

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POLICE FORCE – RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS

(No. B/897) **Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if Government will consider the possibility of calling back some retired Police Officers, from the rank of Superintendent and above who have not reached 65 years of age, as supply Police Officers to assist in branches/units of the Police Force.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it is not the current policy of the Police Force to call back retired Police Officers.

Recently the Police Force has proceeded with the recruitment of new Police Constables and had filled in vacancies in various grades so as to offer a policing standard which is to an expected level. My Government is committed to reinforce the Police Department so that it suits a modern society where there are high expectations, needs and demands from the public.

I am also informed that it is a practice of the Police to call upon ex-officers who have long experience in the service to conduct lectures to young members of the Police Force. Additionally, a few ex-officers of the Police Force have been recruited as advisors in some specific fields.

PAILLES, GRNW & CITÉ VALLIJEE –

DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

(No. B/898) **Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, he is aware that there is a proliferation of alcohol and drug abuse in the regions of Pailles, Grande Rivière and Cité Vallijee, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures that will be taken.

Reply: As the House is aware, the regions of Pailles, GRNW and Cité Vallijee have long been known to have problems relating to drug and alcohol abuse.

I have always maintained that Government alone cannot tackle the problem of alcohol and drug abuse. There is need for concerted and collaborative efforts on the part of the Government, the citizens, the local communities and the NGOs. Every stakeholder should play its part.

To address these problems, we have placed emphasis not only on enforcement but equally on prevention and support. The more prevalent perspective today is that an informed public can best assist law enforcement, given that Police cannot be at all places at all times and that policing would be most effective when it is performed in an environment in which the public offers active support.

In fact, the Police along with NATReSA, the NGOs and the ‘Forces Vives’ of the regions of Pailles, GRNW and Cité Vallijee have taken a comprehensive package of measures which include the following:

- (i) The strength of the police stations serving these regions has been increased;
- (ii) Regular surprise shop check operations are carried out jointly with the local Police and the ERS;
- (iii) The ERS, the local Police, the ADSU and the CID are constantly on the ground;
- (iv) The Police has greater interaction with NGOs and the ‘Forces Vives’ of the different localities through the Police Public Partnership Policing Programmes;
- (v) ADSU participates in prevention campaigns organized by NATReSA and NGOs to sensitise the population on drug and alcohol abuse;
- (vi) NATReSA in collaboration with the Municipality of Port Louis, the Dr Idrice Goomany Centre and other NGOs has started a sensitization campaign since April 2008. A first batch of 30 trainees from the regions of Pointe aux Sables and La Tour

Koenig have completed their training sessions in June. The programme for the inhabitants of GRNW will start in August next.

We are fully committed and will continue our crusade against drug and alcohol abuse. We are strengthening the legal framework for the consumption of alcoholic drinks and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is proposing to promulgate appropriate regulations under the Public Health Act. In this respect, a first draft of the Public Health (Prohibition on Advertisement, Sponsoring and Restriction on Sale of Alcoholic Drinks) Regulations has been subject of wide consultations. The State Law Office is now working on a revised version of the regulations.

ASSEMBLÉE DE DIEU (ILE MAURICE) - ESTABLISHMENT –

LEGISLATION

(No. B/918) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to legislation for the establishment, incorporation and management of *Assemblée de Dieu (Ile Maurice)*, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed that the draft Bill is still under consideration at the State Law Office.

GAMMA COVENTA PROJECT – ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION

(No. B/928) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Gamma Coventa Project for the incineration of waste for the production of electricity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I have to inform the House that the Gamma project is essentially a solid waste disposal project and the spin off is electricity generation. As such, the promoter is interacting with all the relevant Government Bodies including the CEB.

Insofar as discussions with the CEB for a Power Purchase Agreement is concerned, I am informed that, on 04 April 2008, the Chairman of the Negotiating Panel of the CEB has requested Gamma Energy Limited to provide updated technical and financial information on the project to enable the CEB to properly examine the project proposal.

Last information gathered is to the effect that, on 08 July 2008, the promoter has informed that, due to some delay on its part, it would provide the required information by 22 July 2008.

DRUG ADDICTS - NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

(No. B/929) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the exchange of needles programme, he will state –

- (a) the number of drug addicts presently on the programme;
- (b) the places of distribution, and
- (c) if he is aware of any problem caused in relation thereto.

Reply: Allow me at the outset to point out that the Needle Exchange Programme forms part of a harm reduction strategy aimed at preventing the transmission of HIV amongst injecting drug users. The programme started in November 2006 and was initially being implemented by NGOs, operating on two sites only.

In view of the specific nature of the programme and given that as at January 2008, only 3 sites at Batterie Cassée, Baie du Tombeau and Tranquebar were being serviced, covering only around 200 clients. It was decided to invite through press communiqués other NGOs to join the programme. Two communiqués were issued, the first one in January 2008, and the second in May 2008, but there were no response.

Accordingly, in May 2008, it was decided that the Needle Exchange Programme will be implemented by my Ministry as well.

As at 08 July 2008, some 2262 clients were being covered under this programme 33 sites. 26 sites are being covered by my Ministry and 7 sites by NGOs. Arrangements are being made to place a list of these 33 sites in the Library.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that any problem arising is attended to in consultation with all parties concerned. If ever, the hon. Member has any information about any specific incident, he may report same to me so that remedial action may be taken.

MON LOISIR SUGAR FACTORY – CLOSURE

(No. B/930) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the closure of the Mon Loisir Sugar Factory, he will state where matters stand regarding the delimitation of the new factory areas and benefits to be granted to the workers upon closure.

Reply: I have to inform the House that on 31 March 2008, I approved the closure of Mon Loisir factory subject to certain conditions.

However, FUEL has challenged the quantum of canes I imposed as a condition under Section 24 of the Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board for redirection towards Belle Vue and the cascading from FUEL to Deep River Beau Champ.

As at date, Mon Loisir factory has therefore not closed down yet.

Regarding the delimitation of the new factory areas, I am informed by the Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board that this exercise has not yet been undertaken. This is due to the fact that the provisions of Section 24 of the CPMACB Act have not been satisfied for the Board to proceed with the delimitation of the new factory area.

The principle used to determine cane allocation was the equal saturation of factory capacity and the minimisation of transport which the Honourable Member himself had, as Minister of Agriculture in 2005, imposed as guiding principle in respect of factory closure.

The hon. Member would recall that he had communicated these decisions to the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association (MSPA) and to all its members who had accepted them. Moreover, these cardinal principles were incorporated in the MAAS which were never challenged by the MSPA nor by its members.

Moreover, it has to be recalled that the redirection of canes of Mon Désert Alma as agreed between FUEL and Deep River Beau Champ was based on the equal saturation of the receiving mills.

As FUEL has filed a case for Judicial Review, I will not , and the House will appreciate, go into further details on a matter which is *sub-judice*.

As regards the benefits to be granted to the employees and planters upon closure, these will be as per the prevailing conditions of the Blue Print. In this respect, I had a meeting Mr. L'Omelette of the *l'organisation des unites artisans* (OUA).

May I reassure the House that I am impressing upon Mon Loisir Sugar factory and all stakeholders not to slow down the reform process which has gathered momentum.

CHEBEL – HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/931) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the construction of new housing units at Chebel, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof to be made available for sale;
- (b) the eligibility criteria, and
- (c) the number of applications received to date.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question I am informed by the NHDC Ltd. that 54 low-cost housing units have been constructed.

In regard to part (b) of the question, a Committee comprising representatives of my Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and the NHDC Ltd has been set up by the Board of the NHDC Ltd. to look into the allocation of housing units. The reinforced and

consolidated eligibility criteria, on which allocation will be decided, include catchment area, seniority of application, repayment capacity, and the *sine-qua-non* condition for applicants to be first time buyers of a housing unit. These reinforced and consolidated criteria will need to be approved by the Board of the NHDC Ltd.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am further informed that a list of eligible applicants will be finalised based on the eligibility criteria once they have been approved by the Board of the NHDC Ltd. It is only after this exercise that the number of applications received, will be determined.

CEB – CHAIRPERSON - *PER DIEM* ALLOWANCES

(No. B/932) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to each of the private visits effected by the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Board, in respect of which he had been paid *per diem* allowances, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the grounds on which he has been paid the *per diem* allowances.

Reply: I am informed by the CEB that the practice of allowing officers to undertake official missions while being on private visit overseas is not new and dates back to 1985. This practice is resorted to after ascertaining that the interests of the CEB are being upheld.

As I indicated in the document which I placed in the Library of the National Assembly in response to PQ No. B/799 last Tuesday, out of the six visits of the Chairman of the Central Electricity Board between 2006 to-date, three were for official purposes and three others were for personal reasons. However, while on private visit overseas, he availed himself of the opportunity to discuss official matters with CEB's business partners in the respective countries. I am given to understand by the CEB that all the official missions of the Chairman were approved by its Board even though they were undertaken in the course of private visit. It is based on this premise that *per diem* allowances were paid to the Chairman for the days on which he was on official mission, while excluding the days he was on private visit. The *per diem* allowances were in line with the rates applicable in the CEB.

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD. – ARREARS SETTLEMENT SCHEME

(No. B/933) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the writing off of debts by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., as announced in the Budget Speech 2008-2009, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank a list of the names of the persons/companies who owed more than Rs1m.

Reply: As stated in the Budget Speech, the special arrears settlement scheme at the Development Bank of Mauritius applies only to micro business owners who have contracted loans in the amount of up to Rs200,000 before April 2003.

I am informed by the Bank that there are 12 borrowers who had initially raised up to Rs200,000 some 15 years back have now a liability exceeding Rs1 m.

PALMAR – STATE LAND – TROPICAL CRUISE LTD.

(No. B/934) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and G.R.S.E.) asked the Minister of Housing and Land whether he has received a letter from the Silver Beach Taxi Owners Association in connection with the illegal occupation of a portion of State land in the region of Palmar, whereby a container has been placed and an office under the name of Tropical Cruiser has been opened to carry out tour operator activities and if so, the actions that have been taken, if any.

Reply: Representations were made to me in June last by the First, the Second, and the Fourth Members of Constituency No. 10, namely and respectively hon. Mrs Indranee Seebun, hon. Mr Lormus Bundhoo, and hon. Mr Cader Sayed Hossen, against the use of the container in question.

On 15 July 2008, my Ministry received a letter dated 14 July 2008 from Silver Beach Taxi Owners Association complaining against the illegal occupation by “Tropical Tour Operator” of a portion of State land at Trou d’Eau Douce, in the region of Palmar.

Following these representations and this complaint, a site visit, effected on Friday 18 July 2008 by officers of my Ministry, has revealed that the said site is presently uncommitted State land. However, Tropical Cruise Ltd, a company dealing with the renting of cars and marine equipment, is currently occupying the land illegally, without the mandatory authorization of my Ministry.

Consequently, action is being initiated at the level of my Ministry to serve a ‘Notice to Squatter’ on Tropical Cruise Ltd.

RODRIGUES - AIR MAURITIUS FLIGHT MK 120 – TECHNICAL FAULT

(No. B/935) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and G.R.S.E.) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communication whether, in regard to the Air Mauritius flight MK 120, scheduled for Rodrigues, in the morning of Monday 14 July 2008, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if the flight had to ply back after its take off and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by Air Mauritius that the flight MK 120 to Rodrigues, which took off on 14 July 2008 as scheduled, reported a technical problem some 30 minutes after its take-off and made an air turn back to Plaisance.

I am given to understand that the technical fault concerned a battery charger and that, though the safety of the passengers was at no time compromised as a result thereof, the commander took the decision to return so that the repairs effected at the airport have all technical facilities are available.

I am further informed that the repairs, the flight was cleared for departure some two and half hours later and landed safely at the airport in Rodrigues.

BEIJING 2008 OLYMPIC GAMES – MAURITIAN DELEGATION

(No. B/937) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritian delegation attending the forthcoming *Jeux Olympiques* in Beijing, he will state the composition thereof, indicating –

- (a) the number of athletes, and
- (b) the number and names of the officials.

Reply: I would like to point out that the Mauritius National Olympic Committee is responsible for coordinating participation of the Mauritian delegation in the Olympic Games which are organized every four years by the international Olympic Committee.

I am informed by the Mauritian National Olympic Committee that as at to date the Mauritian delegation selected to participate at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games comprises 39 members, including 11 athletes, two young persons and five coaches.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling in the National Assembly the composition of the whole delegation.

LE MORNE - BUFFER ZONE

(No. B/942) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the nomination of the site of Le Morne on the list of the *Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO*, he will state –

- (a) the area surrounding the site constituting the actual buffer zone, and

- (b) if it is envisaged to enlarge the actual area and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: As the House is aware Le Morne Cultural Landscape has been listed as *Patrimoine Mondiale de l'Unesco* on 07 July 2008. The actual Buffer Zone consists of 2756 hectares.

Following queries from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) the Buffer Zone has been extended towards the south east so as to preclude development on the shore running from Le Morne Village to La Prairie and to ensure that critical views from the southern spur of the peninsula are not affected.

CEB – TARIFFS

(No. B/943) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether in regard to the electricity tariffs, he will state if he has received any request from the Central Electricity Board for an increase thereof.

Reply: The last increase in electricity tariffs dates back to 01 April 2008. It is a fact that since then, there have been increases in CEB's costs which are adversely impacting on the financial situation of the CEB. However, I have not, up to now, received any request from the CEB for an increase in electricity tariffs. Should there be any such request, it will be thoroughly and objectively examined before any decision is reached.

LA GAULETTE SSS – KNOWLEDGE BASED TRAINING CENTRE

(No. B/944) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the State Secondary School of La Gaulette, he will state if his Ministry is reviewing its decision to have it converted into a Knowledge Based Training Centre.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

STC - FLOUR & BROAD BEANS – SALE

(No. B/945) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether in regard to flour and broad beans, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the Corporation has recently sold same to the Funny Flour and Rice Company Ltd. and, if so, indicate in each case –

- (a) the quantity sold, and
- (b) the selling price.

Reply: I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that the sales of flour and broad beans to Funny Flour and Rice Co. Ltd. have been as follows –

FLOUR		
MONTH	QUANTITY	PRICE
April 2008	7,963 50 kg bags	Rs655 per bag
May 2008	6,045 50 kg bags	Rs655 per bag
June 2008	5,335 50 kg bags	Rs655 per bag
BROAD BEANS		
June/July 2008	800 50 kg bags	Rs1,000 per bag

PHARMACOLOGICAL VIGILANCE UNIT

(No. B/946) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the introduction of a pre-clinical testing of drugs in Mauritius, he will state if his Ministry is planning to set up a Pharmacological Vigilance Unit or its equivalent.

(Withdrawn)

HEALTH SERVICES – DRUGS – LABELS

(No. B/947) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to drugs and medicines dispensed in hospitals, dispensaries and health care centres, he will state if they are properly labelled and if their names and expiry dates are clearly indicated.

(Withdrawn)

LA GAULETTE SSS

(No. B/948) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the La Gaulette State Secondary School, he will state if his Ministry will review its decision to have it converted into a vocational institution.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

COMMISSION NATIONALE DU SPORT FEMININ – ACTIVITIES

(No. B/949) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the *Comité National du Sport Féminin*, he will state if it is operational and, if so, give a list of its activities island-wide, since January 2008 to date.

Reply: The '*Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*' is operational and has been organising a number of activities.

I am making arrangements for the list of activities organised by the '*Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*' since January 2006 to date to be tabled in the National Assembly.

ZEP SCHOOLS – CPE PASS RATE

(No. B/950) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* schools, he will state the pass rate of each of the schools at the Certificate of Primary Education examinations, since the implementation of the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* scheme to date.

Reply: I would like to point out that the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* (ZEP) project was established in 2003 with the main objective of addressing educational failure, i.e to improve the educational attainments of pupils attending schools mostly in less developed regions, and which had a CPE pass rate of less than 40% over the past five years or if they were Special Support Schools with an average pass rate between 40% and 45% over the past five years.

In view of the considerable amount of information requested for by the hon. Member, I am herewith tabling a detailed list of the CPE pass rate in respect of each ZEP Schools for the period 2003-2007.

MONSEIGNEUR LEEN STREET, PORT LOUIS – MRS V., MRS M. A & CHILDREN – ASSISTANCE

(No. B/951) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Mrs V. and Mrs M. A., who were living in the open air alongside Monseigneur Leen Street, Port Louis, together with their respective children, she will state if her Ministry proposes to extend any assistance to them.

Reply: The cases of Mrs V. and Mrs M. A. and their respective children were referred to my Ministry on Tuesday 01 July 2008. On the same day, officers of my Ministry attended the case and following a first hand assessment, it was found that they were neither victims of domestic violence nor victims of child abuse. They were proposed temporary accommodation at the shelter of the Ministry but they declined the offer.

On Wednesday 02 July 2008, officers of my Ministry accompanied the children to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital for medical examination. Thereafter, we were informed that both women and their children had obtained temporary accommodation at Vacoas. The Ministry made necessary arrangements to provide them with mattresses, bed sheets, blankets and basic food items.

The two cases have been referred to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reforms Institutions and to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for social aid and assistance. I am informed that the two families are recipients of social aid, and they have also been paid food aid in July 2008.

Following information on 09 July 2008 to the effect that the families have been offered temporary accommodation at Roche Bois, officers of my Ministry visited them on 10 July to assess their living conditions. It was reported that the children were fairing well and were safely accommodated.

Another visit was effected on 17 July 2008, by officers of the Ministry. The two women and their children were found to be in similar conditions as noted in the previous visit. They confirmed that they had running water and they informed that procedures had been initiated for electricity supply at the location. They also informed that they had adequate food supply.

Arrangements have been made to have the four children admitted to the Day Care Centre run by my Ministry at Baie du Tombeau to enable the mothers to seek and eventually take up employment.

Furthermore, my Ministry has referred the two families to the NHDC Ltd. for housing facilities and they were accompanied thereto by officers of my Ministry on 18 July 2008. I am informed that due consideration would be given to their applications.

On 23 July 2008, a further site visit was effected whereby it was suggested to us by Mrs Françoise that Crèche Mère Thérèse of Roche Bois would be a much better option than the day care centre at Baie du Tombeau as it was in the vicinity of her dwellings.

Crèche Mère Thérèse is an institution that operates on a twenty four basis offering flexible hours for daycare as well as residential services to vulnerable groups residing in the region of Roche Bois. Sister Jobina, the Director of the centre has provided her assent to taking the children as from 11 August 2008 owing to renovation. Mrs Agathe and Mrs Véronique have consented to this offer.

BERJAYA HOTEL – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/952) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the renovation works at the Berjaya Hotel, Le Morne, he will state –

- (a) if the promoters have stopped works;
- (b) the number of employees who are still employed;
- (c) if the employer has informed his Ministry that he intends to lay off the workforce, and
- (d) if the employees have been proposed alternative employment and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit that the promoters for the extension works at Berjaya Hotel had applied for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Licence at the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit on 21 November 2007.

During a site visit effected jointly by officers of the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit and those of the Black River District Council on 26 March 2008 it was observed that the extension works were being carried out without waiting for the EIA Licence.

A Stop Order was immediately issued to the promoters to stop the extension works at Berjaya Hotel. The EIA Licence was granted on 11 April 2008.

I am further informed that a visit carried out by officers of Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit on 01 July 2008 has revealed that extension works had not resumed.

As regards, part (b) of the question, following an inspection carried by officers of my Ministry on 18 July 2008, it was found that 190 persons are still employed by Berjaya Hotel.

As regards, parts (c) & (d) of the question, the employer has not, as at to date, informed my Ministry of any intention to lay off the workforce. Consequently, the question of alternative employment does not arise.