

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**SMF – POLICE OFFICER – TRAINING SESSION**

(No. B/962) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the circumstances in which an Officer of the Special Mobile Force has recently passed away, following a training session.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no Police Officer posted to the Special Mobile Force has recently passed away following a training session.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS – PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

(No. B/963) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to good governance, transparency, freedom of information, increased accountability and consensus building, Government will agree to set up Parliamentary Committees to work for the better interest of the management of the Public Affairs.

(Withdrawn)

CUTTERS – SALE - CONTROL

(No. B/964) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to cutters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of acts of violence in which cutters have been used for the past two years, indicating if consideration will be given for the introduction of measures to control the sale thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the past two years, the number of reported cases of acts of violence in which cutters have been used is as follows -

PERIOD	NO. OF CASES
July – December 2006	19
2007	54
2008 (as at 24 July)	54
TOTAL	127

I am further informed that there is no control over the import of cutters as they are considered as an item of everyday use. However, if a person is found without lawful authority or reasonable excuse with an offensive weapon, including a cutter in a public place, he shall commit an offence, under the Criminal Code and if convicted is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year and to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000.

I have already requested the Attorney-General's Office to review the relevant legislation in order to increase the fine and the term of imprisonment in cases where offenders have been found in possession of an offensive weapon without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.

As regards the sale of cutters, it is already an offence, under the Criminal Code to sell or offer for sale any instrument or tool with a blade to a child under the age of twelve. Furthermore, the sale of such instruments or tools is prohibited on the street, in a fair, or in any other open-air space.

PRISONS – HIV POSITIVE DETAINEES – ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENT

(No. B/965) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the prisoners who are HIV and AIDS positive, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to if –

- (a) they are provided with the anti-retroviral treatment and
- (b) they benefit from the needle exchange programme

Reply: I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that anti-retroviral treatment is being provided to HIV positive detainees in the prisons. There are currently 64 male and 5 female HIV positive detainees on anti-retroviral treatment, representing 13.9 percent of the HIV population in the prisons. Anti-retroviral treatment is prescribed by the AIDS Physicians of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to HIV detainees in accordance with the established norms.

The question of introduction of the Needle Exchange programme in the prisons does not arise as we are adopting a zero tolerance policy in regard to drug use by detainees. Emphasis is placed more on demand reduction of drugs in prisons, that is, for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addiction as well as the control of drug use in the prisons.

PRIME MINISTER – RESIDENCE – ROGUE & VAGABOND - ARREST

(No. B/966) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a person has been arrested for rogue and vagabond at the residence of Dr the Honourable Prime Minister, at Riverwalk, Vacoas, on or about Monday 21 July 2008, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

16^{EME} MILLE, FOREST SIDE – VILLAGE STATUS

(No. B/1002) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the village of 16eme Mille, Forest Side, he will state if his Ministry is considering granting a separate village status thereto.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Local Government Act is presently being reviewed and the proposal for granting a separate village status to 16eme Mille will be considered during this review exercise.

CASERNES & FOREST SIDE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/1003) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, he is aware that the supply of water in the regions of Casernes and Forest Side, Curepipe, has been inadequate and disrupted for the past month, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority (CWA) that, during the past month, the water supply in the regions of Casernes and Forest Side was disrupted on two occasions as follows -

- (a) on Friday 11 July 2008, a cement pipe burst in the evening. Repairs of the pipe started only on the next morning as the presence of other pipelines including a sewer line just next to the broken one rendered any intervention extremely risky in the dark. Nonetheless, even when the excavation works were being carried out, a minor damage was caused to the nearby sewer line. The works on the CWA pipeline were completed at about 18.00 hrs and water supply was restored immediately, and
- (b) on 19 July 2008, the outlet valve on the distribution main broke. The CWA attended to the problem immediately. The water supply was restored on the same day at around noon.

During the period of interrupted supply, the CWA provided water tanker service to the inhabitants. Presently, these regions have an 18-hour supply daily.

CUREPIPE AND MIDLANDS – LANES, ROADS & DRAINS

(No. B/1004) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to Curepipe and Midlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, a list of the lanes, roads and drains that have been constructed or resurfaced for the last two years, and table copy thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

BOODHEA LANE, CONGOMAH - RESURFACING

(No. B/1005) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he has received any request from the inhabitants of Congomah for the resurfacing of the Boodhea Lane, and if so, where matters stand.

Reply (The Minister of Local Government): I am informed by the Pamplémousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that the resurfacing of the Boodhea Lane at Congomah is included in its priority list of projects for implementation during the current financial year and will be completed before the end of August 2008.

CAMP LA BOUE – BUS TERMINAL

(No. B/1006) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Camp La Boue, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of a Bus Terminal thereat.

Reply (The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit): The site identified for the construction of a Bus Terminal at Camp La Boue of an extent of 6874 square metres has already been vested in the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit.

The Traffic Management Road Safety Unit has recommended that the main road to Camp La Boue be enlarged. Since this entails land acquisition from private land owners, the matter has been referred to the Ministry of Housing and Lands to initiate appropriate action.

PORT LOUIS NORTH & MONTAGNE LONGUE – TOTE - LICENCES

(No. B/1007) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Tote, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the number of licences issued in relation thereto in Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North Montagne Longue, since 2005 to date.

Reply: As the House may be aware, there are only two Totalisator Operators licensed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority, namely the Automatic Systems Limited and Globalsports Limited. I am informed that there are two totalisator outlets at Terre Rouge. One is being operated by Globalsports Ltd since 20 April 2007 with 6 terminals and the other by Automatic Systems Ltd since 27 September 2007 with 8 terminals.

CHILDREN – HEARING IMPAIRMENT – SPECIAL SCHOOLS

(No. B/1008) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the children with hearing impairment, she will state the number thereof who attend special schools, indicating the number thereof who do not wear hearing aids.

(Withdrawn)

SCHOOL TRANSPORT - ZONE 3

(No. B/1009) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the buses effecting school transport of the students in Zone 3, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number thereof, indicating the name of the companies involved, and
- (b) the number of buses which are more than 10 years old.

(Withdrawn)

SCHOOL BUSES – STUDENTS - SECURITY

(No. B/1010) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if his Ministry or obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if any complaint has been received regarding the security of the students who travel by the school buses, and if so, state or obtain information as to the measures, if any, that will be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC FAIRS - ALCOHOLIC DRINKS – SALE

(No. B/1011) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to alcoholic drinks, she will state if her Ministry will consider prohibiting the sale thereof in public fairs, with a view to combating alcoholism, especially among the younger section of the population.

Reply: The sale of alcoholic drinks to children is already prohibited under Section 16(1)(a) of Child Protection Act 1994 which stipulates –

“No person shall sell any liquor, rum or compounded spirits to a child”.

As regards sale of alcoholic drinks in public fairs, I am informed that the Mauritius Revenue Authority grants occasional licences under the Excise Act for same on the basis of a report from Police on the application. The enquiry includes site visits, statements from applicants as well as from persons residing in the vicinity of the venue of the fair. Consideration is also given to the aspect of peace and order in the surroundings as well as proximity to places of worships and schools.

I am also informed that an occasional permit for “Public Entertainment Organiser” is granted for the organization of public fairs under the Local Government Act.

However, for the holding of public fairs where alcoholic drink will be offered for sale, the Local Authorities seek clearances from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, Police Department and the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life.

For such public fairs, Police is present to enforce the law, especially to ensure that no alcoholic drink is sold to a child.

With a view to further strengthening our law to combat alcoholism, the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life is presently finalizing Draft Regulations under the Public Health Act to regulate the –

- (a) advertisement;
- (b) sponsorships;

- (c) sale, and
- (d) consumption in public places of alcoholic drinks.

I have made a special appeal to provide for the following in the proposed Regulations -

“No person shall cause a minor to have access or to consume an alcoholic drink.”

In our endeavour to prevent substance abuse and to combat alcoholism among the younger section of the population, my Ministry has been carrying out sensitisation campaigns island-wide at the level of the community in collaboration with the National Children’s Council, the ‘*Brigade des Mineurs*’ and NGOs. So far, some 208 talks have been held and 3,554 adolescents have also been reached during the past three years by the National Children’s Council.

Furthermore, sensitization programmes on the effects of alcohol on the family have also been conducted in 19 localities through Zero Tolerance Clubs and in collaboration with NATReSA and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

Under its prevention strategy, NATReSA is running specific sensitization programmes among the youth, in schools, at the work place, among women and in the country.

QUARTIER MILITAIRE STADIUM – ALMA ACTION GROUP - ACCESS

(No. B/1012) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the Quartier Militaire Stadium, he will state –

- (a) if it is a national or regional one;
- (b) the conditions relating to the use thereof, and
- (c) if the Alma Action group has recently been refused the use thereof and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: From the outset, I have to inform the House that, as regards utilization of the Quartier Militaire Stadium, the Alma Action group has filed a case before the intermediate Court against the Mauritius Sports Council which is responsible for the management of sports infrastructure of Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it would not be appropriate to provide details on this matter at this stage.

EX-QUEEN VICTORIA SUGAR ESTATE – GARDEN

(No. B/1013) Mr R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware of the bad state of the garden at the ex-Queen Victoria Sugar Estate, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that in view of the fact that the garden at ex-Queen Victoria Sugar Estate was in a very deplorable condition, the Council had decided to construct a new children garden on the site.

I am informed that the project in January 2007 and up to now the following works have been completed.

- (i) kiosk
- (ii) fencing works
- (iii) installation of children play equipment

I am further informed that the following works are ongoing and will be completed by the end of August 2008 –

- (i) construction of sit around
- (ii) placing of benches
- (iii) brick laying on the access path

EX-QUEEN VICTORIA SUGAR ESTATE – ODOUR NUISANCE

(No. B/1014) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the unpleasant and noxious odour affecting the inhabitants of the ex-Queen Victoria Sugar Estate for a number of years, generated by the effluence flowing out from the Fuel Sugar Factory, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: Following complaints received from inhabitants of the ex-Queen Victoria Sugar Estate regarding odour nuisance and occasional water pollution, especially during the harvest season, my Ministry carried out an investigation. It is found that Fuel Sugar Estate channels all its effluents into two decantation ponds before discharging them into River Croignard.

With a view to minimising the odour nuisance, my Ministry has requested Fuel to use deodorisers and to install a clarifier to remove suspended solids from the effluents prior to discharge in the decantation ponds and eventually into the river by the end of August. The quality of the effluent being discharged would thus be improved.

As an additional measure, my Ministry has just had part of the river flowing through Queen Victoria cleaned and dredged over a length of 1.2 km at the cost of Rs200,000 to ease the free flow of water.

The situation will be monitored and any additional measure deemed necessary will be taken.

QUEEN VICTORIA ROMAN CATHOLIC AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL - FENCES

(No. B/1015) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the fences surrounding the Queen Victoria Roman Catholic Aided Primary School, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I should like to kindly point out to the hon. Member that the infrastructural developments connected with Roman Catholic Aided School buildings is the responsibility of the Bureau of Catholic Education and the schools themselves.

The hon. Member would also wish to be informed that there exists a framework for cooperation between the Ministry on one side and the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority on the other with regard to infrastructural issues. An item exists in the Budget of my Ministry for the provision of a total of Rs4 m. each year to the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority for infrastructural works considered as priorities for them. My Ministry contributes in the proportion of 2/3 while those organisations contribute 1/3 of the costs.

In the context of that cooperation, I am informed that comprehensive extension/renovation works were carried out at Queen Victoria RCA primary school in 2004. I am further informed that within those works, the upgrading of the fencing of the school was also attended to. However, the fencing surrounding of the Queen Victoria RCA school is old and obviously needs to be replaced.

I am informed that actions have already been initiated by the Bureau Catholic Education to have the present fencing replaced by a more appropriate and solid one. The perimeter of the school yard is around 300 metres. The works are expected to start by next year.

SOUTH REGION – FISHERS – REGISTRATION

(No. B/1016) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state the number of fishers registered for fishing activities in the south region, since July 2005 to date.

(Withdrawn)

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES – EXPORTERS – FREIGHT REBATE SCHEME

(No. B/1017) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the Freight Rebate Scheme for the exporters of fruits and vegetables, he will state if any change has been brought thereto and if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG MARINE PARK – ENTRY FEE

(No. B/1018) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the Mahebourg Marine Park, he will state if any entry fee is charged for access thereto, and if so, the quantum thereof.

(Withdrawn)

NOTRE DAME – WOMEN CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1019) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to the construction of the women centre at Notre Dame, she will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

ELDERLY – RECREATION CENTRES

(No. B/1020) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether in regard to the recreation centres for the elderly, she will state the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) the eligibility criteria, and
- (b) the conditions for the use thereof.

Reply: As at to date, there is only one residential Recreation Centre functioning under the aegis of my Ministry, namely, the Recreation Centre for the senior citizens and disabled at Pointe aux Sables.

Regarding part (a), the eligibility criteria are as follows –

The priority target groups constitute of members of senior citizens associations affiliated to the Senior Citizens Council and disabled persons who have to make written applications to the Manager of the centre.

However, the centre also caters for the following groups depending on availability of the centre –

- (i) local residents comprising children and adults below 55 years;
- (ii) foreign residents comprising children, adults and senior citizens, and
- (iii) other groups comprising Ministries, NGOs, parastatal bodies and socio-cultural associations which hire the Conference Room and/or the Dining Room for official functions.

As far as part (b) is concerned, the conditions for the use of the centre are as follows –

- (i) requests are entertained on a first-come-first-serve basis;
- (ii) availability of the centre, and
- (iii) payment of the appropriate rates applicable to the different groups.

A list of rates applicable to all groups using the centre is being tabled.

I would also like to point out that there is an increasing demand for the use of the centre. Presently, there is a waiting list which goes up to December 2008. The only centre at Pointe aux Sables cannot satisfy all the requests. Government is conscious of the situation. My Ministry has already initiated procedures for the construction of an additional centre at Belle Mare which in the 1st phase will cater for 80 persons. Documents have been submitted to Central Procurement Board and award of contract will be made shortly. A provision of Rs91 m. has been made in the Budget for the construction.

CITÉ PERDUE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE – SQUATTERS

(No. B/1021) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether she is aware of the presence of squatters at Cité Perdue, Quartier Militaire, and if so, will she state the measures that will be taken to help them obtain an accommodation.

Reply (The Minister of Housing & Lands): A recent survey has revealed that there are presently seven families squatting at Cité Perdue, within Bonne Veine Housing Estate at Quartier Militaire.

My Ministry is in the process of completing a survey of the area being squatted upon and of exploring the possibility of regularizing the situation of the seven families based on the eligibility criteria.

SPEED CAMERAS – PURCHASE

(No. B/1022) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if Government proposes to purchase speed cameras and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the places where same will be installed.

Reply: In order to improve enforcement against speeding and improve road safety, my Ministry is purchasing three Automatic Mobile Speed Detection Camera Units which are expected for delivery within two months, and that the Police Department is also in the process of purchasing three additional units.

Appropriate regulations are being finalised under the Road Traffic Act for the use of these equipment by the Police Department, to track down cases of speeding.

As regards part (b) of the question, the equipment is mobile and will be used at different places.

POLLUTION – AIR QUALITY – MONITORING

(No. B/1023) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to pollution, he will state if a monitoring of the air across the country is carried out and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the places, and
- (b) the frequency and, if not, if he considers it advisable that needful be done.

Reply: Monitoring of air quality has been carried out in various regions such as Cassis, Valentina, Forest Side, Rose-Belle, Saint Antoine, GRNW, Flacq, Port Louis North and Place Margeot. Results obtained so far have shown that the ambient air quality standards are being satisfied

The mobile station is subject to frequent break downs and my Ministry is, therefore, in the process of procuring specialised units of equipment for the measurement of important parameters separately.

A new equipment known as the Gent Sampler has been provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is being used to measure fine particulate matter.

MON TRÉSOR HOUSING ESTATE – INHABITANTS – RELOCATION

(No. B/1024) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the relocation of the inhabitants of the Mon Trésor Housing Estate to the land at Desplaces, he will state if he has been made aware by the Mauritius Sugar Authority of the problems concerning the land thereat and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: May I refer the hon. member to the reply that I gave to the PQ No. B/225 on this issue.

I am advised by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that, following the request made to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division), for Geotechnical Engineering, the said Ministry has replied that they do not have such expertise.

Consequently, the services of the University of Mauritius was sought to assess all the 133 plots in terms of their suitability for construction purposes.

The University of Mauritius has offered the following consultancy services, which will cost about Rs1.7 m. –

- (i) preparation of tender documents for the investigation;
- (ii) analysis of tenders;
- (iii) supervision investigation, and
- (iv) submission of interpretation report.

The MSA has decided to proceed with this investigation and is arranging a meeting at the seat of the University of Mauritius to finalise the way forward.

The result of this investigation is expected in about 6 months.

DES PLACES/CARREAU ESNOUF - ROAD SURFACING

(No. B/1025) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the surfacing of the road linking the villages of Des Places and Carreau Esnouf in the Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit): The untarred road linking Carreau Esnouf to Desplaces village belonging to Mon Désert Mon Trésor Sugar Estate is a private road. In 2003, the sugar estate agreed that the road be tarred by Government. Prior to starting road surfacing work, necessary procedures are under way to declare the road public.

Soon after the access will be declared public, consideration will be given for the upgrading the road.