

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

TAXPAYERS (EARNING UP TO Rs25,000)  
– INCOME TAX EXEMPTION

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the electoral promise made by the *Social Alliance* during the last election campaign to the effect that all those earning up to Rs25,000 per month would stop paying income tax, he will say when same will be implemented, indicating -

- (i) the present number of taxpayers and the number who will benefit therefrom;
- (ii) the loss of revenue to Government, and
- (iii) the steps, if any, being taken in the case of taxpayers governed by the PAYE system.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, despite the very difficult economic situation we have inherited from the previous Government....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I have personally seen to it that three of our major promises are implemented immediately. These measures relate to -

- (i) free transport for the elderly and the handicapped which will benefit some 125,000 people;
- (ii) free transport to about 150,000 students of the pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary levels;

- (iii) restoring universal old age pension to every senior citizen especially after the humiliation meted out to them by the previous Government.

Mr Speaker, as I said, despite the very difficult economic situation, these three measures alone will cost the Exchequer over Rs700 m.

This afternoon my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, will announce a series of measures to stimulate the key sectors of the economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Government stands committed to fulfill its electoral pledges during our current mandate, including our promise to review the fiscal burden of those earning up to Rs25,000 per month in order to increase their purchasing power.

As regards part (i) of the question, for the income year ended 30 June 2004, there were about 73,000 individuals who effected payment of income tax. The number of beneficiaries will depend on many parameters and these are being worked out.

With regard to part (ii) of the question, the loss of revenue to Government would also depend on how the scheme is implemented.

I would like to inform the House that one of the main objectives is to relieve the fiscal pressure on the middle income earners whose purchasing power has been significantly eroded during the last three years. Also our objective is to encourage those taxpayers who would be exempted from payment of income tax to invest in an Empowerment Fund thereby participating in both the democratisation of the economy and the stimulation of the economy.

As regards part (iii) of the question, this measure can be implemented by increasing the present PAYE exemption threshold from Rs8,000 to Rs25,000.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say, if I heard him correctly, that the fiscal burden of those earning up to Rs25,000 will be “reviewed” whereas in the Presidential Address, the word which was used was ‘relieved’. But the hon. Prime Minister would agree

with me that in all the documents circulated during the electoral campaign, there was absolutely no reference to review or relief. The promise was categorical. From any number of documents produced by *l'Alliance Sociale*, which I can table, where what was proposed was, I quote –

*“L’abolition de l’impôt sur le revenu pour les salariés gagnant moins de R25,000 par mois”*

The promise was that all those earning up to Rs25,000 would stop paying income tax. Clearly there has been a change. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why now there is no talk of abolition of income tax for all those earning up to Rs25,000?

**The Prime Minister:** I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for giving me an opportunity to say it. Let me read what the manifesto itself says – ‘*une île Maurice pour tous*’ - putting people first.

*“Notre gouvernement allègera le fardeau fiscal de ceux touchant jusqu’à R25,000 par mois. Ces contribuables pourront participer à l’actionnariat d’un Empowerment Fund qui relancera l’économie et contribuera à la démocratisation de l’économie. En retenant une plus grande partie de ses revenus personnels, une tranche importante de salariés verra un accroissement de son pouvoir d’achat.”*

In other words, they will have a choice. They can either not pay their income tax or they can put in the Empowerment Fund and get benefit from it.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I again put it to the hon. Prime Minister that not only was a promise of an abolition of income tax for all those earning up to Rs25,000, but that promise was made on the television on the Saturday prior to election day?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, those, who don’t want to pay, won’t have to pay. In other words, they will have a choice. If they want to take their money and not pay their income tax, they will be able to do so; in other words, it is an equivalence to an abolishment because they are not going to pay, but if they so choose that they want to reinvest their money in

an Empowerment Fund, they will have that option also. It is an additional option that they will have.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can we, at this stage, have any detail on this so-called Empowerment Fund, any details of what form it is going to take and when it is proposed that it will be before the House?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the details are being worked out, in fact, by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. We will, in due time, give details on the Empowerment Fund, because that is going to be a reality. As I have said, we are committed to the pledges that we have taken and this is one of the pledges we are committed to have during our mandate.

**Mr Bérenger:** Government is still committed to that promise which it made on the eve of election day on television. The last time that the hon. Prime Minister appeared on television, he promised abolition forthwith of payment of income tax to all those earning up to Rs25,000. Surely this should be implemented forthwith as it was promised on the eve of general election, and especially in the case of taxpayers governed by the PAYE system.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition is being, if I may say so, demagogic.

*(Interruptions)*

He, himself, had said, at one point, that *nous sommes dans un état d'urgence économique. La crise est sans précédent.*

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Leader of the Opposition had accepted himself. When they got elected they fooled the people and said that they would *redresse le pays*. After four years, the Leader of the Opposition, then Prime Minister, said - '*nous sommes dans un état d'urgence économique*', which is an admission *qu'il n'y a pas eu de redressement du pays*. Now, what we have said, we are committed to relieve those people who are paying up to Rs25,000. They will have choices, not only will they not pay their income tax if they so choose or else they will be able to put their money in an Empowerment Fund where

they will get interest. It is a Fund that would be guaranteed by Government. So, they are not going to lose their money at all. That is what we intend to do.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the words used by the hon. Prime Minister. All those, earning up to Rs25,000 per month, will stop paying income tax if they so choose. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister when will that choice be put to all those taxpayers who are paying income tax and who earn up to Rs25,000?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said at the beginning of my answer to the question, we are facing a very difficult economy due to the mismanagement of the economy. The economy is in tatters. I can inform the House that the deficit is much higher. Growth is significantly lower than we expected. Investment is lower. That is why the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is going to make a statement. We know that public debt is much higher than we expected. The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that they have used a colourable device to transfer the payment of almost Rs2 billion of interest to be effected in 2007-08. Nobody knew that the Road Development Authority had borrowed Rs500 m. outside the Budget.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order please!

**The Prime Minister:** It is only when we came in power that we knew it. The STC has a deficit - the people have been lied to, they do not know the truth - of almost Rs1.1 billion. The DWC also has a major deficit. The public debt also is higher. This is the state of the economy that they have left. That is why we say that in spite of all this, we will honour our commitment.

**Mr Bérenger:** I give the *bénéfice du doute* to the *Alliance Sociale*, to the present Minister of Finance and others around, that before promising on the eve of the general election that income tax would be abolished for all those earning up to Rs25,000, different scenarios were worked out. I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that right now there are roughly 73,000 taxpayers. Can I remind the hon. Prime Minister that in the document circulated by *l'Alliance Sociale* it was worked out that abolition of income

tax would affect 50,000 taxpayers? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister how was that figure arrived at? Clearly, it was *en toute connaissance de cause* that the promise was made that 50,000 taxpayers would stop paying income tax. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister on the basis of what calculations or studies was this promise made and how that figure of 50,000 taxpayers who would stop paying income tax was arrived at?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, these are the figures that were worked out. But, in fact, I said that, in regard to the year ended 30 June 2004, there are about 73,000 individuals who effected payment of income tax. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are committed to what we said. I said it again that all those who are paying income tax up to Rs25,000 will have a choice. Either they pay no income tax or else they contribute, if they so choose, in an Empowerment Fund.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I asked before when will that choice be put to them because they were promised that on the eve of election day. We are provided with information that there are at present 73,000 taxpayers. In the document circulated by the *Alliance Sociale*, it was estimated that 50,000 out of 73,000 taxpayers would stop paying income tax. In fact, the figures that I have - I had them worked out - is 54,000. Will the Prime Minister agree that it was totally *démagogique* when you have 73,000 taxpayers to promise on the eve of election and throughout the campaign that 54,000 would stop paying income tax?

**Dr. Jeetah:** On a point of Order, Sir. Would it be possible to request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask the question instead of making statements?

**Mr Speaker:** I will ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put the question now.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition is under a misapprehension for no reason. As I said, the information that we have now is that for the income tax year ending 30 June 2004 there were about 73,000 individuals who effected payment of income tax. But according to us - I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition because, in fact, we were correct - there was roughly 50,000 people who earn up to Rs25,000 will not pay income tax. He said 54,000 taxpayers which is within our target.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the hon. Prime Minister confirm that there will be statement from the hon. Minister of Finance later on the state of the economy. Can I remind him that when that promise was made that all those earning up to Rs25,000 would stop paying income tax it was presented, and I quote again from the document circulated: "as a means pour *redémarrer l'économie*". Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why now postponing to God knows when what was promised to be implemented forthwith?

**The Prime Minister:** I must say to the Leader of the Opposition that in spite of the difficult economic situation that we have inherited, I am proud that we have implemented three important measures which will cost the exchequer a lot of money. It will cost real money, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they affect real people. In fact, no Government has ever implemented with such speed measures announced in its political campaign.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition realises that in some cases it affects up to 25% of the income that people are having. As I said earlier, it is costing over Rs700 m.

I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition has read the electoral manifesto that we have circulated, but he should have read it before the election. He would have had some ideas. But I must tell the Leader of the Opposition that it is not only on the eve of the election that we have said it, but we have been saying it since the first of May in public. This is why, as I said, we are totally committed to that measure.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Prime Minister has confirmed that not only on the eve of the general election was that commitment reconfirmed, but throughout the campaign and it was to be implemented forthwith, that is, after the general election. Today, the hon. Prime Minister is no longer saying that it will be implemented forthwith, but that all those earning up to Rs25,000 per month would be given the choice of either stop paying income tax ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Jeetah:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** It is an abuse of points of order, Sir!

**Mr Speaker:** Let me listen to the point of order, please!

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is allowed to ask questions, but he continues to make statements.

**Mr Speaker:** I think, this is the second time the hon. Minister is raising the point. Some latitude is being given to the Leader of the Opposition and I hope that there will be no abuse of that latitude.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the hon. Prime Minister has said today that the choice will be given to all those earning up to Rs25,000 to either stop paying Income Tax or contribute to a so called Empowerment Fund, which does not mean anything. Can I ask him when will this choice be offered to all those earning up to Rs25,000 per month?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, I am proud that we have taken three measures that affect people directly and it is going to cost the Exchequer over Rs700 m. We have our political manifesto. I don't know whether the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to read it; if he has not, I will give him a copy. That is what we say, that we will relieve the fiscal burden on those earning up to Rs25,000. That we will do, but we have seen also that the economy is in tatters, that the situation is much worse than it is. In fact, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development is going to make a statement later on and people can see what is the economic situation. But, we will honour our commitment during our mandate.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Prime Minister has referred on several occasions to *trois mesures* which his Government has implemented. But can I remind him that what was promised was ten *mesures radicales*, including ...

*(Interruptions)*



**Mr Speaker:** I am sorry, the PNQ concerns the issue of tax rebate on Rs25,000, I would not allow any question to be put outside the PNQ.

**Mr Bérenger:** I am only saying that he ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I have no control on the replies of the hon. Prime Minister, but the question has been put on one particular issue, I will allow supplementary questions on that issue.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I again come back to the hon. Prime Minister? I don't know what the Minister of Finance will be saying later on, whether there will be any reference to Income Tax, I hope so. As I said, and I put it to the Prime Minister, he has a moral commitment all through the campaign and on the eve of election, he promised all those earning up to Rs25,000 that they would stop, immediately after general election, paying Income Tax. I put it to the Prime Minister: He has a moral commitment, will he tell them when that choice will be put to them?

**Mr Speaker:** I think this question has been put many times and the hon. Prime Minister has answered the question. I think the point has been mooted out. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has any further questions to put, I will ask him to do so.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I said we will honour our commitment and the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well. He has been Prime Minister, he has been Minister of Finance. He knows very well and he himself said. I will give you an example. At one point, he never promised that he will increase VAT by 50%, but he did increase it.

*(Interruptions)*

Why? He increased it, because he saw the situation warranted it. I am not disputing that he increased it, but he increased it, because he saw the situation warranted it. This is the economic situation as it is and, as I said, we are committed to our pledges and we will honour them.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I have got an announcement. Hon. Members, I have been informed that PQ I B/153 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and PQ I B/136, addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister will be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications.

**(PQ No. I B/136 – see after PQ No. B/195)**

### **POLICE FORCE – PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATION**

**(No. I B/137) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** 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 whether it is proposed to review the manner in which promotional examinations are held in the Police Force.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that at present competitive examinations within the Mauritius Police Force are conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission for promotion of officers from the rank of Constable and Corporal to that of Sergeant and from the rank of Sergeant and Sub-Inspector to that of Inspector.

These examinations comprise a three-hour written paper to assess the officers' knowledge of laws and evidence, Police duties, administration, orders and other Police related procedures.

Successful candidates at these examinations undergo a four-week professional development course to enable them to acquire necessary interpersonal and communications skills, organisational aptitudes, and supervisory and management abilities.

As enunciated in the Government Programme 2005/2010, a new personnel management, appraisal and promotional selection system will be introduced in the Police Department.

My Government has undertaken to enact a Freedom of Information Act which will provide citizens with a right of access to personal

information held by State Agencies and to information relating to Government Business.

Furthermore, my Office is discussing with the Public Service Commission on ways and means of ensuring that results of examinations and interviews are made known to candidates.

**MINISTRY OF CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE  
REFORMS - ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE – TRAINING ABROAD –  
GOVERNMENT POLICY**

**(No. I B/138) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** 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 Government policy in regard to the training of officers of the Administrative Cadre abroad and say if he is aware that one officer at the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has been nominated to follow training courses abroad every year since 2001 to date.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, officers of the Administrative Cadre are usually provided with opportunities to attend overseas seminars, workshops and conferences. These are meant to give them a wider international exposure and help them keep abreast of latest trends and development in the fields of Management. These opportunities are usually available through Bilateral and Technical Assistance Schemes.

Officers are normally nominated after taking into account the nature, the specificity, the relevance of the programme and the extent to which the officer as well as the Organisation will benefit thereof.

As regards the second part of the question, I am advised that there is in fact one officer of the Administrative Cadre who has attended training courses abroad once in 2001, on two occasions in 2003 and once in 2004.

This officer is at present on leave without pay to follow a ten months Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Programme 2005-2006 in the USA.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister - as putting people first is the motto of this Government – whether

it is not reasonable that training is dispensed in a fair and equitable manner, and that not the same person gets everything all the time as we know that like even the sky is not the limit for certain people whereas there is a ceiling immediately above the head of some officers.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, the hon. Member is right to say that we have to give everybody a chance and she has been abroad on many times, but it is on leave without pay although she did ask for leave with pay. But we did not accept that.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I should like to ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is contemplating of setting up a new Civil Service Act, defining the responsibilities of all officers as well as the training policy. This will trigger a review of the current policy regarding training of officers.

**Mr Speaker:** I am Sorry, can the hon. Member put his question?

**Mr Dayal:** Will the hon. Minister come with a new Civil Service Act.

**The Prime Minister:** I think we can look at that, but what we want to do is to ensure that people are given equal chances to go abroad and follow courses.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Will the Prime Minister say whether he is aware that that officer is in charge of the reforms section and that she is providing training to other officers and that she needs updating all the time?

**The Prime Minister:** I can mention the programme that she has been to. She went to a new public executive programme and she worked on the workshop on benchmarking in Malaysia. She went to a regional seminar on performance management systems in the public sector. She went on a workshop on Managing Public Service Reform in November 2003 in London and Turin. She went to two seminars organised by CAPAM on performance management and then now, she is the on Hubert Humphrey Fellowship programme.

So, naturally, she has to be trained but she also has to train other people here.

## COMMISSION OF INQUIRIES - 01.10.00 TO 30.06.05

(No. I B/139) **Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will table a list of the Commission of Inquiries set up during the period 01 October 2000 to 30 June 2005, indicating in each case the name of the President and assessors and the remuneration and other benefits paid to each one of them.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, for the period 01 October, 2000 to 30 June 2004/2005, four Commission of Inquiries were set up.

The first Commission of Inquiry was set up on 19 February 2002, on the Ex-MURD with Sir Victor Glover as President and Messrs A. Juddoo and Liam Tai Cheung as Assessors. The President was paid a fee of Rs2 m. and the Assessors Rs1 m. each.

Another Commission of Inquiry was appointed on 24 August 2004, on the Procurement of Ship to shore Gantry Cranes for the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. with Sir Victor Glover as President. He was then paid a fee of Rs200,000.

The third Commission of Inquiry on Mare Chicose Landfill was set up on 26 October 2004. Mr R. Ahnee was appointed as President and was paid an amount of Rs1,150,000.

Finally, the Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy was appointed on 14 February 2005, with Sir Victor Glover as President and Messrs Y. Thacoor and D. Vellien as Assessors. The President was paid a fee of Rs2 m. and each Assessor was paid Rs1,500,000.

**Mr Boodhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister if it is normal that the same name keeps to be recurring regarding the president of Commission of Inquiries?

**The Prime Minister:** That is a strange question to answer. It depends on what the Government decides.

**AGALEGA - MS F.J.F. - ALLEGED CASE OF RAPE**

**(No. I B/140) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & 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 will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, Information as to whether any declaration has been made by one Ms F. J. F. in Agalega in connection with an alleged case of rape and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 06 August 2005, one female of the Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC), aged 46, and residing in Agalega, reported to the South Island Police Station, a case of rape and sodomy upon her person by two labourers of the OIDC, aged 22 and 30 respectively. The alleged offence was committed in the night of 30 July 2005. Both accused who were arrested by the Police admitted the charge leveled against them.

I am also informed that following receipt of the report of the case on 07 August 2005, the Commissioner of Police sent a team led by an Assistant Superintendent of Police to Agalega to attend the case. Both accused were brought to Mauritius on 09 August 2005 and have been provisionally charged of “sodomy” before Port Louis Division II Court. They are at present remanded to jail.

I am advised that Police inquiry is still ongoing.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, I heard from the hon. Prime Minister that the two accused were arrested. Can we know by whom?

**The Prime Minister:** I take it that they must have been arrested by the Police and they are now in jail.

**MAKHAN, MR VIJAY - FORMER SECRETARY  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**(No. I B/153) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International

Trade and Co-operation whether, in regard to Mr V. M., former Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he will state -

- (a) the date on which he joined the Public Service;
- (b) whether there were any adverse reports on him during his career as a civil servant;
- (c) the posts he occupied at international level and,
- (d) the date on which his employment was terminated and the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

- (a) As per records, Mr Vijay Makhan joined government service in November 1973 as Village Development Officer. He was appointed Second Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs on 23 June 1974.
- (b) There is no record of adverse report on him during his career as a Civil Servant. However, the absence of written adverse report does not necessarily signify that all has been well. The House will recall that the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs was listed for abolition in July 1995 by the then MSM-RMM Government and Mr Makhan was reverted to his substantive post of Ambassador. This decision was linked to the incident at Johannesburg Airport in September 1994 when an Air Mauritius flight, which was airborne, was instructed to return to the terminal to take on board the then Prime Minister and his delegation. Following the freezing of the post of SFA and his reversion to the post of Ambassador, Mr Vijay Makhan decided to seek election to the position of Assistant Secretary General of the OAU (then called OAU) in July 1995.
- (c) He occupied the post of Assistant Secretary General of the OAU from 01 September 1995 to 21 September 2003 following his successful election for two consecutive terms with full support of government of the day.

- (d) His employment was not terminated. He applied for his retirement and was allowed to retire under section 6(1)(a) of the Pensions Act as from 08 August 2005.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, could I ask the hon. Prime Minister to inform the House as to the benefits and other privileges that have been obtained by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs upon his retirement?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, he retired under section 6 (1)(a) of the Pensions Act, Mr Speaker, Sir. The maximum retirement benefits computed on the basis of thirty-three and one third years of service - although he had not completed the length of service qualifying him for the maximum benefits - amount to Rs1,984,750.

He has also been paid Rs30,731.61 as pension for the month of August. He will be entitled to a monthly pension of Rs39,695 as from the month of September. He has been refunded all the accumulated vacation leave - although as I say, on an hypothetical date, because he has not completed the thirty three and the third years of service - this amounts to approximately Rs390,000. Refund of all the accumulated sick leave for the year 2005 on a pro rata basis amounting to Rs436,257.89. Refund of all the casual leave that he has accumulated as at 07 August, that is, 22 days of casual leave amounting to Rs65,375.00. Refund of the accumulated passage benefits on the hypothetical basis that he has served thirty-three and one third years of service amounting to Rs183,787.00. He has also been allowed to purchase the official car allocated to him, which is a Mercedes Benz E 200 at a depreciated price of Rs686,198.00. He has also been allowed to keep a desktop computer and a fax machine that was put at his disposal when he was in service and he has also been allowed to purchase the cellular phone put as his disposal while he was in service at a depreciated value. The total amounts to Rs3,090,894.89 cents.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the Prime Minister say very clearly that it was Mr Makhan who asked to retire - I am not saying that it is right or wrong. For a matter of record, is it not a fact that it is the present Prime Minister who, through the Secretary to Cabinet, informed Mr Makhan that the new Government expected him to leave?

**The Prime Minister:** The general policy of the Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that some officers who have been, for one reason or the



other, found to be closely linked with the previous regime should step down. He then asked for his retirement.

**Mr Bérenger:** This is my point, the initiative did not come from him, that it is the Prime Minister, through the Secretary to the Cabinet, who informed him that the Government expected him to leave. This is confirmed.

**The Prime Minister:** I said this is the general policy of the Government. I think it is normal and the previous Government has done same.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I know from the Prime Minister whether the benefits, that Mr Makhan derived were as per conditions of his employment?

**The Prime Minister:** No. In fact, as I said, we had computed the benefit on the basis that he had thirty-three and one third years of service though he had not completed that length of service, but we gave him that extra.

**Mr Speaker:** Other Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. Hon. Jhugroo.

**MAURITIUS, RODRIGUES AND AGALEGA –  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CONSTRUCTION –  
DEC 1995 TO JUNE 2005**

**(No. I B/141) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state –

- (a) the number of primary and secondary schools constructed in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega during the periods -
  - (i) December 1995 to September 2000, and
  - (ii) September 2000 to June 2005.
- (b) the number of secondary schools under construction, indicating when works started and the expected date of completion, and

(c) if it is proposed to construct additional primary and secondary schools and, if so –

- (i) in which regions;
- (ii) when works are likely to start and the expected date of completion, and
- (iii) the estimated cost.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not clear whether the hon. Member is referring to schools in the private or the public sector. It is assumed that he is referring to the public sector schools.

Regarding part (a), the number of primary and secondary schools constructed in Mauritius during the period December 1995 to September 2000 is 6 and 11 respectively. For Rodrigues, one primary school and no secondary school was constructed during the same period. For Agalega, no school was constructed, as two primary schools already existed.

During the period September 2000 till June 2005, 4 primary schools and 2 secondary schools were constructed and completed in Mauritius. In Rodrigues, no primary school was constructed, but two secondary schools were built for the same period. As for Agalega, one primary school was built.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the hon. Member may refer to the reply I made to PQ No. I B/79 of last week. Two secondary schools have been constructed and completed. Construction works have not started in 5 schools. Furthermore, 31 schools are under construction. I am tabling the information regarding the secondary schools under construction.

As for their expected dates of completion, I should like to invite the hon. Member to again refer to PQ Nos. I B/28 and B/79 replied to in the previous weeks, where I indicated that the schools are being constructed on a phase-wise basis, so that it would not be possible, at this juncture, to state when exactly the last phases would be completed.

As for part (c), a school mapping and space audit exercise will be carried out as a matter of urgency. A contingency plan with regard to the provision of science laboratories to students of Form IV in 2006 has already

been drawn. A policy decision as to whether new schools should be constructed will be taken thereafter.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the construction of primary and secondary schools for the period September 2000 to June 2005, can the hon. Minister state to the House how many such schools were fully constructed, fully equipped and fully operational?

**Mr Gokhool:** The figures are as follows -

For period 1995/2000 -  
Primary Schools: 6  
Secondary Schools: 11

For period 2000/2005 -  
Primary Schools: 4  
Secondary Schools: 2

**Mr Guinness:** May we know from the hon. Minister how many schools were under construction?

**Mr Gokhool:** I have already answered the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that there are other schools under construction. May we know from the hon. Minister whether students are attending the schools, or are they only construction sites?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is right to ask this precision. But, I have already stated in my previous reply that students who were admitted to schools on the admission list have had to be accommodated to other schools; I am not happy with the situation.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that the Phases I and II of the schools have been constructed. So, may we know whether students are attending these schools?

**Mr Gokhool:** In certain schools this is the case, but in many schools this is not the case.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when this project was initiated for schools that were constructed between December 1995 and September 2000?

**Mr Gokhool:** I don't have this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact of the matter is that between 1995 and 2000, the schools were completed.

### **PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – TEACHERS - RECRUITMENT**

**(No. I B/142) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to primary and secondary school teachers, he will state –

- (a) the number of teachers recruited during the periods –
  - (i) December 1995 to September 2000, and
  - (ii) September 2000 to June 2005, and
- (b) if it is proposed to carry out further recruitment exercises and, if so, when and the number to be recruited in each category.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that –

- (a) (i) during the period December 1995 to September 2000, 710 primary school teachers and 540 education officers were recruited, and
- (ii) for period September 2000 to June 2005, 405 primary school teachers and 927 education officers were recruited.

As for part (b) of the question, the reply is in the affirmative. There are presently 543 trainee teachers for the primary sector following courses at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

On successful completion of the course, these trainees will be appointed as primary school teachers. Additionally, it is proposed to enrol 600 primary trainee teachers for the primary schools and 248 education officers upon resumption of studies in January 2006.

The recruitment exercise will be carried out by the Public Service Commission. In this respect, I wish to point out that for education officers the vacancies have already been reported to the Public Service Commission and the latter has been requested to proceed with the filling thereof. As in the past years, it is expected that the Public Service Commission will start the exercise in October and that it will be completed by early December.

As regards the trainee teachers for the primary schools, my Ministry is currently finalising the scheme of service for the post, and as soon as it is prescribed, procedures will be initiated for recruitment as provided for in the estimates 2005/2006.

**Mrs Labelle:** If I have heard the hon. Minister correctly, he mentioned that there are 543 trainee teachers right now. May I know from him when these students started their courses?

**Mr Gokhool:** I don't have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. The question was when they will be recruited. Once they complete the programme, they will be recruited.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question was: when were they recruited? Is it not the policy of the Government that when teachers in the primary sector are recruited, they start by the training courses and then go on as primary teachers? Have we changed this policy or is it the same?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not arguing on that. All I am saying is that they are following the training programme and they will be offered substantive position once they finish their training.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has answered that actually there are 543 teachers on training and that there are around 600 vacancies. How does he intend to fill up the other vacancies?

**Mr Gokhool:** Well, once the 543 teachers have followed the training programmes. I must point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are many drop-outs as well. Once we embark the trainees, there are drop-outs and these have to be filled up in the course of time.

### **TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD – CHAIRPERSON – APPOINTMENT**

**(No. I B/143) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, she will –

- (a) state if a new Chairperson has been appointed and, if so, the name of the Chairperson, the terms and conditions of his employment, indicating whether it is a full-time job, and
- (b) table the list of persons who have served as Chariman since January 2000.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, a new Chairperson, Mr Coomaravel Pynandee, has been appointed on 12 August 2005. The Chairperson is eligible to a monthly allowance of Rs10,500 and the use of a mobile phone. The Chairperson of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board is not a full-time Chairperson.

As far as part (b) is concerned, a list of persons who have served as Chairperson since January 2000 to date is being tabled.

### **MALHERBES, CUREPIPE – FOOTBALL GROUND**

**(No. I B/144) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the construction of the football ground at Malherbes, Curepipe, he will –

- (a) state the progress achieved so far and the expected date of completion of works, and
- (b) table a copy of the contract and the specification of works to be carried out together with the layout plan.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on 22 December 2004, the contract for the construction of a football ground at Malherbes was awarded by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to the Development Works Corporation.

Owing to the topography of the site, which has a gradient of 6 metres, the following major works have to be undertaken –

Clearing of site which includes cutting down of pine trees, bushes and carting away of undesired materials, cutting and filling-in all materials in temporary spoil heap for re-use to sides of football ground, carting away from site surplus of excavated soil, level and compact formation to receive top soil, construction of drain around football ground, high level fencing, retaining walls, renovation of existing toilet and provision of french drains.

Sir, I am informed that as at to date, some 50% of the works have been completed and it is expected that the whole works will be completed by November this year.

I am arranging for a copy of the contract and the relevant location plans to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Can the hon. Minister state whether the work is done as per scheduled time?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, 50% of the works have already been completed and I will try to go on site maybe by next week.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, does the Minister know that since three weeks no more work is being carried out on the specific site?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any provision for lighting on the football ground at Cité Malherbes?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I need notice of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**NELSON MANDELA CENTRE FOR AFRICAN CULTURE -  
MAQUETTE, LAND LEASE, ETC.**

**(No. I B/145) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture at La Tour Koenig, he will state -

- (a) if a *maquette* already exists for the centre;
- (b) if land has been vested in his Ministry for the project, and
- (c) whether funds are available.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping that there is a *maquette* in the possession of Pravin Desai Architects, who was declared winner of the Architectural Competition in November 2000 for the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture building project. However, the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping has informed my Ministry that the *maquette* is in dilapidated conditions.

Regarding part (b) of the question, being given that on 12 September 1998, H.E. Mr Nelson Mandela had laid the foundation stone for the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture building project at La Tour Koenig, Government has decided to implement the project on that site.

As the site at La Tour Koenig will be occupied by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, the Ministry of Housing and Lands is leasing the land to the Centre itself, instead of vesting it in my Ministry.

As regards part (c) of the question, the sum of Rs15 m. which has been provided in the current financial year to house the centre at the ex-General Post Office building will now be used for the implementation of the project at La Tour Koenig.



**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he can inform the House of the area of this plot of land which can be used for construction purposes?

**Mr Gowressoo:** The area is 2,140 square metres.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, which part of these 2,140 square metres...

*(Interruptions)*

I was asking the hon. Minister, out of this area of 2,140 square metres, what percentage can be used for construction purposes.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole area, that is, 2,140 square metres will be used for the construction of the centre.

**Mrs Labelle:** Sir, I am going to be clearer in my question. I know that the area vested is 2,140. Can I know which percentage can be used for construction purposes?

**Mr Gowressoo:** I need notice of this question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **ROSE HILL-EBENE LINK ROAD PROJECT**

**(No. I B/146) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the Rose Hill-Ebene link road, he will state -

- (a) when the project was initiated, and
- (b) its impact on the fluidity of movement of vehicles in that region.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with the opening of the Rose Hill-Ebene link road, traffic in Rose Hill Town Centre and its vicinity has been considerably relieved and the movement of vehicles is now fluid in that region.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Order, I said.

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** The link road was studied under the Third Highway Project in 1997.

*(Interruptions)*

Implementation started in 2001 under the...

*(Interruptions)*

The construction of the link road started in September 2004 and was completed in 2005. The road was opened to traffic on 18 August 2005.

### **VALLÉE PITOT, TRANQUEBAR AND CHATEAU D'EAU - SQUATTERS**

**(No. I B/147) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to squatters in the regions of Vallée Pitot, Tranquebar and Chateau D'Eau, he will state -

- (a) the number thereof whose situation has been regularised;
- (b) since when, and
- (c) whether provision has been made for road, electricity and water supplies thereat.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the regularisation of squatters is an ongoing process. From 1995 to date, some 552 cases of squatting have been regularised at Vallée Pitot, Tranquebar, Chateau d'Eau and its vicinity. However, the previous Government waited until the eve of the last general election to regularise some 156 cases, when the decision to do so was taken as far back as 2001.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding part (c) of the question, I am advised that Vallé Pitot and Tranquebar are now connected with electricity and water

supply. As regards the issue of access road, the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit. I am following up with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Environment and National Development Unit.

### **BENTLEY APPAREL LTD - OWNERSHIP**

**(No. I B/148) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state -

- (a) if he has been notified of the change in the ownership of Bentley Apparel Ltd and the termination of employment of the employees of the factory;
- (b) the number of workers who have been laid off;
- (c) whether they have been paid compensation as provided by law and, if not, whether steps have been taken to ensure that they are paid compensation, and
- (d) whether he intends to request the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd to write off the debt of the company.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** No, Sir, I have not been notified of any change in the ownership of Bentley Apparel Ltd nor of the termination of employment of the employees of the factory.

However, I am aware that the company has met with financial difficulties and has been placed in receivership since February 2005.

As regards part (b) of the question, no worker has been laid off and, therefore, the question at part (c) does not arise.

As for part (d), I am of the opinion that it would be premature to do so at this stage.

## WINBRIGHT LTD - EX-WORKERS - COMPENSATION

(No. I B/149) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether in regard to the ex-workers of Winbright Ltd, he will state -

- (a) if a compensation was offered to them at the time of closing down of the factory;
- (b) the reasons why the offer of compensation was not accepted by the workers;
- (c) if a court judgment was delivered in connection with the matter and whether it has been complied with and the reasons therefor, and
- (d) what steps he proposes to take to ensure that the workers are paid their compensation.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in answer to part (a) of the question, I have to inform the House that there was no offer of compensation as such at the closing down of the factory.

However, there was a willingness on the part of the company to consider payment according to law provided it received clearance from the relevant authorities to dispose of its assets as it was an EPZ enterprise.

Part (b) of the question does not arise as there was no formal offer of compensation.

As to part (c), a judgment in favour of the workers was given on 13 March 2003 by the Industrial Court. My Ministry having no jurisdiction to execute a judgment of the Court, the workers were informed accordingly, but were, however, advised that the judgment could be executed by a warrant to levy and, subsequently, they have entered an action against Winbright Ltd at the Bankruptcy Division of the Supreme Court and the case is fixed for 03 October 2005.

In these circumstances, as my hon. friend is surely aware, my Ministry has no *locus standi* to take any further action in the matter. I propose, however, being given the continuing hardship of the workers having to wait for long periods for cases to be heard and so on, to liaise and discuss with

my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, to investigate fast-track possibilities for such cases to be heard in priority.

### **INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS GAMES 2007 - MEETINGS, SPORT DISCIPLINES, ETC.**

**(No. I B/150) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the Indian Ocean Islands Games 2007, he will state -

- (a) if he has been briefed on the outcome of the last meeting of the *Commission Internationale des Jeux (CIJ)*;
- (b) the list of sport disciplines chosen, and
- (c) whether he has been made aware or has received representations from the Badminton Federation and badminton players to the effect that badminton has been excluded from that list and, if so, whether he proposes to take up the matter with the CNOM and the Malagasy Authorities and make a statement thereon.

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, yes, I have been briefed of the outcome of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the "*Conseil Permanent des Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien*" (CIJ) held in Madagascar from 18 to 22 August 2005 in connection with the organisation of the 2007 Indian Ocean Islands Games.

As regards part (b), I am informed that, at that meeting, on the proposal of the Malagasy Authorities, the CIJ agreed to retain the following 15 sports disciplines for the games -

1. Athletics
2. Basketball
3. Boxing
4. Cycling
5. Football
6. Judo
7. Karaté
8. Petanque

9. Swimming
10. Table Tennis
11. Tae Kwon Do
12. Tennis
13. Volleyball
14. Weightlifting
15. Wrestling

Horse riding and yachting will be retained for demonstration only.

With regard to part (c) of the question, my Ministry is not in the presence of any representation from the Mauritius Badminton Association and badminton players concerning the non-inclusion of badminton in the list of the sports disciplines for the games.

Sir, I wish to point out, for the benefit of the House, that, according to article 32 of the "*Charte des Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien*", the host country may organise the Games with a minimum of five sports disciplines, which should compulsorily include athletics and swimming.

In practice, the host country proposes a certain number of sports disciplines for the Games, depending on its capacity and availability of resources. However, on account of financial constraints and problems of infrastructure, Madagascar opted, at the last CIJ meeting, to host competitions in only the 15 disciplines which I mentioned earlier. Badminton was not retained, in spite of intense lobby and formal requests from the delegations of Mauritius and Seychelles.

Normally, the organising country has a major say in the number and choice of sports disciplines to be included in the Games, as was the case for the 2003 Games, whereby Mauritius restricted the number of sports disciplines to only 13 and did not agree to include karaté and tae kwon do, in spite of requests from other member islands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of consultation with the Mauritius National Olympic Committee does not arise as the delegation, which represented Mauritius at the last CIJ meeting, comprised three of its members and a representative of my Ministry.

However, I propose to liaise with the Malagasy Authorities with a view to exploring the possibility of a reconsideration of the matter.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. I would advise him to meet the players, because there is a lot of frustration among them in this discipline. In view of future tournaments, I think it would be good for the Minister to meet the players. Would he be agreeable to meet the members of the Federation and the players in due course?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I thank the hon. Member, and I will take his advice into consideration.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister informed us that he has been briefed on the outcome of the last meeting of the *Commission Internationale des Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien*. Can I ask him whether the delicate issue of Mayotte was raised and, if yes, what happened?

**Mr Tang Wah Hing:** I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **CITÉ CHEBEL – SEWERAGE PROJECT**

**(No. I B/151) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, with regard to the sewerage project at Cité Chebel, he will state –

- (a) when tenders were launched;
- (b) when the contract was awarded and its project value;
- (c) the duration of the project and the expected date of completion, and
- (d) whether the road network, particularly the main Chebel Branch Road in that region has been damaged as a result of these works and, if so, will he impress upon the contractor to take urgent remedial measures in order to avoid inconvenience to the public and to prevent accidents.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that, as regards part (a) of the question, tenders for the sewerage network at Cité Chebel were launched on 16 June 2004.

With regard to part (b), the contract was awarded to Messrs Sotravic Ltée on 26 October 2004, with a project value of Rs87,765,813.30, exclusive of VAT. The contract also included rehabilitation works at Cité Cassis.

As far as part (c) is concerned, works at Cité Chebel started on 23 November 2004 and the contractual completion date was 29 August 2005, that is, yesterday. Sewerage construction works and house connections are complete.

As for part (d) of the question, I am informed that, in accordance with the provisions of the contract and following other conditions imposed by the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill regarding way-leave, temporary reinstatement of the roads was carried out along the excavated parts immediately after the completion of back-filling of the trenches. Works for the permanent reinstatement of the roads started on Monday 22 August this year, and most of the works have been completed. The main Chebel Road, where excavation works were carried out, has already been reinstated.

I wish to inform the House that I share the worries of the hon. Member of Parliament, Mr Bhagwan. As a member of a caring Government, I personally visited the area and have ascertained *de visu* that works have been executed as scheduled and that the inconveniences associated with the excavation works have been contained within reasonable limits, so as not to affect the inhabitants of the locality unduly.

#### **NTC - EX-TRAFFIC MANAGER – TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

**(No. I B/152) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NTC the following information in regard to Mr P. U., ex-Traffic Manager –

- (a) the dates on which he joined the Corporation and was promoted as Traffic Manager;
- (b) whether there has been any adverse reports on him;
- (c) the number of times he was elected as representative of employees to the Board of the Corporation, and



(d) the reasons for the termination of his employment.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NTC that Mr U. – I'll call him Mr U. -, ex-Traffic Manager, has joined the Corporation on 12 March 1980 as Traffic Supervisor.

On 16 August 1990, he was promoted Depot Manager although he did not hold the relevant degree as provided for in the scheme of service. In January 2002, the scheme of service of Depot Manager was amended to qualify Mr U. as Depot Manager with a diploma qualification only.

Similarly, in June 2004, though not qualified for the post of Traffic Manager because he did not hold an Honours Degree, he was appointed and not promoted to the post of Traffic Manager for a probationary period of one year, that is, till June 2005. However, on 25 November 2004, that is, after a period of only five months, he was confirmed to that post. It is to be noted that the post of Traffic Manager is not a promotional one, as mentioned in the question.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, there have been several verbal complaints against him.

As regards part (c), Mr U. has been elected seven times as the representative of workers on the Board of Directors of the NTC, the last time in 2001, but he did not stand as candidate in January 2005 elections.

Concerning part (d), the Board of Directors, at a meeting of 14 July 2005, decided to terminate the employment of Mr U. in the interest of the Corporation.

I am informed that, amongst others –

- (i) as Manager of Rémy Ollier Depot, he was often not at his place of work in Vacoas during the months of October, November, December 2003, but at other places actively involved in partisan politics;

- (ii) using his position as Traffic Manager, he favoured certain political parties and candidates and discriminated against others, whilst hiring buses for political gathering;
- (iii) for the hiring of buses for certain political gatherings, he did not respect the procedures laid down by the NTC for that purpose, and
- (iv) when political gatherings were held during normal working days and school days, he allocated a disproportionate number of buses to perform related special trips. He, thus, discarded completely the interest of commuters on routes served by the Corporation, who have to travel for attending work, hospitals, schools and for other social purposes. Such an irresponsible attitude by disrupting normal services provoked widespread public dissatisfaction and outcry, and caused harm to the image of the Corporation as a bus service provider.

Mr U. was paid a compensation and, in a written declaration, he accepted that the compensation represented a full and final settlement.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether compensation was paid on a punitive rate or on a normal rate?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Compensation was paid at the rate at which it was due.

**Mr Gunness:** I understand that compensation was paid on a punitive rate, which means that the NTC was at fault. Mr Speaker, Sir, can I take it that the employment of Mr U. was terminated because he asked for a deposit for the public meeting of the Labour Party? There was an amount of Rs88,000 due by the Labour Party, for which the Labour Party is being sued at the Court of Curepipe. Is it because of that, that he has been sacked?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not a question of finance because the MSM still owes the NTC money. But if the hon. Member wants information on political manoeuvring, I'll give him such information. Between April 2005 and July 2005, the MSM/MMM Alliance requested 1,237 buses.

*(Interruptions)*

And you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many they were provided? Not 1,239 but 1,337.

*(Interruptions)*

This is wrong. This is against the rule of hiring. The *Alliance Sociale* requested 409 buses, only 260 were provided. Discrimination, Mr Speaker, Sir! There was gross political interference!

**Mr Varma:** I would like to know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that Mr Udhin, the ex-Traffic Manager of the NTC, caused the NTC to be decorated with the political colours of the MSM/MMM during the electoral campaign?

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question was asked by the Opposition, I do not want to raise it. But if we want to continue this discussion, there is a lot to be said. Yes, he did put a container in front of the CNT gate and acted as political agent throughout the campaign. He decorated his own office with political colours.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Gunness:** Can I know from the hon. Deputy Minister whether he is prepared to table the final status report submitted by Mr Udhin on 14 July concerning the hiring of buses and the amount of money owed by each political party? Is he prepared to lay it on the Table of the Assembly?

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** No problem. I will do that.

**(PQ No. I B/153 – see after PQ No. I B/140)**

**STATE INVESTMENT TRUST – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
(FORMER ) – DATE OF EMPLOYMENT, PROMOTION, ETC**

**(No. I B/154) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Trust the following information in regard to its former Chief Executive Officer –

- (a) the date she joined the SIT and in which capacity;
- (b) the date on which she was promoted as Chief Executive Officer;
- (c) whether there has been any adverse report on her, and
- (d) the date on which the Board decided to terminate her employment and the reason thereof.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQ Nos. I B/154 and I B/162 together. I understand that the hon. Member was referring to the Sugar Investment Trust instead of the State Investment Trust.

I wish to point out that the Sugar Investment Trust, the private company incorporated under the Companies Act. Nevertheless, I shall, to the extent that the information is publicly available from the Registrar of Companies submit the following information –

- (a) the former Chief Executive Officer of the SIT joined the company on 21 November 1994 as Company Secretary;
- (b) she was appointed CEO on 27 July 2000;
- (c) on 19 August 2005, the Board of Directors decided to terminate her employment, and
- (d) she worked under the following chairpersons –

Sanjay Dabysing	- from 1994 to March 2001
Soonilduth Bholah	- from May 2001 to July 2002
Viranand Ramchurn	- from September 2002 to July 2005
Ritesh Sumputh	- in August 2005.

As far as compensation and adverse reports are concerned, these are matters which are dealt with in accordance with the constitutive documents of the company and by its appropriate bodies.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state whether a study conducted by Ernst and Young highlighted financial mismanagement in the SIT and a cash shortfall of Rs111 m.?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I read that there has been report of financial mismanagement and, of course, these are issues that can be taken up at the shareholders' meeting.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Let me listen to the question.

**Mr Boodhoo:** Will the hon. Minister state whether he is aware that shareholders have asked for a Commission of Inquiry on SIT?

**Dr. Boolell:** Again, this has been reported and the shareholders will have every opportunity to raise the question at the shareholders' meeting.

### **POWDER MILK – SHORTAGE**

**(No. I B/155) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the shortage of certain brands of powder milk in some supermarkets and shops, he will state what actions are being taken to ensure a regular supply of milk

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the price of milk powder has been brought under the mark-up regime since 10 August 2005. The ensuing decrease in the prices of milk powder has been widely welcomed by consumers.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the Consumer Protection Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection, has been monitoring the situation to ensure that the decision is implemented by the traders. Up to now, I can confirm that there has been no shortage of milk power. However, there are some indications that some suppliers are not supplying milk in the usual quantity although the stock of milk, I am advised, is adequate. The Consumer Protection Unit is

closely monitoring the situation and booking contraveners as and when necessary.

**Mr Guinness:** I think that everyone who goes in supermarkets can see that only a minimum of two is being sold. Can I know from the Minister whether there is a quota which has been imposed on consumers?

**Dr Jeetah:** I have answered the question. But I am prepared to give some supplementary information: at the time when the mark up was introduced, that is, on 10 August 2005, there was a stock of over 1 million kilogram of powdered milk.

**Mr Guinness:** My question, Sir, is: if there was no shortage of milk, why do some supermarkets impose a quota on consumers?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me give the answer again which I gave a few minutes. There are some indications that some suppliers are not supplying milk in the usual quantity although the stock of milk is adequate. The Consumer Protection Unit is closely monitoring the situation and is booking contraveners as and when necessary.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I know from the Minister how many such suppliers have been booked up to now?

**Dr. Jeetah:** If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will answer it. Mr Speaker, Sir, I can't give people's names, but we have booked a number of suppliers, even importers as well.

*(Interruptions)*

But if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question next week, I will give the answer.

**Mr Guinness:** When the situation will come back to normal, can I ask the Minister whether a quota will be imposed on customers?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have answered the question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Perrier:** Le ministre peut-il nous dire s'il était au courant quand il a pris cette décision qu'une partie du lait en vrac qui est importé était destiné pour faire des yaourts et non pas pour être vendu en lait en poudre?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is something else, it has nothing to do with the question.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Est-ce que le ministre peut garantir la population qu'il n'y pas de pénurie de lait dans les boutiques de l'île Maurice?

**Dr. Jeetah:** M. le president, j'aimerais bien garantir l'honorable membre. There is no shortage of milk in Mauritius.

### **PATIENTS – HEALTH SITUATION – INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

**(No. I B/156) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Government decision to give access to information about the health situation of a patient to his parents, he will state-

- (a) whether he has held consultations with and obtained the agreement of the representatives of the Union of Medical Practitioners and of the paramedical staff, and
- (b) who will provide the relevant information to the parents and by what means.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the health personnel, in particular, medical practitioners and nurses, are responsible for treatment and care being provided to patients attending hospitals. As such, they are fully aware of the health conditions of patients and can provide information to them or their responsible parties or next of kin.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the need to have consultations as such with the representatives of the unions does not arise. In fact, this measures does not, in any case, affect the conditions of service of the medical practitioners, nursing and paramedical staff.

As regards part (b) of the question, the information is provided, on request, to close relatives/parents of the patient verbally by the treating doctor and/or nursing officer in charge who will consult the doctor before providing such information.

### **PONT JUNCTION, PAILLES - TRAFFIC FLOW**

**(No. B/157) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if it is proposed to widen Pont Junction at Pailles in view of the increasing traffic thereat and the threat to public safety and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question.

Pont Junction is located on Pailles Branch Road which is an important link between the Motorway M1 and Grand River North West. There is considerable traffic along that road due to numerous industries located along its length. The bridge is narrow and is found at a bend and constitutes a serious bottleneck and a traffic hazard. The attention of my Ministry was drawn to this situation by Minister James Burty David and a site visit arranged on 03 August 2005.

With a view to improving the traffic flow, the Road Development Authority has prepared a project to upgrade and widen the bridge and funds have been earmarked in the present budget. The tender documents are being finalised and procedures for land acquisition have already been initiated. It is expected to invite tenders in October 2005. The works are expected to start in December 2005 and completed in September 2006.

**Mr Barbier:** Can the Minister inform the House when all the designs and plans concerning this project were completed?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** I am not aware, but I'll provide the information to the hon. Member when he needs it.



**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, does the Minister agree that all the documents for this project were already completed since the former Government was in place?

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister has said that he will give the information to the hon. Member. He has already replied to the question. Next question.

**CAMP LEVIEUX, POINTE AUX SABLES & CHEBEL -  
SQUATTERS' CHILDREN**

**(No. B/158) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the children of squatters in the regions of Camp Levieux, Pointe aux Sables and Chebel, she will state -

- (a) their number and age group, and
- (b) whether these children are attending educational institutions and, if so, what arrangements have been made in that connection and, if not, why not.

**The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that -

- (a) there is presently a total of 248 children of squatters in the regions of Camp Levieux, Pointe aux Sables and Chebel.

The age groups are as follows -

	Number
0 - 3 years	92
4 - 11 years	106
12-18 years	50
Total	248

Of the 248 children, only 9 are not attending educational institutions, namely 7 at Camp Levieux and 2 at Pointe aux Sables. It has been reported

that these children were previously residing at Floreal, Quatre Bornes and Terre Rouge and were attending schools in their respective catchment areas.

I am also informed that officials of the Ministry have been visiting the families on a regular basis and as education is compulsory to our children, the need to send children to school was impressed on the parents during these visits. They were also apprised that arrangements for the transfer of their children to the nearest school would be made. These parents were, however, reluctant to accept such arrangements. They had stated that they would not embark on transfer procedures for their children to be admitted in a new school of the vicinity where they are actually, given that they were residing in these regions only on a temporary basis. They would initiate such procedures only when they would be made aware of the outcome of their unstable situation, but counselling by officials of the Ministry is still going on.

### **INFANT FORMULA MILK - RETAIL PRICE**

**(No. B/159) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether, in regard to infant formula milk, he will state –

- (a) if it is proposed to review the retail price thereof and, if so, by how much and when, and
- (b) the present profit margin, indicating on what basis it is calculated.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, infant milk powder is an item which is already under the mark-up regime and presently a rate of 20% is applied. I wish here to inform the House that in the price control regime, we consider maximum mark-up and not profit margin as is being suggested by the hon. Member.

The Market Analysis and Monitoring Unit of my Ministry is currently studying market and price trends for several products. It is on the basis of the findings that appropriate decisions would be taken about any need for review and the extent thereof.

I seize this opportunity to thank the hon. Member for raising this issue and I am seriously envisaging the possibility to review the mark-up of infant

milk because as we put people first, babies deserve an even greater consideration.

### **LA LAURA/MALINGA ROAD PROJECT – LAND ACQUISITION**

**(No. B/160) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the La Laura and Malinga Road project, he will state if procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land have already started and, if so, will he state since when and the number of land owners concerned.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Malinga-Crève Coeur Link Road also referred to as the La Laura and Malinga Project was initiated under the priministership and leadership of Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam in 1998. Notice under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act was published on 09.01.99 and 23.01.99.

However, no follow-up was made for this project during the period 2000 to 2004.

I am informed that 92 portions of land involving some 110 owners are concerned. Six additional portions of land will have to be acquired from the Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate. In this context, an offer has been made to the owner of the Company on 07 April to acquire the land amicably.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House what is the scheduled date for the completion of this project?

**Mr Dulull:** Sir, the consultants are still working on the project and the date will be communicated later.

*At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

## PRIMARY & SECONDARY LEVELS

### – COMPULSORY EDUCATION

**(No. I B/161) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state what measures have been taken to ensure that compulsory education both at primary and secondary levels is being complied with.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it should be recalled that compulsory primary education was introduced in 1991 whereas compulsory secondary education does not yet exist. In fact, compulsory education up to the age of 16 was introduced this year, following legislation passed by the previous Government in November last year. My predecessor had, in his speech, for the second reading of the Bill, last year, underlined that this year would be a transitional year. I must point out that the legislation for compulsory education up to the age of 16 has been passed somehow hastily without a proper mechanism for the enforcement of the legislation and for the monitoring of attendance in order to identify those who do not register to attend school or who subsequently dropout of the system.

I am informed that, for the primary school sector, the enrolment rate is in the region of 98% to 99% and, in spite of the individual efforts of my Ministry, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child's Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions and Non Governmental Organisations, it is very difficult to attain the 100% enrolment figure.

As regards the secondary schools sector, where enrolment rate prior to 2005 was 71%, there is no indication, at this stage, that the introduction of compulsory secondary education up to the age of 16 has contributed to an improvement thereof.

To ensure compulsory education at primary level, and up to the age of 16 at secondary level, one has to target the following categories of students –

- (i) those who do not attend primary school at all;

- (ii) those who drop out from primary schools between Standards I and VI;
- (iii) those who do not enroll in either in Form I mainstream or Form I prevocational at secondary level, and
- (iv) those who drop out from the secondary school before reaching the age of 16.

There is definitely need to set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure compulsory education up to the age of 16 and to combat both non-registration and school drop-outs at primary and secondary levels. My Ministry, in collaboration with other stakeholders, would be working in that direction within the broader objective of moving towards a world-class quality education, as already pointed out in the Government Programme 2005-2010. In this respect, one of the measures, which will no doubt contribute in the process, is the provision of free transport to students.

**SIT - EX-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
– CHAIRMANSHIP COMPENSATION**

**(No. I B/162) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Trust, the following information in regard to its ex-Chief Executive Officer –

- (a) when she joined the SIT;
- (b) under whose Chairmanship she has been working during the period of her tenure of office, and
- (c) the compensation granted to her when she had been laid off.

*(vide reply to PQ No. B/154)*

**ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE – 40-HOUR WEEK**

**(No. I B/163) Mr S. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board if the Board had entered into an agreement with the trade unions of

workers of the sugar industry for the introduction of the 40-hour week during the crop season in the year 2000 and, if so, will he state the reasons for which it was not implemented.

**Dr. Boolell:** Sir, there was an agreement between the management of Rose Belle Sugar Estate and four trade unions providing that the 40-hour week would be implemented at the sugar estate.

However, the management did not implement the decision. The matter has been referred to the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal, following a dispute reported by the unions.

Sir, I informed the House last week that the matter is still under consideration at the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal and that consultations will be held in the light of the PAT award. For the information of the House, the next hearing at PAT has been fixed in December 2005.

### **LA VIGIE ROAD - STREET LIGHTING NETWORK - MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP**

**(No. I B/164) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in view of the repeated breakdown of the street lighting network along the motorway, especially on the La Vigie Road, he will state if it is proposed to create a special unit for the maintenance and upkeep of the network to avoid accidents.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Sir, the maintenance of street lighting on the motorway falls under the responsibilities of the local authorities concerned. Each local authority has the appropriate equipment to work on the high street lighting column in order to change the spare parts and is allocated the appropriate budget to pay for the electricity bill.

However, on the suggestion of the hon. Member, I will take up the matter with the Ministry of Local Government.

## **POWDER MILK - IMPORTATION SEP 2000 TO JUNE 2005**

**(No. I B/165) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the importation of powder milk for the period September 2000 to June 2005, he will state –

- (a) the quantity imported, and
- (b) the reasons why the previous Government did not establish a maximum margin of profit.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information received from the Customs Department, a total of 72,220 tons of milk for a total CIF value of Rs4,540,592,286. has been imported during period September 2000 to June 2005.

I have to stress on the fact that the price control regime makes provision for maximum mark-up and not maximum margin of profit.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot answer for the previous Government, but I can assure my learned friend that our maxim is “Putting People First”

## **PLAINE MAGNIEN VILLAGE (LOWER) – FLY OVER**

**(No. I B/166) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, having regard to Plaine Magnien which is a strategic village bordering Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will consider the need and urgency of constructing a flyover to link the region of lower Plaine Magnien, called Chatgown, to the other side of the trunk road to facilitate the inhabitants.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Sir, it is the policy of the Road Development Authority to provide flyovers where there is a need.

This need is identified through a study carried out in consultation with the Traffic Management Unit and Road Safety Unit. So far, no study has been carried out for the location under reference.

The Road Development Authority proposes to conduct a survey and thereafter a decision will be taken.

**Mr Varma:** May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister when the survey will be carried out?

**Dr. Beebeejaun:** Now that the proposition has been made, I will have it done as soon as possible.

### **MAHEBOURG MARKET - STALLS ALLOCATION**

**(No. I B/167) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware of problems regarding the allocation of stalls at the Mahebourg market and, if so, will he say what steps he proposes to take.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Grand Port/Savanne District Council is encountering difficulties for the allocation of the 173 existing stalls at the Mahebourg market fair while the demand exceeds 400.

Consultations have been held on several occasions by the District Council with representatives of the sellers and their Legal Adviser, but no consensus could be reached.

In the circumstance, the District Council has, in July 2005, taken the decision to proceed with the drawing of lots to allocate these stalls.

### **COMMODITIES (BASIC) – PROFIT MARGIN**

**(No. I B/168) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will state –



- (a) if it is proposed to review or establish a maximum margin of profit on basic commodities such as cooking oil, refined rice (basmati), sea foods, milk products such as cheese, yogurt and baby food, and
- (b) if it is proposed to review the functioning of the Consumer Unit so that it operates as a Fair Trading Unit.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, a study conducted by Market Analysis & Monitoring Unit has revealed the different level of mark-up being applied on different items by importers, especially that of milk powder as well as that of other essential commodities.

I pointed out, Mr Speaker, Sir, when replying to previous parliamentary questions, that the placement of milk powder under the mark-up regime was a beginning. I have asked the Management Audit Bureau to make a comprehensive study to determine a list of essential commodities, their existing price structures and the evolution of prices over the last two years. In the light of the findings, a decision will be taken whether or not to bring any other item under the mark-up regime.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the Consumer Protection Unit. The Consumer Protection Unit has the responsibility of enforcing the various consumer legislation and carries out consumer education as well as ensures that traders are selling goods at the prices, which are fixed by the Ministry. On the other hand, the Office of Fair Trading, which is coming very shortly under my Ministry, will act as watchdog against restrictive business practices and will propose remedial actions.

### **EMBELLISHMENT PROJECTS & UPGRADING WORKS - JANUARY 2004 - CONSTITUENCYWISE**

**(No. I B/169) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will table a list of all the embellishment projects and upgrading works undertaken since January 2004 in each Constituency, indicating the name of the contractors for these projects and the sum paid to the consultant, if any, for each project and state whether tenders were floated for all projects exceeding Rs500,000.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be placed on the Table of the National Assembly.

**BELLE MARE - EXPLOSIVES AND DYNAMITE - USE**

**(No. I B/170) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if dynamite or any other explosives were used on the coral reefs and/or in the lagoon in the area of Belle Mare between 2000 and 2005 under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and the Beach Authority and, if so, why.

**The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ No. I B/170.

In November 1997, ICEMIST (Mtius) Ltd submitted an application for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) licence in respect of coastal improvement works at Le Surcouf Hotel, Palmar. The works comprised –

- (a) the reprofiling of the beach;
- (b) creation of a swimming zone, and
- (c) the opening of two blind passes through the use of explosives, to improve flushing of the lagoon which was expected to curb algae growth which was proliferating in the region.

An EIA licence was issued on 10 July 1998 only for the reprofiling of the beach. The opening of the passes was not allowed and the proponents were requested to consider other means than the use of explosives.

In April 2001, ICEMIST (Mauritius) Ltd. submitted a fresh application for an EIA licence for the opening of the two blind passes at Passe La Grotte and Blind Pass South in front of Le Surcouf Hotel using controlled dynamite blasting. In its application, the company mentioned that it had obtained expert advice to the effect that the use of mechanical means for opening of the passes could not be considered in view of the complexity of the work.

The EIA application from ICEMIST was considered after consultation with all parties including, *inter alia*, the Prime Minister's Office, the

Ministry of Fisheries, the Special Mobile Force, and the National Coast Guard. It was agreed that instead of opening the blind passes, the proponent could be authorised to open 8 to 10 small slits in the reef to allow for good flushing of the lagoon. The National Coast Guard advised that blasting would be required for the creation of the slits.

An EIA licence was, therefore, granted on 12 July 2001 for the creation of 8 to 10 slits of dimension 1 metre wide and 4 metres deep. The slits were to be opened two at a time to enable proper monitoring of the flushing of the lagoon. Opening of further slits would be allowed provided the performance of the first two slits was to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment.

The blasting operations were carried out on 03 February 2003 by the Special Mobile Force under the supervision of officers of the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Fisheries, and the National Coast Guard. A total of 16.4 kg of explosives were used for the operation.

Further operations were carried out on 28 and 29 August 2003 on the same reef opposite Le Surcouf. On the first day, 4.4 kg of dynamite were placed and, on the second day, 14.6 kg of dynamite were placed. The SMF ensured that all the dynamites placed were blasted.

So far only the two first slits have been opened. Preliminary results of the monitoring exercise indicate that there has been a relative decrease in the volume of algae in the region.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there was a report which was prepared by the then Head of the Beach Authority which was sent to the former Prime Minister and the former Minister of Environment concerning this matter wherein it was suggested that the cause of the problem should be looked into and the blasting was not recommended.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the report with me. If ever there is such a report I am ready to lay a copy of it on the Table of the Assembly.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the main cause of the problem is the Natural Resources Palmar Livestock

Production Unit whereby raw sewerage from that Unit is seeping into the sea thereby increasing the phosphate in the ocean and increasing the algae and that the Minister of Agriculture at the time was aware of it as from 2001, but did nothing?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take up the matter with the Minister of Agro Industry, because I am not aware of this.

### **DAGOTIERE - MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX**

**(No. I B/171) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will consider the advisability of constructing a multipurpose complex at Dagotièrè to provide for recreational activities, a library, a computer room and a gymnasium as the present village hall cannot cater for the needs of the inhabitants.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Moka/Flacq District Council has confirmed that a request had been received on 18 June 2002 from the Dagotièrè Village Council for the construction of a multipurpose complex by the National Development Unit to cater for various amenities, namely a library, a computer room and a gymnasium as the present village hall cannot satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of the region.

However, I am advised that the project could not be implemented due to unavailability of land. A request had been made on 13 August 2004 to the Ministry of Housing and Lands with a view to acquiring compulsorily a plot of private land adjacent to the village hall. The matter is being looked into.

### **MOUNT ORY - CREMATION GROUND**

**(No. I B/172) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the cremation at Mount Ory, he will state -

- (a) since when it is not operational and the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if an alternative cremation ground has been provided and, if so, where and, if not, why not.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information available by the Moka/Flacq District Council, the cremation ground at Mount Ory, which is a private one is not operational for the last five years as the owner has resumed possession of his land.

I am informed that an alternate site identified near the existing cremation ground at Mont Fleury, St Pierre has not been recommended by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the following reasons -

- (i) the site is found adjacent to recently constructed residential buildings, and
- (ii) the site is within the view of residential buildings.

I am advised that no suitable site has yet been identified for the setting up of a cremation ground in spite of several site visits effected by officers of the Ministry of Housing and Lands as well as those of the Moka/Flacq District Council.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further advised that the inhabitants of Mount Ory are presently using either the cremation grounds at Circonstance or Pailles.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants of Moka, Mount Ory and Réduit have identified a piece of land. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can consider the advisability of making compulsory acquisition?

**Dr. David:** If land has been identified, we will look into it.

### **DIKSON & VALETTA LAKES - UPGRADING**

**(No. I B/173) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if he proposes to liaise with the appropriate authorities in order to undertake the upgrading and embellishment works at the Dikson lake at Dagotièrè and at the lake at Valetta.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that both lakes are private properties and belong to Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate.

I propose to request the Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate to initiate action to maintain and embellish the sites.

**Mr Dayal:** Can the hon. Minister look into the possibility of installing stone steps and a platform for the benefit of the devotees of the Lord Ganesh during Ganesh Chaturti festival?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a private land. Last year, the General Manager of the ENL Group has advised against putting up any structure on the site and that is the big problem. If we can negotiate with the Manager, then, we will see what we can do.

### **MSIRI - PROMOTION/RECRUITMENT EXERCISE**

**(No. I B/174) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MSIRI, information as to whether any promotion or recruitment exercise has been carried out thereat since 2003 and, if not, the reasons therefor and whether other cess-funded organisations falling under the control of his Ministry have adopted a similar policy.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, in 2003, the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute Board decided to freeze all promotions of officers pending the report of the Task Force on cess-funded institutions. Only 3 new officers were appointed. During the same period, 12 officers and 25 manual workers left the Institute for various reasons and were not replaced.

The MSIRI has, since the late 1990s, been carrying out a rightsizing policy with a view to reducing cost and resources from cess. Employees who have been resigned or retired have not been replaced. Instead, redeployment of existing personnel has been effected. Furthermore, for certain specific activities such as cane analysis in the crop season or for research projects, the MSIRI resorts to temporary or contractual employment.

The other cess-funded organisations have been recruiting people only where filling of vacancies was absolutely required for the good conduct of business. In certain cases, internal arrangements have been made.

## **HOLLYROOD, VACOAS - CREMATION GROUND**

**(No. I B/175) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if the plot of land used as cremation ground at Hollyrood, Vacoas for the last 50 years or so has been repossessed by its owner and, if so, will he state if it is proposed to put an alternative cremation ground at the disposal of the inhabitants.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix that the plot of private land used as a cremation ground at Hollyrood, Vacoas has been taken over by its owners since June 2004.

I am advised that tenders were invited by the Municipal Council in February 2005 for the purchase of around 15 perches of land for this purpose, but no offer was received. Fresh tenders were called in April this year and only one offer was received, but unfortunately the procedures for acquisition of the land could not be finalised as the owner was not in possession of a proper title deed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall request the Council to launch fresh tenders.

## **ECONOMIC INDICATORS - STATEMENT**

**(No. I B/176) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will make a statement on the situation of the main economic indicators including public debt, economic growth and job creation for the financial year 2004-2005 as compared to the financial year 1999-2000.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **NATIONAL RISK PREVALENCE SURVEY ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES - COST & SURVEY**

**(No. I B/177) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard

to the National Risk Prevalence Survey on non-communicable diseases, he will state -

- (a) the cost of the survey in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, and
- (b) when the preliminary and the final results of the survey will be communicated.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), I am informed that the costs of the National Risk Prevalence Survey on non-communicable diseases (NCD Survey) carried out in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 2004 amount to Rs9,757,868. This amount includes expenses for the National Nutrition Survey carried out concurrently with the NCD Survey both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues. In addition, an estimated amount of Rs300,000 for external assurance of tests to be carried out will also have to be met in due course.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that Government has already been apprised of the preliminary results for the NCD Survey for Mauritius. Regarding the NCD Survey in Rodrigues and the Nutrition Survey, the preliminary results will be ready in four weeks time. The findings of the reports, both for Mauritius and Rodrigues will be disseminated to all stakeholders concerned after which, the final reports, with the confirmed results, will be available. I am advised that this exercise including the external quality assurance tests to be carried out, may take up to six months to be completed.

**Dr. Mungur:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the successive surveys carried out so far, 1987, 1992, 1998 and 2004, lots of resources have been consumed in terms of money, material and manpower. Could the Minister look into the possibility of introducing a new (WHO) methodology called the Rapid Assessment and Response which is characterised by rapidity of data collection, resource effectiveness and action oriented approach?

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will look into it.

SC/D06/P12/1

**CHANGE OF NAMES – APPLICATIONS – JAN. 2004**

**(No. I B/178) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights



whether he will state the number of applications for change of names received since January 2004, indicating –

- (a) the number of cases pending as at end of July 2005, and
- (b) what is the situation now.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to both parts (a) and (b) of the question together.

I am informed that for the year 2004, 159 applications for change of name were received by my office and from January up to 18 August of this year, 116 applications for change of name were received. Three applications have since been withdrawn.

I am also informed that as at the end of July of the present year, 227 applications have been processed by my office. Out of 227 applications, 77 have been referred to the Commissioner of Police for enquiry and my office has, in respect of 105 applications, advised the respective applicants to give notice of their applications in the Gazette and in two daily newspapers for the purpose of determining whether there is any objection to the application by any interested person, as required by section 56 of the Civil Status Act.

I wish to point out that the notice is published at least three times in the Gazette and in each of the newspapers and any objection to an application for a change of name may be received at any time within four months from the last publication of the notice.

The remaining applications have already been processed and approved.

**Dr. Mungur:** Will the Minister envisage initiating a fast track to speed up the whole process?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we will contemplate the suggestion of my hon. friend.

**SIR SEEWOOSAGAR RAMGOOLAM STREET, PAMPLEMOUSSES  
STREET, NICOLAY ROAD – TRAFFIC LIGHTS**

**(No. I B/179) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in view of the increasing flow of traffic and road traffic accidents, he will consider the advisability of having traffic lights installed at the following junctions –

- (i) the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam Street/Sun Yat Sen Street;
- (ii) the Military Road/Pamplemousses Street, and
- (iii) the Military Road/Nicolay Road (near the BAT).

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already approved the installation of a set of traffic light at the junction Military Road/Nicolay Road near British American Tobacco.

As far as the other junctions are concerned, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry will carry out a survey which comprises traffic counts and a geometrical layout for visibility assessment to evaluate the necessity of installing traffic lights.

In the event that traffic lights are warranted at these junctions, my Ministry will do the needful.

### **POUDRE D'OR VILLAGE – “MEMOIRE” – MONUMENT**

**(No. I B/180) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre D’Or)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in view of the fact that the place called *Mémoire* situated at Poudre D’Or village is associated with *Paul et Virginie* and is considered as a historical place visited by tourists especially French tourists he will state if there is any project to have it upgraded and to give the site a national and an international recognition.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X.L.Duval):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows: the place known as “*Mémoire*” refers to a site on the beach of Poudre d’Or village where a monument has been erected in

memory of *Paul et Virginie*. The monument commemorates the wreck of the St. Géran.

I am told that this monument, which has historical and cultural importance, is located at a suitable place where it is easily accessible. It is an important tourist attraction and is visited by members of the public and numerous tourists, particularly the French tourists.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to date the Ministry has no project regarding the site. However, I am prepared to upgrade the site and similar sites in other parts of our island in our endeavour to upgrade the attractiveness of our island as a tourist destination.

Tour operators in Mauritius could be encouraged to include the site in their cultural tours of the North and link it with the SSR Botanical Gardens, where according to the legend, Paul and Virginie are buried near St Francois Xavier Church, opposite Pamplemousses Gardens.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I avail of this opportunity to invite the hon. Member and our other colleagues of the Constituency to visit the site with me at a suitable time as well as other such tourist sites in region, in order to determine an appropriate course of action.

**Mr Rucktooa:** Taking into consideration the literary aspect of the place which has already been immortalised by Bernardin de St Pierre, will the hon. Minister take into account at the same time the historical and literary aspects whenever something is being done to upgrade the place?

**Mr X.L. Duval:** We were trying to put more emotion into the tourists experience and make tourists who come to Mauritius more aware of the historical and cultural aspects of the island. And this is the sort of project which is of interest.

**Mr Bérenger:** Is the Minister prepared to consider taking on Board the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture? Because we are fully in favour of upgrading and giving due treatment to this historical place. But there is a less positive aspect to the whole issue that should be handled very carefully. And I believe the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture could be helpful.

**Mr X.L.Duval:** I am not sure what the Leader of the Opposition means. The Nelson Mandela Centre falls under the responsibility of my colleague, the hon. Minister for Arts and Culture, and if there is anything, it should be suggested to that Ministry.

**Mr Bérenger:** The *Paul et Virginie, Bernardin de St Pierre*, all this is very fine. But the historical fact is that the St Géran was the *négrier*, the slave boat which came to Mauritius from Gorée Island and all the slaves that were on that vessel drowned on the occasion of that shipwreck. Therefore, I think the whole historical dimension has to be handled very carefully.

**Mr X.L.Duval:** I don't think we should be ashamed of our past, whether it relates to slavery or any other aspect. And the truth has to come out and it should come out as much as it can.

**Mr Bérenger:** There was no suggestion at all that we should be ashamed of our past. On the contrary, the point which I was making is that when we gave due recognition to the literary work of Bernardin de St Pierre, that this aspect of our past should be fully taken on board.

**Mr X.L.Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not understand the question in the first place because there were so many *sous entendus*. Now, I understand it. As I mentioned, Nelson Mandela Centre falls under the responsibility of my colleague but as far as the *Mémoire* is concerned, I will see what can be done.

#### **STATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION – MANAGING DIRECTOR – REMUNERATION PACKAGE & BENEFITS**

**(No. I B/181) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, the annual remuneration package and other benefits, in whatever form, that were paid to its Managing Director who was in office, from September 2000 to July 2005.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows: the annual remuneration of the Managing Director of the State

Investment Corporation inclusive of overseas travelling, gift vouchers, security expenses, telephone expenses, motor car expenses and training package for the period 2000 to 2005 were as follows:

<b>Year ended</b>	<b>Amount (Rs)</b>
30 June 2001	1,215,535
30 June 2002	2,210,924
30 June 2003	2,462,684
30 June 2004	2,744,028
30 June 2005	2,690,826
July to August 2005	<u>823,384</u>
	<u><b>12,147,381</b></u>

#### **STATE LAW OFFICE – LEGAL ADVISERS**

**(No. I B/182) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights whether he will, for the period of 01 October 2000 to 30 June 2005, state if any legal work was contracted out by the State Law Office to Legal Advisers other than members of its own staff and, if so, will he state why, to whom and at what cost.

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to the question I wish to point out that Sir Victor Glover, former Chief Justice was employed by the Attorney-General's Office as Consultant for the drafting of Legislation and for the training of Law Officers and Attorneys in the same field from 01 October 2000 to 31 January 2004.

The total amount paid to Sir Victor Glover during the period of his consultancy is detailed hereunder.

	Rs
1 October 2000 – 31 December 2000	180,000
1 February 2002 – 31 January 2003	720,000

1 February 2003 – 31 January 2004	720,000
Total	1,620,000

**Mr Rucktooa:** May I ask the hon. Minister if there are other legal advisers registered with the SLO?

**Mr Valayden:** Mr Speaker, Sir, at the office of the Attorney General, there is no other legal advisers who have been employed during that period of time.

### TOTAL PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT

**(No. I B/183) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Total Public Sector Debt, he will state –

- (a) the latest estimate in rupees and as a percentage of GDP;
- (b) the sustainability, and
- (c) the consequences of such a high level of debt to the economy.

*(Withdrawn)*

### ALLAGAPEN, MRS M. EVA - OLD AGED PENSIONS

**(No. I B/184) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state the reasons for which Mrs M. E. A, of 10, Capucine Road Batimaraï has not received her old aged pensions for the last 5 years and say what remedial measures are envisaged.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Mrs Marie Eva Allagapen, born Sevastian of Batimaraï, Rivière des Anguilles, was drawing basic widows' pension and contributory widows' pensions since November 2000. According to the birth certificate produced at time of application, she reached the age of 60 in January 2002 and was transferred then to the basic retirement pension.

In July 2002, another person by the name of Marie Eva Anthonee, born Sevastian, residing at 62, Ste Thérèse Street, Plaisance, Rose Hill, applied for the basic retirement pension. She produced an extract of a birth certificate containing exactly the same information as the one produced by Mrs Marie Eva Allagapen.

After investigations by the visiting officer of the Ministry and interview by the awarding officer, it was observed that the birth certificate produced by Mrs Marie Eva Allagapen, at time of application in November 2000, was not the correct one. It appears that Mrs Marie Eva Allagapen applied for an extract of birth certificate at the Civil Status Division in 1999 and was issued an extract of birth certificate belonging to Mrs Marie Eva Anthonee instead. It is observed that both applicants bear the same forenames and the same maiden names.

Mrs Marie Eva Allagapen was referred to the District Clerk for the swearing of an affidavit and for an application for a tardy declaration of birth. However, since July 2002, she has been granted social aid and presently she is drawing a sum of Rs1,275 per month. But her basic retirement pension will be restored on production of her correct birth certificate, with arrears of up to six months in accordance with the National Pensions Regulations. Possibility is being looked into to amend the regulations so as not to unduly penalise the applicants.

The views of the Attorney General's Office are being sought on this issue. It has also been brought to my attention that there are thirteen other such cases of two applicants producing the same birth certificate and in order not to cause undue hardship to those applicants without a genuine birth certificate, actions have been initiated at the level of my Ministry with the Attorney General's Office for a fast track to be put into place for dealing expeditiously with these cases.

**Mr Mardemootoo:** Does the hon. Minister envisage to pay back to those victims of redtapism the total outstanding amount due plus interests, compound interests and a compensation? Because these people have been deprived of their rights of pensions?

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I just mentioned, according to the law as it is now, on production of the correct birth certificate, the arrears are up to six months in accordance to what the National Pensions Regulations

stipulate. If the whole issue needs to be reviewed and revised, I will certainly be ready to do it.

**Mr Mardemootoo:** Can the hon. Minister consider taking immediate action so that these pensioners can benefit the privilege of free transport?

**Mrs Bappoo:** This action has already been taken at the level of my Ministry and the Attorney General and I want the hon. Member to rest assured.

### **PERMAL SOOBRAYEN PRIMARY SCHOOL - WATERPROOFING WORKS**

(No. I B/185) **Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he has been made aware of the problems faced by the primary school students of the Permal Soobrayen Government in Souillac when it rains and, if so, will he say what remedial measures are envisaged.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Head Teacher of the school has informed the Directorate on 27 January 2005 that the roof of the building was leaking and that water had seeped through cracks in the walls during rainy weather.

A survey was carried out by the Technical Officer on 07 February 2005 following which it was decided to repair the cracks and leakages in the walls in the first instance. The contract for the works was awarded on 22 April 2005 and the works were completed on 19 June 2005.

The waterproofing works on the two classroom blocks will be carried out during the November/December vacation when pupils will be away for a sufficient long period.

### **ST JEAN ROAD, QUATRE BORNES –**

#### **"THE GATEWAY" BUILDING**

(No. I B/186) **Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the building "The Gateway" under construction at St Jean Road, Quatre Bornes, he will state whether all regulatory permits were



appropriately cleared by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes before the greenlight was given for the project.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is another flagrant example of mismanagement.

An application for a development permit was received on 15 July 2003 at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes from Sir Kailash Ramdane for the construction of a multi-storey commercial and residential building at St Jean Road and corner Surath Avenue which is presently known as "the Gateway".

I am advised that the development permit was approved on 28 October 2003 subject to various conditions including the obtention of an Environment Impact Assessment and a Traffic Impact Assessment which were received on 05 December 2003 and 09 March 2004, respectively.

I am further informed that an application for a building permit was received on 10 December 2003 and same was issued on 28 May 2004 after obtaining the relevant clearances, but the Municipal Council has failed in its duty to assess and supervise the construction works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the minimum required setback from the edge of the pavement to any building along these roads which is 4.5 metres according to established guidelines by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes has not been complied with in this particular case. The relevant drawing plans, which have been approved by the Municipal Council, do not meet these requirements. A site inspection carried out yesterday by the Council has confirmed that the setback along both St. Jean and Surath Avenues has not been fully observed in as much as -

- (i) along Surath avenue six columns stand at 2 metres from the edge of the road whereas the body of the building at ground floor stands at 4.5 metres. The body of the building above ground floor stands at only 2 metres from the edge of the road.
- (ii) Along St. Jean Road the body of the building stands at a minimum of 4.5 metres whereas two columns stand at 3.5 metres and 1.3 metres respectively from the edge of the pavement.

It has also been noted that part of the open porch along Surath Avenue is being enclosed with concrete blocks. I am informed that, upon query, a notice is being served upon the promoter by the Council to have them removed forthwith failing which legal action will be taken against him.

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a serious case of gross negligence and wrong planning. I therefore propose to take up the matter with my colleague, the Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, with a view to initiating appropriate action against the officers and Municipal Councillors.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Municipality of Quatre Bornes is aware of this and has it taken any action whatsoever in this matter?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it appears that it is only following the PQ asked by the hon. Member that the Municipal Council suddenly became aware of it. In a letter dated 30 August - that is today - the Town Clerk has informed us that a notice is being served upon the developer to have the concrete block walls removed forthwith failing which legal actions will be taken against him.

I am laying on the Table of the Assembly copy of the letter which has been issued today.

### **BIRTH - TARDY DECLARATION AS AT 03 JULY 2005**

**(No. I B/187) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether she will state the number of tardy declaration of birth pending at her Ministry as at 03 July 2005.

**The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there were 258 cases of tardy declaration of birth still pending at the Ministry as at 03 July 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on taking cognizance of the significant number of cases, my colleague, the substantive Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection, has already started

consultation for immediate actions to be taken in order to remedy this alarming situation. Consultations have already started with the Attorney-General and a High Level Committee comprising the Attorney-General himself, my colleague, the substantive Minister, the representatives of the Police Department, the Civil Status Office, the Attorney-General's Office, the Law Society, the Master and Registrar and officials of the Ministry of Women's Rights was set up last week with a view to accelerating procedures for the registration of those outstanding cases. So far, this committee has met on three occasions, *i.e.*, on 23 and 25 August and this morning itself.

I wish to inform the House that as a step forward, some 45 cases pending at court level are being attended urgently. The remaining cases are being put on a fast track and in that connection the support of the Bar Council and the Law Society has also been enlisted.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection is embarking on an outreach campaign across the island with a view to identifying cases of tardy declaration and encouraging their registration. The first programme is being launched in two weeks' time at Karo Kalyptis. The support of the media has also been enlisted to motivate parents to register the tardy declarations of birth of their children.

### **AVENUE TALIPOTS/AVENUE ROSIERS, QUATRE BORNES – ACCIDENTS**

**(No. I B/188) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the number of recurring accidents at the corner of Avenue Talipots and Avenue Rosiers at Quatre Bornes and, if so, will he state what measures he proposes to take to remedy the situation.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, records indicate that there were 12 accidents at the corner of Avenue Talipots and Avenue Rosiers, Quatre Bornes in year 2000 and 3 in year 2004.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry will carry out relevant surveys to evaluate the situation and come up with proposals for implementation of different traffic calming and road safety measures.

### **FLIC-EN-FLAC, WOLMAR/TAMARIN – ROAD EXTENSION**

**(No. I B/189) Dr. K. Babajee (Third Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed extension of the road from Flic-en-Flac, Wolmar to Tamarin, he will state the obstacles, if any, for the execution of the project and whether measures are being taken to surmount these obstacles in order to facilitate movement between Flic-en-Flac, Wolmar and the west coast.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the coastline between Wolmar and Tamarin is approximately 4 kms long and the construction of a new road on that stretch is estimated at around Rs160 m.

The project is not in our current programme of road works as we are laying emphasis on projects that address the problem of traffic congestion.

However, if new hotel sites or any major developments are proposed in the region, the extension of the road will be considered.

### **MAURITIUS SHOPPING PARADISE LTD. – CHIEF EXECUTIVE – OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

**(No. I B/190) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shopping Paradise Ltd., a list of trips effected abroad by its Chief Executive during the period October 2000 to July 2005, indicating in each case the composition of the delegation, the countries visited, the cost of air tickets and *per diem* allowances paid out to each member of the delegation and state whether a report has been submitted for each trip.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker Sir, the Executive Chairman of the Mauritius Shopping Paradise Ltd. (MSP) effected 5 overseas mission from October 2000 to July 2005. A total of Rs404,207 was disbursed by the company to cover the cost of tickets and *per diem*.

Most of his overseas missions related to the recovery from VAX System of Data pertaining to the value of stock as at 31 March 1999, transferred to Word Duty Free (Mauritius) Ltd. The main issue was that the value of stock transferred to Word Duty Free (Mauritius) Ltd. was much more than Rs172 m. as assessed by the then auditors.

The hard discs of the MSP VAX System were sent to Malaysia for analysis by HP Compaq Malaysia.

The first mission was effected to Kuala Lumpur from 26 June to 04 July.

The purpose of the visit was to convey the hard discs for analysis by Compaq Malaysia. He was assisted by Mr Jacky Loo, who lives in Australia, and who is quite conversant with the VAX System used by MSP. The cost of the mission was as follows -

	Rs
Air Ticket for Dr. Fokeer	32,000
<i>Per Diem</i> Allowance	110,000
Air Ticket of Mr Loo	25,210
Fees for Services Provided	15,195

No official report was submitted by Dr. Fokeer following his mission. He only informed the Board of MSP at its meeting held on 02 August 2001, that the data had been recovered from the VAX System and was being examined by Price Waterhouse Coopers.

A second trip was effected by the Executive Chairman to Malaysia from 26 to 30 March 2002 to recover the hard discs left in the custody of HP Compaq Malaysia in July 2001.

The cost incurred was as follows -

	Rs
Air Ticket	26,295
<i>Per Diem</i> Allowance	47,771

Again, no report was submitted by the Executive Chairman. He only informed the Board of Directors, at its meeting held on 15 May 2002, that the hard discs had been brought back and that the IT Consultant had managed to recover all data in respect of MSP stock as at March 1999.

The third mission of the Executive Chairman was from 22 to 23 July 2002 while he was on vacation in London. He proceeded to Paris to meet representatives of Channel. The cost involved was as follows -

Air Ticket (London/Paris/London)	Rs19,237
<i>Per Diem</i> Allowance	Rs13,213

No report was submitted.

A further visit to Malaysia was made by the Executive Chairman from 20 September to 25 September 2002. The cost of air tickets amounted to Rs7,851 and *per diem* to Rs 51,000. However, no indication of the purpose of the visit was given and no report was submitted.

The fifth mission of the Executive Chairman was - the last one - on 05 August again to Malaysia. Apparently, the purpose of the visit was to collect the VAX/VMS hard disks from HP Compaq Malaysia for submission to the Police as exhibit. The cost of air ticket amounted to Rs39,000 and *per diem* to Rs16,964.

Again, no report was submitted. I am given to understand that at the Board Meeting held on 08 December 2003, the Executive Chairman reported that the VAX hard discs had been submitted to the Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would let hon. Members draw their own conclusion. For my own part, I fail to understand the purpose of the fourth and fifth mission of the Executive Chairman to Malaysia, especially after a second mission has stated that the hard discs had been brought back.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether it is not thoroughly improper that no mission report was submitted?

**Mr Sithanen:** I think it is incumbent upon the Executive Chairman to submit the report once he is being paid by the company to visit Malaysia or Paris with a view to ascertaining what he was supposed to do was done.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may we know what sanctions or measures are envisaged against the said Executive Chairman?

**Mr Sithanen:** I think the Executive Chairman has already left the company.

### **MAURITIUS SHOPPING PARADISE LTD. – EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN – SALARY, BENEFITS, ETC.**

**(No. I B/191) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shopping Paradise Ltd, the following information in regard to its present Executive Chairman –

- (a) monthly salary;
- (b) fringe benefits attached to the post, and
- (c) whether he has purchased the official car placed at his disposal and, if so, the price thereof.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows. The Executive Chairman of Mauritius Shopping Paradise Ltd. (MSP) was employed on a 3-year contract in December 2000 and his monthly salary, excluding the fringe benefits, was Rs45,000.

I am informed that the fringe benefits attached to the post of Executive Chairman were as follows -

- (i) Monthly entertainment allowance: Rs5,000;

- (ii) Gratuity of 25% of annual salary on completion of every 12 months;
- (iii) Chauffeur-driven car;
- (iv) 2 air tickets (MRU-London-MRU) during the subsistence of the contract or its equivalent in cash, and
- (v) Refund of cellular phone bills

The Executive Chairman was provided security services at his residence on a 24-hour basis for an annual amount of Rs33,000 monthly as from September 2001. Furthermore, being a staff of MSP, he also benefited from 50% rebate on air tickets from Air Mauritius.

Insofar as part (c), the Executive Chairman expressed the wish to acquire the company car Audi A4 1.9 Turbo diesel, which was at his disposal, but he declined the offer as the sale price of Rs400,000, excluding VAT, was considered by him to be on the high side. MSP took possession of the car.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may we know from the Deputy Prime Minister why security services were provided at the residence of the Executive Chairman?

**Mr Sithanen:** I need notice of this question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **CUSTOMS & EXCISE OFFICERS – BURSARIES**

**(No. I B/192) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will give the names and qualifications of Customs & Excise Officers who have been awarded bursaries from the year 2000 to 2005 and state whether he has received complaints in that respect.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows. For the period year 2000 to date, four officers of the Customs Department have been granted bursaries to follow training courses abroad.



Another Customs & Excise Officer is expected to leave for training during the course of the month of September. I am circulating a list detailing their names, qualifications as well as the courses to which they were nominated. There have been no complaints in respect of these bursaries. (*Appendix I*)

However, complaints averring discriminate treatment have been received from three Principal Customs & Excise Officers. Two of the complaints relate to a course in Customs Administration offered by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) of the Government of Japan. The third one is in respect of a "*Stage de Formation des Cadres Supérieurs*" in France

In regard to the first two complaints, I am informed that the Comptroller of Customs has already made a reply to the respective officers concerned, while for the third a reply has yet to be made.

Regarding the Customs Administration Course in Japan, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry received on Friday 01 July 2005, a fax copy of a letter from JICA Office, Madagascar requesting nomination for the course scheduled from 23 August to 01 October 2005. The date limit for submission of the name of the nominated candidate to JICA was 10 July.

The Comptroller of Customs was advised on 06 July to submit to my Ministry duly completed survey and application forms of the proposed candidate by 08 July.

In order to select a candidate for the course, I am informed by the Comptroller of Customs that a Departmental Circular Letter was issued on 06 July inviting applications from Chief Customs and Excise Officers with the next day being the closing day. Interviews were scheduled for Friday 08 July, but were postponed for Monday 11 July, as the Chairman of the interview panel and one of the applicants had to attend Court.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that subsequent to the Customs Departmental Circular Letter inviting applications for the course from Chief Customs and Excise Officers, questions were raised at the Department as to whether to accept applications also from Principal and acting Chief Customs and Excise Officers. The Comptroller of Customs, after consulting the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

and given that agreement had been reached for filling of promotional vacant posts in the Customs Department, had instructed that Principal and acting Chief Customs and Excise Officers who had submitted their applications be considered for the interview.

Following the interviews held on 11 July, the Comptroller of Customs submitted the details of the proposed candidate on 13 July, three days after the date limit of 10 July set by JICA for submission. I understand from the letter issued by the Comptroller of Customs to one of the complainants that the latter did not attend the interview. With respect to the second complainant who was interviewed, his candidature was not retained.

The offer from JICA has unfortunately not materialised.

Regarding the complaint in respect of the training course in France, the Customs Department issued a Circular Letter on 21 February 2005, inviting applications from eligible Customs Officers for two courses, one for "*Inspecteurs de Surveillance*" scheduled from 27 June to 13 July 2005 and the second one for a "*Stage de Formation des Cadres Supérieurs*" scheduled from 02 to 25 November 2005. The closing date for submission of applications by officers was 04 March 2005.

I am informed that, following representations from Customs Officers of the various sections that they had not taken cognizance of the Circular Letter dated 21 February, a second one was issued on 05 May 2005. The second circular invited this time applications for "*Stage de Formation des Cadres Supérieurs*" only, while informing at the same time that nomination for the course "*Inspecteurs de Surveillance*" had expired on 03 May 2005.

Concerning the "*Stage de Formation des Cadres Supérieurs*", scheduled for November 2005, 18 applications were received in response to the first circular and the same number applied following the issue of the second one. Out of the total of 36 applications received, 23 applicants were called for an interview; however only 14 officers turned up.

I am informed that the candidature of the complainant has not been retained as he is under report and the second on the list has been selected. It is now for the French School of Customs to carry out a selection exercise for the allocation of the scholarship.

## **GOODLANDS - AREA HEALTH CENTRE - SPACE PROBLEM**

**(No. I B/193) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre D'Or)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether in regard to the health centre in the village of Goodlands, he has been made aware that due to lack of space -

- (a) male and female patients are examined in the same room, and
- (b) there is only one toilet without a proper lock for both males and females and, if so, will he state what remedial measures are envisaged.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am told that since years, representations have been made regarding space problem at Goodlands Area Health Centre. As a matter of fact, I have on 17 August, this year approved that extension works be carried out over there to address this issue. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has already been given the green light to proceed with the project.

As regards part (a), there are two doctors attending to patients in the consultation room. However, whenever a patient needs to be examined, the consulting doctor makes use of a treatment room or the Breast Feeding Clinic whichever is available.

I am told that only one patient at a time is examined by one doctor in that separate room. Ideally, there should have been one consulting room to attend to one patient at anyone time. Unfortunately, this is not possible at the moment in view of space problems.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there is only one toilet for male and female patients which is now fitted with a proper lock.

## **COMMODITIES - PRICE**

**(No. I B/195) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether in view of the

high cost of living which has occurred in the last 4 to 5 years, he will state the magnitude of mark-up on the following items -

- (i) rice;
- (ii) pulses;
- (iii) canned meat, and
- (iv) pasta

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry, being very sensitive to people's aspirations and their daily life difficulties, is already following price trends of essential commodities. Far from the idea of reintroducing overall price control, we have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that essential consumer products are available at affordable prices.

With regard to the issue of mark-up on rice, the House will note that for ration rice, Government is subsidising to the tune of Rs100 m. per year. I am also advised that the mark-up on State Trading Corporation (STC) (the sole importer) transfer price is 13.2%. The price of ration rice has remained constant at Rs2.50 from May 1998 to October 2004 and has been increased by the previous Government in October last from Rs2.50 to Rs3.25.

Concerning luxury rice (Basmati, Long grain, etc.), pulses, canned meat and pasta, as well as other essential commodities, my Ministry is presently monitoring price trends and preliminary findings indicate that the mark-up applied by the importers on these uncontrolled items are as follow -

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mark-up range</b>
(i) luxury rice	39% - 60%
(ii) pulses	29% - 63%
(iii) canned meat	33%
(iv) pasta	from 38% to 60%

Mr Speaker, Sir, as these items are not controlled, mark-up figures for past years are not readily available for comparison purposes.

The MAB is presently looking into price trends of essential commodities and, as I have said many times before, I will not hesitate to intervene should the findings show profiteering tendencies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, referring to previous questions raised by hon. Members, I am informed that seven contraventions have been taken for the period 22 August to 29 August 2005.

### **IBL AVIATION LTD - MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES FLIGHTS**

**(No. I B/136) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** 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 a new licence has been granted to an aviation company to operate between Mauritius and Rodrigues and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the name of the company;
- (b) the date on which the application was made;
- (c) the terms and conditions of the licence;
- (d) whether that company has applied for an extension of its licence to other destinations, and
- (e) what type of aircraft has been approved.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr. X. L. Duval):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question.

Sir, in terms of section 4(3) of the Civil Aviation Act, I have on 09 August 2005, granted a licence to a new company to operate between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

- (a) The name of the company is IBL Aviation Ltd.;
- (b) The application was made on 21 April 2003, nearly two and a half years ago;
- (c) The licence was issued upon the condition that the company obtains an Air Operator's Certificate issued by the Director of Civil Aviation. I am tabling a copy of the licence as well as the Air Operator's Certificate, which was issued on 15 August 2005;

- (d) IBL Aviation Ltd, on 15 August 2005, applied to operate between Mauritius and Reunion and between Rodrigues and Reunion. This application is presently being studied;
- (e) The approved aircraft is an 18-seater turbo prop, BEECH1900 D type.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that following consultations with my Ministry, IBL Aviation Ltd has agreed to provide a 10 per cent reduction on the prevailing air fares on the Mauritius/Rodrigues route. Furthermore, infants who are less than two years old will travel free of charge. The 10 per cent reduction is exclusive of fuel surcharge and passenger service charge.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that it is not the policy of this Government to allow scheduled flights between Mauritius and Agalega.