

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### MBC – LICENCE FEES – AMOUNT COLLECTED

**(No. B/1453) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs whether, in regard to the television licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the amount of money collected monthly, indicating the number of customers therefor?

**Reply:** I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Corporation is collecting an average amount of Rs27.7 m. monthly as licence fees from a total number of around 290,690 customers.

### JEWELLERY - THEFT

**(No. B/1455) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs whether, in regard to the theft of jewellery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof over the past four years, indicating the preventive measures taken to combat same.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of cases in regard to theft of jewellery reported to Police for the last four years is as follows -

2005	-	515 cases
2006	-	631 cases
2007	-	784 cases
2008 (to date)	-	905 cases

With a view to curbing theft of jewellery and other types of larceny, preventive patrols are being organised island-wide by the regular police with support from other units of the Police Force.

At the Divisional level, check points at strategic places are being set up with a view to checking motor vehicles and arresting suspects involved in criminal cases. Police Divisions have also been directed to make rigorous use of the Police Public Partnership Policing and the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to enhance Police/Community co-operation.

At the Station level, visible police presence is being provided near markets, hotels, restaurants, bus stands, commercial centres and jewellery shops.

Furthermore, the Crime Prevention Unit is sensitising school children, elderly persons, salesmen, tourists as well as jewellers on safety of life and protection of property.

Dealers in jewellery are also being encouraged to install security equipment on their premises.

With the coming into operation of the Close Circuit Television (CCTV) System in Port Louis, Grand Bay and Flic en Flac, a more effective monitoring of the law and order situation and a better protection to members of the public will be provided.

Police is also in the process of modernising its radio communications system and the new digital system will enhance communication and coordination of police activities and operations.

I also wish to inform the House that the Jewellery Act 2007 which has recently come into operation will provide for a better regulation and control of manufacture and sale of jewellery made of precious metals. The Act will also protect buyers and provide for a better control on dealings in jewellery. Section 28 of the Act makes provision for the search of business premises of a dealer and seizure of jewellery where the Assay Office has reasonable ground to believe that an offence has been committed under the Act.

Members of the House are also aware that the Judicial Provisions Act 2008, recently passed by the National Assembly has provided for the possibility for the Courts to inflict a harsher penalty with respect to offences like larceny with wounding, larceny with violence by night breaking, larceny by night breaking and larceny with other aggravating circumstance.

Parliamentary Question

**MBC – CAMERAMEN/SENIOR CAMERAMEN – RECRUITMENT  
AND PROMOTION**

**(No. B/1459) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the cameramen employed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if a promotion exercise in the grade thereof has recently been carried out and, if so, indicate –

- (a) if the new recruits satisfy the qualifications requirements as per the scheme of service, and
- (b) if any cameraman holding the required qualifications has not been promoted and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that a selection exercise for the posts of Cameramen/Senior Cameramen was recently carried out by the Corporation.

Twenty-two applications were received in response to an internal advertisement issued in May 2008. Twelve applications were not considered as the candidates were not qualified as per the Scheme of Service for the post. One application was also not retained as it was received three days after the date limit for submission of applications. Nine candidates who hold the required qualifications as per the Scheme of Service for the post were interviewed and were appointed as Cameramen/Senior Cameramen following approval of the Board of the MBC.

## MBC – SPORTS/CURRENT AFFAIRS SECTIONS

(No. B/1460) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if the Sports Section and the Current Affairs Section have been detached from the News Department and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Sports Section and Current Affairs Section are an integral part of the News Department and therefore they have not been detached from the News Department.

The News Department comprises seven desks namely, Radio News, Sports, Samachar, Creole, English, French TV and Current Affairs. The News Department is under the authority of the Director of News.

## PAS GEOMETRIQUES – INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL SITE LEASES

(No. B/1464) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the industrial and commercial site leases on *Pas Géométriques*, he will state where matters stand in relation to –

- (a) the review of the terms and conditions thereof which will reflect the market value and which are aligned with those of the *campement* sites, and
- (b) the meetings held with his Ministry, the Ministry of Finance & Empowerment and the Valuation Office so as to work out the conditions of the option forms in relation thereto.

**Reply:** In regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to Section 33 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008,

which makes provision for all the terms and conditions that will be applicable to industrial and commercial site leases on *Pas Géométriques* including assessment of rental at market value.

In regard to part (b) of the question, consultations are ongoing between officers of my Ministry and those of the State Law Office and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Empowerment, with a view to finalising the draft option letter and option form together with the draft new lease agreement for industrial and commercial site leases. It is expected that these finalised option letter and option form will be issued to all the concerned lessees by end of February 2009.

**BEACHCOMBER HOTELS – STATE LAND & PAS  
GEOMETRIQUES – LEASE**

**(No. B/1465) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the State land, *Pas Géométriques*, leased to the Beachcomber Group of Hotels, he will state –

- (a) the number and the names of the hotels standing thereon;
- (b) the extent of land leased per hotel site;
- (c) the annual rental per *arpent* in each case, indicating if the rental value reflects the actual market value;
- (d) if a premium is being paid by each hotel, and
- (e) the terms and conditions of the lease in each case.

**Reply:** In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, the information will be placed in the Library after compilation and verification. The information will comprise the details asked for in parts (c), (d) and (e) of the question.

**HOSPITALS – DRUGS - SHORTAGE**

**(No. B/1466) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the essential drugs in the hospitals, he will state if there is a severe shortage thereof and, if so, indicate if the drugs are being procured on the local market through small contracts, giving –

- (a) a list thereof;
- (b) the names of the suppliers, and
- (c) the amount of money being spent.

**Reply:** Let me give a definition of essential drugs as defined by the World Health Organisation.

Essential drugs are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population and they are selected with due regard to disease prevalence, evidence on efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness.

Let me reassure the House that there is no shortage of essential drugs in the hospitals. I also wish to refer the hon. member to the reply made to his PQ B/335 in May last year by the then Minister of Health & Quality of Life with regard to the supply of drugs.

It may happen that from time to time, we run short of a few drugs for a limited period which is a common feature in all health systems.

The main reasons for the shortages are due to the following -

- (i) suppliers defaulting because of increasing production costs, unavailability of raw materials or supply of substandard drugs;
- (ii) suppliers are late with their deliveries;
- (iii) where no quotes are received, tendering has to be done again;
- (iv) unforeseen increase in the consumption of some newly introduced drugs resulting in early depletion of stocks, and
- (v) delay in the procurement process in view of the transitional period with the coming into operation of the Public Procurement Act 2006.

I am informed that, in accordance with established practice, drugs which are not currently available are replaced by other existing drugs of similar pharmacological class. Whenever suitable substitutes are not available, bridging quotations are made at the level of my Ministry and hospitals are also allowed to buy small quantities on the local market as and when required. Arrangements are also made to airfreight some items that are not available on the local market whenever the need is felt.

The House may wish to know that Regional Drugs & Therapeutics Committees are functional in all regional hospitals to promote rational drug use through good prescribing practices.

Let me again reassure the House that my Ministry ensures that there is a regular supply of drugs to patients at all times.

## **ROCHE BOIS – MARKET FAIR – LAND ACQUISITION**

**(No. B/1468) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the initiatives of the *Force Vives* of Roche Bois to operate a market fair near the flyover at Roche Bois, he will state if Government will consider compulsorily acquiring the said plot of land in relation thereto for further developments.

**Reply:** Following consultations with relevant stakeholders, a plot of private land of an approximate extent of 0A49P has been identified at Roche Bois near the flyover at Roche Bois for the implementation of a market fair. My Ministry has requested the Ministry of Local Government to seek the necessary financial clearance for the acquisition of the said land. Procedure for its acquisition will follow thereafter.

## **SUMMER TIME – IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/1473) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Summer Time, he will state if Government will consider discontinuing the implementation thereof by the end of this year.

**Reply:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ No. B/1304 on 25 November 2008. I wish to reiterate that the summer time project, which is being implemented on a pilot basis, will end on Sunday 29 March 2009.

## **MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL - CONFLICTING SITUATIONS**

**(No. B/1474) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he is aware of the conflict existing between the Chairperson thereof and the administration staff and, if so, will he state the measures he proposes to take to put an end to the conflict.

**Reply:** I am not aware of any conflict which exists between the Chairperson and the administrative staff of the Mauritius Sports Council (MSC).

As in any organisation, conflicting situations and divergence of opinions may arise in certain circumstances between individuals. And in such situations, the problems should be resolved by Management and consensus reached.

The day to day running of the MSC rests with the Board and by virtue of the provisions of the Sports Act, it would not be sound for me to interfere into the routine business of the MSC.

However, I wish to point out that since I have taken office, I have made it a point to remind all the stakeholders that they should put aside petty rivalries and work for the benefit of sports. In fact, positive responses are being noted. For example, upon my insistence, the Federation of the Body Builders Association which had split into two factions since a long time has now decided to work together for the betterment of the discipline. I will see to it that such spirit prevails among all stakeholders.

**GUY ROZEMONT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY  
– MR SYDNEY AUGUST – NET LICENCE**

**(No. B/1486) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the non renewal of the net licence of Mr S. A. with the Guy Rozemont Co-operative society, he will state if he will consider reviewing the decision in relation to the payment of a compensation to him.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that in view of the negative impact net fishing has on the marine ecosystem, Government has since 1996, a policy to phase out net fishing through a buy-back scheme. Consequently registered net fishermen operating in the net fishery are given a compensation when they voluntarily relinquish their nets.

In September 2004, Government decided not to renew the licence of Guy Rozemont Co-operative Society as there was only one registered fisherman as member and for practical purposes a large net cannot be operated by only one registered fisherman.

I am informed that Mr Sydney August was not a registered net fisherman of the Guy Rozemont Co-operative Society and thus he was not eligible for any compensation under the buy-back scheme. His request for payment of compensation was not approved.

At this stage, my Ministry does not intend to review the current policy regarding the payment of compensation to registered fishermen for relinquishing their nets under the buy-back scheme.

### **SILVER COIN CO. LTD – BOOKMAKER - OPERATION PERMIT**

**(No. B/1487) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port/Savanne, information as to if it has received an application for a Building and Land Use Permit from a bookmaker to operate at Chemin Grenier, and if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the applicant;
- (b) the date of the application;
- (c) if the Chemin Grenier Mariamen Kovil Jamize Kazagam has objected, together with other socio-cultural organisations, on ground of the proximity thereof to a Tamil school, a kovil, a mosque and a primary government school, and
- (d) if any decision has been taken.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that an application for a Building and a Land Use Permit was received on 11 November 2008 from Silver Coin Co. Ltd. to operate a Bookmaker operating outside Race Course for football matches only at Chemin Grenier.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that no objection has been received in respect of this application.

## **BEL OMBRE – HOTELS – TAXI LICENCES**

**(No. B/1491) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the taxi operators residing in the villages of Bel Ombre, St Martin, Baie du Cap and Choisy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if measures will be taken to allow them to operate at the four hotels situated in Bel Ombre, and if so, when.

**Reply:** I am informed that the National Transport Authority is not proposing to grant additional taxi licences to operate from the four hotels at Bel Ombre for the time being as it is considered that they are adequately served.

## **STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – HEDGING TRANSACTIONS**

**(No. B/1492) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the Corporation has taken any hedging commitment and, if so –

- (a) when;
- (b) the terms thereof, indicating the volume of each product to be purchased and for which period;
- (c) the financial impact on the Corporation as a result thereof and following the drop in the prices thereof, and
- (d) if prior approval was sought and obtained from the Board of the Corporation and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment.

**Reply:** I am informed that the State Trading Corporation has taken hedging commitment in hedging transactions since October 2004 following approval of the Government in November 2002.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, the information is being tabled.

As regards part (d) of the question, it is not practicable to obtain prior approval of the Board before hedging transactions as by its nature, decision has to be taken on the spot. However, covering approval of the Board is sought thereafter. The approval of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Empowerment has never been sought for hedging transactions.

**DR. IDRICE GOOMANY MUNICIPAL CENTRE  
– AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM - TENDERS**

**(No. A/26) 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 air conditioning system at the Dr. Idrice Goomany Municipal Centre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if –

- (a) new tenders have been launched, and
- (b) when it will become operational.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that in regard to part (a), bids for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of three air conditioners each of capacity 60,000 btu/hr and two air curtains were first invited on 07 May 2008, but the only bid received was not responsive to the Council's requirements. Fresh quotations were launched and opened on 09 July 2008. After evaluation and further clarifications, the contract was awarded accordingly on 03 October 2008.

With regard to part (b), the installation of the three air conditioners and the two air curtains are in progress. The testing and commissioning of same has been effected on Monday 15 December 2008 and the new air conditioning system is operational as from today.

**DR. IDRICE GOOMANY MUNICIPAL CENTRE  
- BADMINTON COURT**

**(No. A/27) 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 badminton court of the Dr Idrice Goomany Municipal Centre, he will state if he is aware that there is no air extractor, the lighting is defective and that the badminton net is damaged 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 in regard to part (a), in view of the fact that the high ceiling and the naco openings of the Dr. Idrice Goomany Municipal Centre allow good aeration, the need for extractors was never felt. Furthermore, there has never been any complaint from the users, in this respect.

With regard to part (b), the lighting system at the centre is in good working condition, and

As regards part (c), the nets are also in good condition.