB has placed at the disposal of its General Manager a car of make Mercedes Benz C220 CDI rating 2148 cc as from 05 December 2008. This car was purchased on 09 June 2004 at a cost of Rs2,413,307 and it was being used by the two former General Managers.

### **SUGAR CANE PLANTERS – STATE LAND - LEASE**

**(No. B/1430) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production & Security whether, in regard to the small sugar cane planters who find themselves in the obligation to abandon their lease on State land due to the drop in the price of sugar, he will state if Government proposes to offer them compensation in monetary terms and a plot of land and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed that around 2000 small planters are presently renting State agricultural land over an area of some 2000 hectares in the ex-tea belt from sugar cane cultivation against payment of an annual rental of Rs 1,000 per arpent.

A number of these planters, because of the suitable nature of the soil, are faring quite well and are obtaining a good yield for their crop. However, there are other planters who have obtained marginal land and their yield is rather low. All the planters are receiving assistance from the Farmers Service Corporation. Those who wish to change crop from sugar cane to food crop are being allowed to do so and are being assisted by the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU).

My Ministry recently received representations from sugar cane planters of Midlands regarding the following:-

- (i) repair of roads in the sugar cane fields to facilitate transport of cane;
- (ii) setting up of a loading zone to enable them to save on transport cost; and
- (iii) payment of a compensation to planters operating on marginal land, especially the older ones.

A meeting was held at my Ministry with representatives of the planters and of the institutions concerned, i.e. the Mauritius Sugar Authority, the Farmers Service Corporation and the Control Board to examine the representations made. It has been agreed that funds would be released from the repairs of the roads and the Control Board would examine the possibility for the setting up of the loading zone. The possibility of regrouping the planters and derocking their land to increase productivity and save an operational costs will also be explored.

The question of payment of compensation to the planters does not arise because all small planters alike will be affected by the 36% cut in the price of sugar and Government is not in a position and does not have the means to pay a compensation to all of them. My Ministry will continue to extend all facilities and assistance to the planters to enable them to go to the difficult time ahead. The planters will also be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities available under the Empowerment Programme to secure an alternative source of income.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION UNIT - VACANCIES

(No. B/1431) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter whether, in regard to the posts of Head of the Consumer Protection Unit and Consumer Protection Officers, he will state if there is any vacancy and, if so, indicate –

- (a) since when;
- (b) the number thereof, and
- (c) the measures taken to have them filled, indicating if the Unions have been informed accordingly.

**Reply:** There are presently vacancies on the Establishment of the Consumer Protection Unit for one post of Head, Consumer Protection Unit and 14 posts of Consumer Protection Officer.

The post of Head, Consumer Protection Unit is vacant since 08 September 2003, whereas the 14 posts of Consumer Protection Officer have become vacant at different dates due to the retirement of some officers from the grade or for other reasons.

Financial provisions have been voted in the 2008-2009 Budget to fill six out of the fourteen vacancies in the grade of Consumer Protection Officer. As regards the post of Head, Consumer Protection Unit, provisions have been made in the budget approved for the Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter in November 2008, following its setting up in September.

As soon as the Ministry was created, action has been initiated to expedite matters regarding the filling of the vacant posts of Consumer Protection Officer in respect of which financial provisions have been voted. In this context, amendments are being brought to the existing scheme of service of Consumer Protection Officer, following recommendations of the PRB Report. Consultations have been held with the staff side, and the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has been requested to take action for its prescription in that respect.

It is understood that consultations with trade unions will take place at the level of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms. Once the scheme of service is prescribed by Public Service Commission, my Ministry will take appropriate action for the filling of the vacancies in the grade of Consumer Protection Officer.

Insofar as the post of Head, Consumer Protection Unit is concerned, it became vacant on 08 September 2003, when the temporary incumbent took employment with the ICAC. An exercise was carried out by the Public Service Commission in October 2004 to fill the post but the offer which was made in March 2005, had to be withdrawn given that the selected candidate could not assume duty within the prescribed delay. Since then, the post has remained vacant, and the next seniormost officer in the grade of Principal Consumer Protection Officer has been assigned duties of Head, Consumer Protection Unit. With the setting up of the Ministry, funds have been made available for filling the vacancy of Head, Consumer Protection Unit. Action is being initiated to that effect as I consider that it is difficult for the Unit to operate efficiently and effectively without a substantive Head, although I must point out that those who have acted in the capacity of Head, Consumer Protection Unit have done so to the best of their abilities.

### **TOBACCO BOARD – MEMBERS - ICAC INQUIRY**

**(No. B/1432) Mr R. Bhagwan First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the Chairperson of the Tobacco Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to if the incumbent has been the subject of any inquiry from the Independent Commission Against Corruption and if so, indicate -

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if he will be required to step down pending the conclusion of the inquiry.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Tobacco Board that ICAC has, at the beginning of April 2008, initiated an inquiry on the procedures for application of licence for cultivation of tobacco. In that context, all Board members including the Chairperson as well as the Administrative Secretary of the Tobacco Board were called by ICAC to give a statement.

I am advised that no *prima facie* case has been established yet by ICAC. In the absence of this information, it is not proposed at this stage to request the Chairperson to step down.

### **MER ROUGE – FUEL DÉPÔT – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/1435) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new fuel *dépôt* at Mer Rouge, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) the names of the promoter/s, and
- (b) if he has discussed the details of the project, including the financial implications thereof, with the existing oil companies.

**Reply:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ B/1306. Following Government decision to have a Request For Proposal (RFP) from interested stakeholders who were willing to invest concurrently in the project regarding the construction of additional storage capacity of 25,000 MT for white oil (Mogas & Gas oil) and around 10,000 MT for LPG, response had been received at the closing date, i.e. on 05 May 2008, from the following -

- (a) Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (for White Oil & LPG)
- (b) Petroil Ltd. (for White Oil & LPG)
- (c) Consortium comprising of Shell Mauritius Limited, Total Mauritius Limited & Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd. for White Oil products (Mogas/Gas oil only)
- (d) Consortium comprising of Shell Mauritius Limited & Total Mauritius Limited for LPG only

Several meetings were held with the Consortium Shell, Total, Indian Oil and Petroil except Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. which was not interested in a joint project. After discussions, a consensus was reached with regard to white oil storage facility. Thus, it was agreed between all stakeholders that Shell Mauritius Limited, Total Mauritius Limited and Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd would be allocated 15% of shares each in the project. 40% of shares would be allocated to Petroil Ltd and Government through the State Trading Corporation would hold the remaining 15% shares. This agreement on share allotment was subsequently approved by Government.

### **STC/MANGALORE REFINERIES - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – AGREEMENT**

**(No. B/1446) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the agreement signed between the State Trading Corporation and the Mangalore Refineries, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the purchase price of each of the petroleum products per barrel.

**Reply:** I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that an agreement was signed between State Trading Corporation & Mangalore Refinery Petrochemical Ltd (MRPL) on 6 July 2007 for the supply of petroleum products for period 01 August 2007 to 31 July 2010. According to the contract, the basis used for pricing are as follows –

(i)	Motor Spirit (Mogas) Platts	FOB (Med Italy)
(ii)	Gasoil 0.25% Sulphur Platts	FOB Arab Gulf
(iii)	Jet Fuel (Kero) Platts	FOB Arab Gulf
(iv)	Fuel Oil 180 Catalytic Cracked Platts	FOB Arab Gulf
(v)	Fuel Oil 180 CST Straight Run Platts	Singapore
and (vi)	Fuel Oil 380 CST Straight Run Platts	Singapore

These reference prices had been used by STC even prior to the signing of the first contract with MRPL in 2005. The prices are denominated in different units for different products, that is: in metric tons for mogas and fuel oil and in US barrel (US BBL) for gas oil and jet fuel.

With reference to Mogas it is to be noted that the CIF price in April 2004 was USD 0.2549 per litre compared to USD 0.5355 per litre in November 2008. Moreover, the exchange rate of the USD was MUR 26.471 in April 2004 compared to MUR 32.55 in November 2008 and MUR 33.00 in December 2008.

I am tabling the CIF prices for the different products as applied for the last twelve months.

### **MINISTRY OF HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE- INSULIN SYRINGES - TENDER**

**(No. B/1449) 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.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, yes, I am informed that my Ministry has placed an order of 1,200,000 units of insulin syringes on 22 April 2008 to be supplied in two equal consignments.

With regard to part (b), the specifications required in the tender document were insulin syringe 1ml 100 units graduation, with incorporated needle 29G X $\frac{1}{2}$ "', disposable, sterile, individually packed.

With regard to part (c), the successful bidder is Ducray Lenoir Ltd.

With regard to part (d), the contract value is Rs1,476,000.

Insofar as parts (e) and (f) are concerned, I am also informed that there has been a deviation from the original specifications for the first consignment as regards the needle and the supplier has offered a discount of Rs50,000. All clearances were sought and obtained in accordance with the Public Procurement Act 2006 before accepting the consignment.

### **CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT – DIRECTOR – POST**

**(No. B/1451) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the post of Director of Customs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to if it has been filled and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the incumbent, and
- (b) the terms and conditions attached thereto.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the post of Director of Customs has not yet been filled. However, the selection exercise has been completed. Two candidates have been retained and discussions are being held with one candidate regarding the terms and conditions of his contract.

### **VALETTA – DRAINS**

**(No. A/25) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he will consider the construction of covered drain at Valetta near Quincaillerie Seetohul over 200 metres.

**Reply:** The Quartier Militaire Road (B6) from Wooton to Quartier Militaire is being upgraded in two phases. The implementation schedule is as follows –

Phase 1 – Wooton to Belle Rive for which works will start shortly.

Phase 2 – Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire which the World Bank has accepted to finance and for which procurement procedures will start next year.

In Phase 2, a bypass for the village of Valetta will be constructed and the road within the village will be upgraded including the construction of footpaths within the residential zone.