

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – PROCEEDINGS – LIVE BROADCAST

(No. 1B/1) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether in regard to the live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House on radio and television, he will state if he intends to present a motion to the House for the setting up of a Select Committee of the House to look into the matter and make such recommendations thereon as it deems fit.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated on several occasions in this House, I am not against the idea of live broadcast of the proceedings of the National Assembly. In fact, on 20 November 2009, I gave notice of a motion regarding the setting up of a Select Committee of the Assembly to make such recommendations as the Committee may deem fit for the live broadcast of the proceedings of the House and matters ancillary to that.

In fact, on 20 November 2009, I gave notice of a motion regarding the setting up of a Select Committee of the Assembly to make such recommendations as the Committee may deem fit for the live broadcast of the proceedings of the House and matters ancillary to that. The motion was circulated on 21 November of last year and was set on the Order Paper of Tuesday 15 December 2009. However, as the hon. Members know, the motion could not be taken on that day due to the sudden demise of late Dr the Honourable James Burty David.

Mr Speaker Sir, being given that Parliament was subsequently dissolved, I propose to present the motion anew during the current session of the Assembly after some further consultations on the matter.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that this question had been discussed for many, many years, especially in the past month, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can give us a definite timetable, because he is asking for consultation again? We are at the beginning of a new mandate so we cannot wait for the end and we all know the performance of the MBC-TV and the guy who is here actually.

(Interruptions)

We will watch this afternoon, Sir! Can I ask the Prime Minister to give us a clear timetable when, in the coming weeks, this motion will come again on the Table of the National Assembly?

The Prime Minister: First of all, I am glad that the hon. Member loves what the MBC is doing. He said he likes the guy, but I said I am all for it. I have said many times I am all for it and, as I have said, I propose to present the motion in the current session of the Assembly, but after further consultation, because as the hon. Member knows I am now in alliance with the MSM and I have to consult them as well.

Mr Bhagwan: We all know that this session can take one year or many months. Can I appeal again to the Prime Minister, at least, in the coming weeks this motion is on the table?

The Prime Minister: I have noted with interest the hon. Member's appeal.

MBC – MR D. R. - RECRUITMENT

(No. 1B/2) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mr D. R, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the date of his recruitment at the Corporation, indicating -
 - (i) in which capacity
 - (ii) his conditions of employment
- (b) the different posts occupied by him since then and as at to-date and the respective salaries drawn,
- (c) the amount of overtime allowances paid to him since July 2009 to-date on a monthly basis, and
- (d) if a vehicle of the Corporation is put at his disposal.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling a statement giving the information requested by the hon. Member in parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, as provided by the Director-General of the MBC.

As regards to the last part of the question, I am informed by the Director-General that Mr D. R. is not entitled to a company car.

Mr Bhagwan: This question has been discussed in the past if we go to the records. Can I ask the Prime Minister, being given the situation at the MBC-TV, and it is known, not only in the general public, among the workers of the MBC-TV, the trade union responsible at

the MBC-TV, that this employee is a protégé because he is a close relative of the Director-General. I am coming to my question...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member can put his question, but he should not impute motives because of relationship.

Mr Bhagwan: Listen! Listen! Do you want me to go into the question of Mr Jhugroo? This is the question of Mr Jhugroo.

Mr Speaker: No, no! The hon. Member has the right to put questions, but he should not impute motives.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the information we have, is the Prime Minister ready to ask the Director of Audit to make a report supervised by the Prime Minister's office on that particular aspect of this employee of the MBC TV?

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Speaker Sir, all this has been done. There has been an inquiry; questions were put by the former Member of the Opposition, Mr Gunness. We have done inquiries; we have looked into some of the things that have been said and lots of them are not actually true; for example, whether he was taking his car in the weekend and that turned out not to be true. As I have said, he is not the only one who starts with a low salary. I have got a list here of so many people who have had the same; the same procedure has been applied. What is important is that we give all the details that the hon. Member wants.

Mr Bhagwan: I am not concerned with the question of salaries and promotions, everybody has a right, but especially on this particular case, I won't say relatives, but very close relationship with the Director-General. I am asking again the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that this employee comes during the weekend on Saturday, clocks his card, goes home, works outside and comes at night again to clock his card and earn over time. Is the Prime Minister agreeable to let us have the amount of overtime paid to that employee during the past 12 months?

The Prime Minister: In fact, as I said, the hon. former Member of Parliament, Mr Gunness, did ask the question. I did say I would look into it and find out whether that is true because I didn't know at the time whether it was true or not. We have looked into it, it turns out not to be true; that he does not do this. In what I am tabling in the House, the hon. Member will also have the overtime that he has got from, I think, July 2009.

MBC – MR J. G. - SUSPENSION

(No. 1B/3) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mr J. G, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to whether –

- (a) he was suspended from duty during the month of April 2010 and, if so, the reasons therefor, indicating if any action has been taken against him, and
- (b) he has been re-instated and, if so, on what terms and conditions.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that Mr J. G., Chief News Editor, was interdicted from the exercise of his duty with effect from 28 April 2010, on the grounds that he had taken part in a public meeting organised by a political party on Tuesday 27 of April 2010.

In accordance with the Corporation's established procedures, he was required to appear before a Departmental Enquiry Committee on 11 May 2010.

He was subsequently administered a written warning.

With regard to the second part of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that he was reinstated in his post of Chief News Officer on 12 of May 2010, on the same terms and conditions of employment prevailing prior to his interdiction.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who presided over that disciplinary committee?

The Prime Minister: The regulations provide that the Director-General may, without reference to the Board, administer a warning to any employee on the ground of unsatisfactory conduct. I think this is how it was done.

Mr Bhagwan: I have asked who presided over the disciplinary committee. This is my question.

The Prime Minister: I can find out who was presiding, but I know, according to the regulations, the Director-General can issue a warning if he is satisfied that there was a breach although he has given his reasons why this breach has taken place. I can give the hon. Member the name of who presided.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, may I know whether that disciplinary committee did meet, whether they made a recommendation?

The Prime Minister: I am informed that he was, in fact, interdicted. He had come in front of the 'whoever was heading the committee' and he was given a written warning.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that this employee participated in a meeting of the Labour Party or *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* and, in that particular case, he had been given a warning, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister why in other cases, within other parastatal bodies, small employees, labourers, had been dismissed? This is a clear case *d'une politique de deux poids deux mesures*. If there is one policy in one particular case on such a type, I would say, of undisciplined action, can the hon. Prime Minister give the assurance that there is no *une politique de deux poids deux mesures* concerning people within one allegiance of one political party?

The Prime Minister: I agree on the face it looks like this, but what happens, but generally as in a court case, it depends on a case to case basis. In this case, the person admitted that he happened to be there and he did do on the grounds that he said that he was in the region, he did go and he made apologies. There are other cases where people completely denied that they were never there; they were never involved and all this. So, they have done a case to case, but, anyway, I will partake this information with the Director-General.

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking the hon. Prime Minister about other parastatal bodies. This gentleman in question *a pris la parole dans un* meeting. But in some other cases where people had been there, even participated in a public meeting, they had been *licenciés* and they are poor labourers.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that he actually took *la parole*. I am not aware that he actually took part in the meeting itself.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister he was suspended on what ground? Was there a charge against him and he had to appear before a hearing?

The Prime Minister: There was a Departmental Enquiry Committee. He was asked to explain why he was there; why did he take part in a public meeting organised by a political party. He explained that he made a mistake, that he was in the region and he did apologise straightaway.

Mr Baloomoody: Would the hon. Prime Minister confirm or look into the case where a messenger at the DBM was not given a chance even to explain what he was doing?

Mr Speaker: No. If the hon. Member...

(Interruptions)

Order! If the hon. Member wants, on the light of the reply which the hon. Minister had given, to come with this particular case, he can do so. Next question, hon. Meea!

LA SENTINELLE – JOURNALISTS – PRESS CONFERENCE

(No. 1B/4) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if, in accordance with past practice, journalists of La Sentinelle Ltd are still being invited by his Ministry to attend official press conferences and, if not, will he -

- (a) state when this practice has been discontinued, and
- (b) give reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been no change in the past practice whereby all journalists of the print, electronic and broadcast media, are invited to cover official press conferences and other official functions. This practice will continue.

I wish to remind the House that the Government Programme 2010-2015 highlights our commitment to support the fundamental rights and freedom of all citizens, including the freedom of expression.

(Interruptions)

No, she did not. It was actually false. She did not.

(Interruptions)

No. I also listened to it. It was in a different context. But, as I have stated on many occasions...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member keep quiet, please?

The Prime Minister: But as I have stated on many occasions, rights and responsibilities have to go hand in hand. You can't have rights and no responsibilities. I

believe that a plural, fair, independent and responsible media is an essential component of a democratic system.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether - he is telling us that no Minister of the Republic of Mauritius - his official functions as Minister will be allowed to exclude any part of the press?

The Prime Minister: That is basically what I am saying. This has been the practice in the past that everybody whether it is a print, electronic or broadcast media are invited to cover official press conferences.

GENERAL ELECTION - IMPERSONATION

(No. 1B/5) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the last general election, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number of cases of impersonation, if any, detected constituency-wise, indicating the actions that have been taken, and
- (b) state the additional measures that will be taken to avert the recurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PLAINE VERTE & ROCHE BOIS – SUBUTEX - ARREST

(No. 1B/6) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to subutex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith during the past twelve months, in the regions of Plaine Verte and Roche Bois.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the past 12 months 26 suspects have been arrested in the region of Plaine Verte and 103 in the region of Roche Bois in cases related to Subutex.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has the figures concerning the total value of Subutex seized in those regions?

The Prime Minister: What I can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that some of the cases are pending in front of the court and, therefore, they will have to ascertain whether the value that we are saying is actually the case. I can say, for example, in fact, eight prosecutions have already taken place; five have been sentenced as far as Plaine Verte case is concerned. As for Roche Bois, 25 cases have been prosecuted and 20 have been sentenced already.

POLICE FORCE – PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. 1B/7) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether the promotion exercise of the Police Officers in the grade of Sergeant to that of Inspector has now been completed and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the completion of the promotion exercise in the Police Force was deferred in view of the impending general elections.

The procedure for the completion of this exercise, which had already been started, as I mentioned in the House, has now been set in motion again and is expected to be completed shortly.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that, in fact, these examinations were conducted some two years ago well before the general elections. But can he inform the House whether any of these candidates has retired by now?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that it was two years ago. I am aware that it was last February. I am just saying offhand. The hon. Member is trying to score a point saying two years. I am not aware, but in any case, all the procedures have already started.

Mr Bérenger: We are talking about promotion exercise for Sergeants to become Inspectors. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - because the frustration is intense in the Police Force - what about Constables to become Sergeants?

The Prime Minister: I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the Commissioner of Police that they do one by one. They will do one batch at one time for one promotion and then they will do the other.

FLOREAL – POLICE STATION

(No. 1B/8) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a new police station in the region of Floréal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the priorities for infrastructure development for the Police Department have been reviewed in line with the new policing requirements and strategies. Priority is being given to the construction of new Police stations in regions where currently there are no Police stations as well as to the renovation/reconstruction of existing Police stations which are in a bad state.

In regard to the region of Floréal, I am informed that the existing Police station, supported by the ERS, the Divisional CID and the Divisional Support Unit, is adequately covering the policing requirements in that area. In fact, the crime rate in that region has decreased considerably due to the new policing strategies that have been put in place.

The project for the construction of a new Police station at Floréal will, therefore, be considered in the light of the new priorities determined by the Police and also subject to funds being available.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/689 last year, the hon. Prime Minister stated that this project was well underway, and even a plot of land was already identified for the construction of this Police station because it was realised that there is a need to bring the Police station nearer to the most inhabited part of this area. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there has been such a shift from what has been decided for years?

The Prime Minister: There has been no shift. In fact, in October 2005, a plot of land located at Cité Magalkhan was vested in my office for the construction of a new Police Station. But I am not saying that this is completely out. But I am saying that there are new priorities. We want to give priority to where there are no Police Stations at all. But this also is being considered. It is not being scrapped.

DETAINEES – CUSTODY - ESCAPE

(No. 1B/9) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

whether, in regard to detainees, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof who, since January 2009 to-date, have escaped from custody.

The Prime Minister: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, Mr Speaker, Sir, that from January 2009 to 10 June 2010, ten detainees managed to escape from custody. They have all been recaptured.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, has there been an inquiry to find out the reason in which circumstances they managed to run away?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course, inquiries are still ongoing.

DETAINEES – ESCAPE – JANUARY 2009 – JUNE 2010

(No. 1B/10) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to detainees, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number thereof who, since January 2009 to date, have escaped from custody.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE CLINICS – ROAD ACCIDENTS – ALCOHOL & DRUG CONSUMPTION

(No. 1B/11) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the procedures followed to ensure that persons involved in road accidents are medically examined and screened for alcohol and drug consumption on admission to private clinics, indicating -

- (a) if these institutions are being informed of such procedures, and
- (b) the consequences for the non-compliance thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Solicitor-General's Office that there are currently no specific statutory procedures under the Road Traffic Act to deal with persons involved in road accidents to be medically examined and screened for alcohol and drug consumption when they are admitted to private clinics.

However, whenever a driver is admitted as a patient in a private clinic, the Police may

require any specimen for analysis in a case of alleged drunken driving. The consent of the treating doctor as well as the patient is required before taking such a specimen.

I am also informed that until September 2003, the Road Traffic Act provided that a person who has been admitted as a patient to a hospital or to a private medical institution shall provide a specimen of blood or urine with the consent of a medical practitioner who has attended to his case.

However, with the amendments to the Road Traffic Act in September 2003, only a person admitted as a patient at a public hospital is required to provide a specimen of blood or urine with the consent of the medical practitioner who is in charge of the case. The legislation also provides that the specimen should be taken at a hospital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, I must point out that clearly the provisions of the law relating to the consequences for non compliance are not satisfactory. A case in point is the fatal road accident which occurred on 30 May of this year at Royal Road, Beau Songes. I have already called for an in-depth enquiry into this particular case. Appropriate remedial measures will be taken in the light of the findings of the enquiry, including whether there has been an attempt to subvert the course of justice; and the law will consequently be amended after the enquiry is completed.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that private clinics are becoming havens of concealment for the mighty who can afford the clinics, not only for those people involved in road traffic accidents, in sea accidents, but also in other misdemeanors. I would be most grateful if I could be informed whether a protocol could be evolved so as to authorise Police officers to have access to private clinics and whether it would be possible for magistrates to be available on call – there are supposed to be magistrates on call – so as to give the necessary authority to those Police officers to have access to private premises of a clinic?

The Prime Minister: I think there are magistrates as the hon. Member rightly said who are supposed to be on call. I don't know whether there has been a case or not, but I think these are good suggestions. That is why I said the law has to be amended. I don't know why, Mr Speaker, Sir, when there was the amendment of the Road Traffic Act in September 2003 whether that was just missed because before it could happen and then in 2002 when the law was amended it was only for public hospitals. That has to be re-corrected.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that the Police, with the authorisation of the patient, the person concerned and of his doctor can take blood or whatever. Did the Police try that?

The Prime Minister: No, the Police did not try it for the simple reason that they did not know the patient had been taken to a clinic. I did not look into that.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, the person concerned went to hospital first and stayed for quite a while there before leaving for the clinic? Why is it that there also, no action was taken?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the doctor noted on the sheet that the person was smelling alcohol. He examined him first, and he was about to go and take the sample when some people came and removed the patient from the premises of the hospital. That is why I said that there is an enquiry which is ongoing, to see whether there has been an attempt to subvert the course of justice in that case.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that one never knows to which clinic the subject is being taken to, could there be some form of regulation compelling directors of clinics to report immediately suspicious cases of admission in their premises, to avoid the police running all over the county?

The Prime Minister: That is a good suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir.

GENERAL ELECTIONS & RRA ELECTION – ELECTORS – VOTING

(No. 1B/12) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to general election and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly election, he will state if he proposes to amend the relevant legislation to enable electors registered for the Constituency of Rodrigues and who are in mainland Mauritius during polling day to cast their vote at the respective elections and, if so, when, and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue raised by the hon. Member was in fact the subject matter of a recent case entered before the Supreme Court, namely the case of Joseph Clency Lisette & Ors v/s the Electoral Commissioner. The applicants in this case are registered electors for the Constituency of Rodrigues and are residing in Mauritius. They had moved the Supreme Court to order the Electoral Commissioner to take necessary measures to allow them to vote in Mauritius itself for the general elections held on 05 May 2010.

After considering the issues raised under the relevant legislation, the Supreme Court ruled that any ordinary citizen has to make his own arrangements to proceed to vote at the polling station allocated to him, and that the Electoral Commissioner has no obligation to make arrangements for a registered voter to vote when the latter is physically unable to do so. The Supreme Court further ruled that it was open to the applicants to be able to exercise their constitutional rights to vote, to register themselves for voting in the constituency where they have moved to and are actually residing. The Supreme Court has finally observed that, and I wish to quote -

“It is the duty and responsibility of each citizen to take positive steps to exercise his constitutional right to vote. Failure to do so cannot entail the imposition of an unreasonable obligation on the respondent to take necessary measures to allow him to vote. Otherwise, this would lead to a situation of havoc and chaos, whereby the respondent would be flooded with requests of the present nature whenever an elector is physically unable to be present at the allotted polling station to vote.”

In the light of the above judgment, it is not proposed to bring any amendment to the legislation.

**RODRIGUES - PORT MATHURIN BASILE ALLAS GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL - INCIDENT**

(No. 1B/13) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the incident which occurred at the Port Mathurin Basile Allas Government School Polling Station on 06 May 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) how and at what time the public gained access to the yard;
- (b) if any politician was involved;
- (c) whether appropriate actions were taken in regard to security measures thereat, and
- (d) if any enquiry has been carried thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no incident was reported to the police on 06 May 2010 at Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School, which was used as a counting centre.

The Electoral Commissioner has also indicated that the Returning Officer for the constituency did not report any incident at that school on that day.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that, at about 1500 hours, when members of the public were allowed access to the yard of the counting centre through the gate for the proclamation of the result, there was a rush. However, the police managed to control the situation and was able to maintain law and order.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that no politician was involved in any incident on that day at the counting centre.

I am further advised by the Commissioner of Police that, since early morning on the counting day, 39 police officers were deployed at the counting centre. These officers were fully briefed about their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, a team of 30 officers was on standby at Port Mathurin Divisional Headquarters, ready to intervene in case of any incident.

In the absence of any reported incident, no police enquiry has been initiated.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Prime Minister whether ballot papers were still in the counting room when the mass of people got into the yard?

The Prime Minister: I will not be able to say whether that is the case; I will have to look into it. But, generally, as you know - even in Mauritius - because there is a pressure from the crowd which is building up outside, at some point they do open the gate.

Mr François: But the ballot papers were still in the counting room. May I, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, table some photos, as evidence that something went totally wrong at that particular time on the counting day?

Mr Speaker: Do you have any other question? Next question, hon. Ganoo!

SUBUTEX– SEIZURE & ARRESTS

(No. 1B/14) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the offence of possession of subutex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith since 2005 to date, indicating the quantity seized and the market value of subutex seized.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 2005 to 09 June 2010 as follows -

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. OF PERSONS ARRESTED</u>	<u>QUANTITY OF TABLETS SEIZED</u>
2005	308	9,019
2006	820	11,600
2007	830	79,619
2008	844	24,443
2009	881	2,139
2010	327	19,840

(as at 09 June 2010)

I should like also to point out that for the whole of the period previous to that, subutex was also seized and people were still being arrested.

I want to draw the attention of the House that the sharp increase in the number of people arrested and the quantity of subutex seized in the recent years, we think, is attributable to the effectiveness of the police authorities in detection, seizure and arrest of persons involved in drug trafficking.

I should also add that, since that time, there has been a very striking parallel decrease in the number of people arrested for heroin related offences.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member allow me to make an announcement? The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions 1B/31 and 1B/64 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, if time permits.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Prime Minister give us the market value of the whole amount of the subutex seized during these past years?

The Prime Minister: In 2005, it was 9,019,000; in 2006, it was 13,920,000; in 2007, it was 95,542,000; in 2008, it was 29,331,000; in 2009, it was 3,208,000 and, so far, in 2010, it is 29,760,000.

Mr Ganoo: Has the hon. Prime Minister taken into consideration the two recent cases, namely that of Bois Pignolet, where a suspect was arrested with thousands of subutex drugs and also that of a young French man who was arrested at the airport? These are the two very recent cases of arrest with subutex.

The Prime Minister: I am not sure what the hon. Member's question is.

Mr Ganoo: Has this been taken into consideration when the figures have been computed?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think so.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand concerning these people who have been arrested and convicted for the subutex affairs and have been able to escape, for example the French pilot, and other cases linked to subutex? Has there been a follow-up as far as enquiries are concerned?

The Prime Minister: Yes, there has been follow-up. I did answer a question at the last parliamentary session about our cooperation with the French authorities. There are legal problems in that and that is why, at some point, I said that maybe we should hang them.

EEZ – SOMALIAN PIRATES

(No. 1B/15) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the presence of Somalian pirates in the Indian Ocean region, he will state –

- (a) the measures initiated by Government to provide safety and security to vessels in our Exclusive Economic Zone;
- (b) whether the National Coast Guard is equipped to prevent any attack in our territorial waters, and
- (c) if Government has solicited any help from the French Government in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, piracy has become a serious concern for maritime security in the Indian Ocean. Mauritius condemns all acts of piracy in any forms and manifestations, and we are fully committed to combating piracy and armed robbery at sea. We strongly support the international community in the repression of piracy.

Government is working very closely with neighbouring countries, the European Union and international organisations to ward off this new security threat to the region. We have recently participated in a Regional Ministerial Conference on piracy held in the Seychelles, under the aegis of the European Union. The problem of piracy was also raised at the IOC Council of Ministers Meeting held in St Denis, Reunion on 08 June of this year, which was attended by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

I wish to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that during my participation in the 25th Africa-France Summit held in Nice, France recently, I spoke of the threat posed by piracy to Coastal and Small Island States of the Indian Ocean. I pointed out that piracy not only had a negative impact on fisheries and tourism, but also led to an increase in the cost insurance, and thereby causing a rise in the price of imported products. I solicited the assistance of France to support the African countries in their fight against piracy. I requested the French Government to-

- (a) provide African countries with better logistical and infrastructural facilities to counter the acts of piracy;
- (b) contribute to specialised training, specifically in the fight against piracy and in the promotion of peace and security, and
- (c) increase the financial support to African countries affected by piracy, in particular to the Small Island States of the Indian Ocean.

Furthermore, I proposed that the European Union could extend the span of the operation which is called the Atalanta Operation in the Indian Ocean to help small island states fight piracy.

I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that during a meeting I had with Baroness Cathy Ashton, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, we discussed the issue of piracy in the Indian Ocean. Baroness Ashton told me that the EU looked forward to the close collaboration of Mauritius in the fight against piracy in the region. I stated that Mauritius would extend its full

cooperation to the United States and the EU in this regard and would be prepared to play a more active role and we will be prepared to judge any person caught in the act of piracy in the Indian Ocean. However, I pointed out that Mauritius would require the assistance of the EU since our prisons are limited in terms of space. We also need additional prisons facilities in order to pursue this collaboration with the EU as well as training and we must ensure that we don't increase the queue for our court cases. Baroness Ashton assured me that the EU would assist in that regard.

Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, has already taken a host of measures to provide safety and security of vessels in our Exclusive Economic Zone which include the following-

- (i) surveillance of the northern region of our EEZ has been reinforced by the Dornier aircraft, also by the new Dhruv Helicopter which is also doing surveillance in our seas;
- (ii) the National Coast Guard personnel is based at St Brandon and an armed contingent of the Special Mobile Force has been posted in Agalega as a Quick Reaction Group. A proper mechanism for surveillance of the island and its coastal region has been put in place;
- (iii) a National Coast Guard Commando has been set up to counteract any sea-ward attack, including piracy and terrorism;
- (iv) the assistance of friendly countries, including India, the United States and France has been solicited in capacity building for a more comprehensive surveillance of our EEZ;
- (v) an Automated Identification System has been installed in the port to enable the detection of vessels above 300 tons navigating the International Shipping Lanes of Mauritian waters;
- (vi) the position of all Mauritian fishing vessels are tracked through the Vessel Monitoring System based at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre. The position of the fishing vessels are received every two hours. These vessels are also required to have a satellite phone and a radio on board for communication;
- (vii) I should also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that private security guards have been authorised on board to provide security to merchant ships and fishing vessels

proceeding through high risk areas. Necessary procedures have been put in place for the safekeeping of arms and ammunition when onboard as well as when the ships are berthed in Mauritius;

- (viii) Masters of vessels operating in the piracy infested areas have been advised to follow the guidance issued by the International Maritime Organisation and to strictly adhere to the anti-piracy instructions issued by the National Coast Guard, and
- (ix) finally, I should add that Mauritius has signed the Djibouti Code of Conduct which makes provision for the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I must acknowledge that Mauritius has limited means to combat piracy in our EEZ. The surveillance of our EEZ is carried out by an operational high-sea going vessel namely the CGS Guardian and three aircraft – two Dornier and one Defender and also now the new Dhruv Helicopter.

However, in the context of bilateral cooperation between Mauritius and India, Indian ships conduct regular patrolling exercises over our EEZ with a view to fighting piracy. Recently, the INS Trishul carried out joint surveillance exercise in the Mauritian waters. The joint exercise is supposed to be carried out every six months.

In order to enhance the surveillance capability of the NCG, we are in the process of installing a Coastal Radar Surveillance System which will be operational hopefully by August this year. We are also awaiting the delivery of a new and better equipped Offshore Patrol Vessel to enhance surveillance up to the extremities of our waters.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that during my visit to France in 2008, I signed an agreement with the French Government in the field of security between the two countries which includes safety and security at sea. As part of that agreement, the French Government is assisting the Police Department in the capacity building of the personnel of the NCG and the SMF in anti-piracy operations and hostage handling situations. A joint anti-piracy exercise with the French Forces was conducted in Réunion Island recently. Again CGS Guardian participated in that exercise. An advanced joint training exercise in anti-piracy is scheduled for October/November 2010 in Mauritius. Furthermore, the French authorities have been providing training to Police Officers in the

fields such as “Stage Commando” and Joint Exercise of “*Sauvetage en Mer*”, which are basic training requirements for commandos.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are very conscious that a lasting solution to the problem of piracy rests in the restoration of stability in Somalia. The international community should strive to set up effective institutions and structures in that country which can address the piracy issue in its totality. Thank you.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether our law as it stands would allow for pirates caught in international waters or in the Exclusive Economic Zones of the neighbouring countries to be tried before our courts?

The Prime Minister: Actually, we will need to amend the law, but this issue will come up once the European Union and the United States agree to help us as we have requested, then we will look at the law. We are looking at it already, but we will have to bring amendments to the law.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister says that we would request the European Union and United States to finance the setting up of a special prison so that they will not mix with ordinary criminals in jail. Does the same hold for our courts? Would those pirates, in his view, be tried before the ordinary courts or would there be special courts?

The Prime Minister: I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not quite decided on that. The European Union feels that they can be tried in the ordinary courts. We are not so sure. We are going to look at what amendments they have to bring, whether it will have to be a special jurisdiction or not.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the stand taken by the Seychelles? They have agreed to put to trial pirates caught in their waters, but they have told the European Union that they are too a small country, for them, to remain permanently in the Seychelles. The European Union would therefore have to make arrangements in Somalia or elsewhere. Has he discussed that with our Seychelles Dillons?

The Prime Minister: I have not discussed that with the Seychelles authorities, but I am aware of it. In fact, there are suggestions that have been made by Seychelles from what I understand including, for example, the point that was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition whether they should be separate. We are saying that they should be separate. In the Seychelles, it appears that they have agreed that they will be put together with other

prisoners. We are not agreeable to that, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, what will happen in Seychelles we are not so sure, but we are going to take our own precautions.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to the hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that PQ No. 1B/60 in regard with the transfer of the lease between Tianli and Jin-Fei will now be replied by the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

MRG LEEN STREET, PORT LOUIS – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/18) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that some 50 families living in the region of Mrg Leen Street, Port Louis are regularly being deprived of water supply and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Port Louis including the region of Mgr Leen is supplied from a Service Reservoir of capacity 20,000 m³ at Pailles Treatment plant. The hours of supply are from 4.00 a.m to 10.00 a.m and from 4.00 p.m to 9.00 p.m.

Some 50 families residing at Mgr Leen are affected by irregular water supply because they are located on a higher level of about 40 metres compared with 10 metres generally.

Following representations, the CWA is implementing a project to rezone the distribution system and to install a dedicated pipeline to supply this area. With this change I hope within a few weeks the situation will much improve.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, following an inquiry made by the technicians of the CWA, it has been known that when the level goes down at the Pailles Reservoir, there is this problem at Mrg Leen Street. It seems that this problem can be solved with appropriate pumping equipment. Has the hon. Minister looked into it so that this problem does not repeat again?

Dr. Beebeejaun: With the location of the new connection, it should address the problem of pressure.

PAILLES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/19) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the frequent disruptions in the water supply in the region of Pailles and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the area of Pailles Guibies is supplied from the Anse Courtois Reservoir of capacity of 3000 m³, which is fed by the Pailles Treatment Plant.

I am informed that during heavy rains, water from Grand River North West becomes muddy and clog the slow sand filters at Pailles Treatment Plant, resulting in disruptions in water supply in Port Louis including the Pailles Guibies region.

To address the problem of water disruption during heavy rains, the CWA has initiated a project since last year, to change the system of filtering. The new filter system is expected to be operational by 2012.

Additionally the CWA has set up an emergency unit to address the problem of burst pipes. I am glad to inform the House that it seems to have made quite a lot of differences to the water supply especially in the Port-Louis region.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, in this particular region it was supposed to have the construction of a new reservoir for the region of Pailles, Morcellement Guibies. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this project is still on?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Very much so.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Quirin.

SPORTS FOOTBALL REGIONALISATION GRANT- FIRST/SECOND DIVISION

(No. 1B/20) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Football Regionalisation Grant provided to First and Second Division football teams by Government since 2001/2002 for the promotion of football, he will give a list of the teams which have benefited therefrom as at January 2010, indicating the amount allocated to each team.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Ministry of Local Government that the Sports Football Regionalisation Grant is being managed by them since 2005. Prior to that, the grant was managed by the local authorities.

With regard to the teams which have benefited from the grant from 2001-2002 up to January 2010 and the amount thereof, this information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as available.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais néanmoins savoir du ministre des sports s'il a des informations en ce qui concerne la saison 2010. Est ce qu'il est au courant, en tant que ministre des sports, quelle est la somme qui a été allouée au club de première et deuxième divisions ?

Mr Ritoo: Well, as I stated, the amount has already been disbursed by the Ministry of Local Government and it was for the season 2010.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Do you have information about the amount?

Mr Ritoo: No, I don't have information about the amount.

Mr Speaker: No, that's it.

Mr Ritoo: I have now made a request that the amount be transferred through the Ministry of Youth and Sports so that in future the Ministry of Youth and Sports disburses the amount.

Mr Quirin: Je trouve cela choquant, aberrant dans la mesure où...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member cannot comment upon the answer which has been given.

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: Je reformule ma question, M. le président. En ce qui concerne la relance du football, le ministre peut-il nous dire si la somme qui a été déboursée au club en 2009 est la même pour 2010 ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have made a request to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development that henceforth the sum be granted to the football club through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and I have also made a request that the amount be increased.

Mr Bérenger: The question is simple. It is about 2009 compared to 2010, has there been a decrease in 2010? I think the hon. Minister must, at least, know that.

Mr Ritoo: As I stated earlier, the Ministry of Local Government has disbursed the amount...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please. If the hon. Minister thinks that this is not his portfolio and it is that of the Minister of Local Government, he will have to ask the hon. Member to address the question to the Minister of Local Government. That's all.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes. Hon. Quirin further question! No.

FOOTBALL - STEERING COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. 1B/21) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the practice of football, he will state if the Steering Committee set up in July 2009 to make recommendations to improve local football has submitted its report and, if so -

- (a) table a copy thereof, and
- (b) state the actions which have consequently been taken as at to date.

Mr Ritoo: The Steering committee presided by Mr Vincent Rogers has effectively submitted its recommendations in October 2009. Thereafter, several meetings have been held between my ministry, the Mauritius Football Association, Football clubs and coaches for the implementation of the main recommendations.

The actions that have been taken by my Ministry to-date are as follows -

- (i) the restructuring of the football *des jeunes* through the *fondation pour la formation au football*;
- (ii) identification of permanent training grounds for each of the 1st Division and 2nd Division football teams;

- (iii) identification of a home ground for each of the 1st division and 2nd division football teams;
- (iv) funds are being made available for upgrading works and lighting of football training grounds, where required;
- (v) the participation of under-19 and under-17 football teams of the *Centre National de Formation du Football* (CNFF) in the 1st Division and 2nd Division Football Tournaments respectively;
- (vi) a proposal has been made to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for provision of funds for an increase in the financial grant to the 1st Division and 2nd Division football teams with the objective to encourage restructuring and professionalisation of football. It is expected that other financial grants will also come from other potential sectors willing to contribute for the upliftment of Mauritian football;
- (vii) a *Directeur Technique National* (DTN) has already been recruited, and
- (viii) the turf of George V, Auguste Vollaire, Germain Comarmond and the Anjalay Stadia are being upgraded. These stadia will be reserved for local football championships as well as for international football competitions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a copy of the steering committee's report on D1 and D2 clubs is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Quirin: J'ai cru comprendre dans le rapport cité par le ministre des sports que l'État s'engage à mettre à la disposition des clubs des terrains d'entraînement avec ses aménités. Le ministre peut-il dire quels sont ces terrains qui sont alloués aux clubs?

Mr Ritoo: As I said, these are the recommendations of the report and we are working on this issue so as to provide all the First Division Second Teams with lighting facilities and training grounds. We are working on this issue.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has given us a list of initiatives which he is contemplating regarding our football. Can the Minister, at least, give the assurance to the House about what is happening at the Mauritius Football Federation? So long we don't put order, our football is doomed to fail. We all know the results we have obtained in the past in

the recent Indian Ocean Games: not even a *médaille ferraille!* We are at the eve of the Indian Ocean Games and we are all involved in watching the World Cup. The Prime Minister stated once that Mauritius will win a World Cup medal. Can the Minister give the guarantee to the House that, at least, Mauritius won't suffer the same fate next year as we did during the past and recent years?

Mr Ritoo: The hon. Member knows very well that the problem of the federation is something very different, very separate and we can't raise it here. As far as football is concerned, I think the hon. Member knows very well how much I am concerned about it and that is why I can assure him that the *médaille ferraille*...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, let the Minister answer! Hon. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Combien de centres de formation le ministre compte-t-il construire durant la prochaine année?

Mr Ritoo: We have only one national *centre de formation*; we cannot have many national *centres de formation*.

Mr Quirin: Are we to understand, Mr Speaker, that only those people, who will have access to one centre de formation, will have the necessary training. This country is quite big; we need more than one, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ritto: I'll consider it if need be.

Mr Quirin: One more question please. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire quels sont les engagements financiers de l'État par rapport aux recommandations faites dans le *steering committee*?

Mr Ritto: As I have stated there have been recommendations, we will consider them in due time.

At 12.59 the sitting was suspended.

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

CANOT VILLAGE AND MORCELLEMENT LA CONFIANCE, MAINGARD – FOOTBALL GROUNDS

(No. 1B/22) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Canot Village and

Morcellement La Confiance, Maingard, he will state whether there is a project for the putting up of new football grounds thereat and, if so, indicate when works are expected to start and the duration thereof.

Mr Rittoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that under the 800 Arpents Scheme, a portion of land to the extent of 3A at Canot has been earmarked for the construction of a football ground.

The said portion of land has already been acquired by government and vested with my Ministry on 11 June 2010. The construction of the football ground will be considered in the next financial year subject to availability of funds.

As regards the construction of a football ground at Morcellement La Confiance, Maingard, I am informed by the National Development Unit, (NDU) that works are expected to start by the end of August 2010 and completed by February 2011.

PETIT VERGER GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – ACCESS ROAD - UPGRADING

(No. 1B/23) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the access road leading to Petit Verger Government School, he will use his good offices to liaise with the relevant authorities for the upgrading thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the access road to the school is a non-classified one and is in a good condition. It does not require upgrading as such. However, it is narrow with a width of about 3 metres and indeed causes hardships and represents a security hazard for the school community and the residents of the locality.

The enlargement of the road will necessitate the compulsory acquisition of a strip of 3 metres of land along one side of the road.

I am informed that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has already initiated action for the acquisition of the strip of land.

Upon acquisition of the land, the following works should be carried out -

- (i) widening of the road to 6m;
- (ii) provision of a footpath of 1.5m, and

- (iii) construction of a lay by along the side of the access road between the Bois Chéri Road and the school.

MOUNT ORY - CREMATION GROUND – PUBLIC ROAD

(No. 1B/24) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asks the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the existing cremation ground located on the land belonging to the Gowreesunkar family, he will state if he will use his good offices to liaise with the relevant authorities for a vehicular access to be provided from the motorway at Mount Ory, Moka thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the access to the cremation ground at Mount Ory, Moka, being a private one, action will be initiated to convert it into a public road.

CAMP THOREL – DRAINS AND PAVEMENT WORKS

(No. 1B/25) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asks the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the drains and pavement works on the main road at Camp Thorel, in the vicinity of school lane, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that drains of an extent of 375 metres has already been constructed up to the surface of the road in August 2008. The drains could not be extended as way leave was not available. As way leave has now been obtained, the remaining works, including the pavement works, will be undertaken by July this year.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister, with regard to the main road at Camp Thorel, whether pavements could be constructed along with drains. This is the only village in the Constituency where there is no pavement.

Mr Bachoo: This means we are left with only one village and that work should be completed by the end of this year.

LA TERRE COUPÉ, MOUNT ORY – RETAINING WALLS

(No. 1B/26) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asks the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of retaining walls on both sides of the road at La Terre Coupé, Mount Ory, Moka leading to the Highway, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that the design of the retaining wall on both sides of the road at La Terre Coupé has been completed and works are scheduled to start by September this year.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the hon. Minister if, in the same exercise, access to vehicles will be allowed? Will the road be constructed for vehicles to have access to both sides at La Terre Coupé? In same breath, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his laudable effort.

Mr Bachoo: I'll look into the issues.

FOREIGN DEBT

(No. 1B/27) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to foreign debt, he will state –

- (a) the total amount of external borrowings of the Public Sector;
- (b) the total amount of external debt of Central Government in USD and Rupees as at
 - (i) 30 June 2005 and
 - (ii) 31 Mars 2010, indicating the reasons for the change, if any, in each case, and
- (c) whether all external borrowings have been utilised.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) and (c) of the question, from information provided to me, I wish to inform the House that the total amount of external borrowings contracted by Government from the end of June 2005 to 31 March 2010 was around Rs51.6 billion, that is, USD 1.5 billion, out of which around Rs10 billion, that is, USD 318 m., has been utilised. Out of this amount of USD 1.5 billion, an amount of USD 900 m. has been contracted in the second half of 2009 and early this year from the African Development Bank, that is, USD 700 m.; from the World Bank (USD 50 m.) and from *l'Agence Française de Développement* (Euro 125 m.). These resources have been mobilised for disbursement over the next three years to finance investment mainly in the infrastructure and sustainable environment sectors.

As regards the external borrowings of public enterprises and the amount utilised as at end of June 2005 and end of March 2010, the information is being compiled and will be tabled in the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

With regard to part (b) relating to foreign debt, the total amount of public sector external debt stood at Rs22.6 billion as at 30 June 2005 and Rs27.5 billion as at 31 March 2010. In terms of USD, the external debt of the Public Sector was around USD 793 m. and USD 871 m. as at 30 of June 2005 and 31 of March 2010 respectively.

Out of this amount, the total amount of external debt of Central Government stood at around Rs9.3 billion as at 30 of June 2005 and Rs16.7 billion as at 31 of March 2010, that is, an increase of Rs7.4 billion. The USD equivalent for the external debt of the Central Government was around USD 325 m. and USD 527 m. respectively for the same period.

The main reasons for the increase in external debt of the Central Government are -

- (i) to finance capital projects of Government;
- (ii) to implement measures to stimulate economic growth following the global economic crisis which impacted on the local economy, and
- (iii) the restructuring of the mix of Government's debt portfolio.

The increase in public sector external debt has been due mainly to the increase in Central Government debt. It may be noted that while public sector external debt rose from Rs22.6 billion to Rs27.5 billion between the end of June 2005 and March 2010, the external debt of public enterprises declined from Rs13.3 billion to Rs10.8 billion during the same period, despite the purchase of an aircraft by the national carrier by way of financial lease.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the massive external loans contracted which have not been utilised, may we know how this amount of money disbursed is being utilised?

Mr Jugnauth: As I have just mentioned, part of the amount has not been disbursed yet, for example, loans from ADB, from the World Bank and even from AFD. These have not yet been utilised. So, the loans are still there and as I have said, they will be used for future capital projects.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: This relates to loan commitments for the future, but what I would like to know – there have been loans which have been contracted, which have been disbursed and which have not been utilised yet as stated in part (b) of the hon. Minister's

reply. Could we know whether the amount has been lodged with the Central Bank as a current account deposit, or is it used as a budget support instrument?

Mr Jugnauth: No, the loans that have been disbursed have been earmarked for utilisation for specific capital projects. So, they are available, and they are being used as and when the amount has to be paid to contractors. But they are for those capital projects.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: From the answer, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, we note that excess amounts which have not been utilised have been kept in Government account at the Central Bank. That is the query that I had, because there has been no project that has been implemented for the use of these amounts.

Mr Jugnauth: No, this is not correct. What I am saying is that for those projects that are ongoing, the loan equivalent has been disbursed and they are used for those projects. For those projects that are not yet implemented, the amount is there, as I mentioned, from the different financial institutions, and will be utilised as and when their disbursement so requires. There is no amount that has been borrowed and disbursed and kept just for the sake of keeping it in an account.

FOREIGN GRANTS & RESERVES

(No. 1B/28) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to foreign grants and reserves as at 30 June 2005 and 31 March 2010 respectively, he will give -

- (a) the total amount of SDR allocations indicating for the same period, whether, additional SDR allocations were made by the IMF and, if so, why;
- (b) the change in amount of grants and external financial aids, if any, giving a breakdown in each case and the reasons therefor, and
- (c) he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the net foreign reserves for the same period.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a), I am advised by the Bank of Mauritius that the total amount of outstanding SDRs as at 30 June 2005 was SDRs 15,744,000 (MUR 694,430,967). The total amount of outstanding SDRs as at 31 March 2010 was SDRs 96,805,549 (MUR 4,512,553,268).

On 07 August 2009, an allocation of SDR 75,317,076 was made to Mauritius as part of the General Allocation of SDRs, as approved by the IMF Board of Governors on 07 August 2009. This amount was credited at the Bank of Mauritius on 28 August 2009.

On 10 August 2009, a Special Allocation of SDRs (SDRs 5,744,473) following the entry into force of the 4th amendment of the articles of agreement on 10 August 2009, in accordance with the IMF Board of Governors Resolution No. 52-4 was made. This amount was credited again at the Bank of Mauritius on 09 September 2009.

All our SDR holdings are held in our external assets under the item Special Drawing Rights. The counterpart is held in our liabilities under Provisions and other Liabilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, foreign grants received as at 30 June 2005 amounted to Rs444 m. For the current financial year 2010, an amount of Rs4.1 billion is estimated to be received. Out of this amount, some Rs3.5 billion would come from the EU. As at 31 March 2010, only Rs1.5 m. has been received. I must say that the bulk of the remaining amount would be received by the end of this year.

The rise in grants over the period is explained by the increasing support of our Development Partners (DPs) to finance the economic reform programme. I can assure the Member and the House that these exceptional resources will be optimally utilised to implement policies and programmes designed to unlock the development potential of our country.

I am tabling a detailed breakdown of the grants received as at 30 June 2005 and the estimates for the year 2010 by institutions and programmes.

As regards part (c), I am informed that the Net International Reserves at end 30 June 2005 and 31 March 2010 stood at Rs65.8 billion and Rs104.3 billion respectively.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: If we sum up the increase in reserves, which is held with the Bank of Mauritius, the net foreign reserves would not be more than Rs24 billion. Is that correct?

Mr Jugnauth: Sorry, I did not get the question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The hon. Minister has not given the increase in the net foreign reserves of the Bank of Mauritius. Can we know the change in that amount?

Mr Jugnauth: I have stated that the net international reserves from 30 June 2005 were Rs65.8 billion and from 31 March 2010 Rs104.3 billion.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In the light of the reserves of the Central Bank and taking into account the foreign debt commitments in terms of external currency, would the hon. Minister be able to inform the House whether there is external debt service sustainability in the medium term for the country?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, it is sustainable and, as I have mentioned, if we look at the figures in terms of percentage of debt with regard to GDP, it has gone down. So, it is sustainable.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The question, therefore, relates to the measures that have been taken by Government in view of the loan commitments which have been mentioned by the hon. Minister and in view of the road decongestion programme which will entail massive amounts of external currency liabilities. I would like to know whether Government has considered any cap on the amount of external loans that would be contracted by Government.

Mr Jugnauth: Of course, Government and my Ministry would be monitoring the amount of external debt that is being contracted. But I mentioned earlier that another reason for contracting foreign loans is to look at the mix of public debt portfolio altogether with regard to local debt that is contracted in Mauritian rupees.

EMPLOYEE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST – UNITS - REDEMPTION

(No. 1B/29) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Employee Real Estate Investment Trust, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to –

- (a) the number of applications for the redemption of units of the Trust as from the date of redemption to date, indicating the number which have been redeemed, and
- (b) whether any dividend has been paid to the trustees, and, if not, why not, indicating if the Trust will propose an immediate payment of a dividend equivalent to the initial value of the unit.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows -

With regard to part (a), as per the Trust Deed of the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust, the effective date of redemption is 31 March 2010. As from that date, the Trust has received 55,000 applications for redemption up to 10 June 2010. The processing is ongoing to verify whether all persons who have submitted the redemption requests are

effectively on the Register of unit holders. I have been informed that, out of 10,000 requests so far processed, around 2,000 are not unit holders. On that basis, it appears that, out of the 55,000 applications received, quite a sizeable number would be from persons who are not unit holders.

Following a press conference I gave on 27 May 2010 and the subsequent launching of an awareness and information campaign, the Trust has to date received 1,954 requests for cancellation of the applications for redemption. Since unit holders have up to 31 July 2010 to cancel their applications for redemption if they so desire, it is only after this date that the Trust will be able to compute the total number of effective applications for redemption. Payment of redemption proceeds will be made accordingly.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed of the following -

- i. The Trust does not distribute cash dividends but instead provision has been made for the distribution of Bonus Units to unit holders. This is clearly indicated both in the 'Scheme Particulars' issued to all unit holders and in the Trust Deed. The 'Scheme Particulars' highlights the fact that "upon realised gains capitalised through completion of real estate projects, this appreciation will be distributed to the Unit Holders in the form of Bonus Units". Since there has been no completion of real estate projects yet, no bonus issue has been effected.
- ii. It should, however, be noted that the total value of the unit holders' holding in the Trust is not, in any way, affected and the Net Income is fully integrated and reflected in the Net Asset Value per unit. Instead of additional units, the Unit Holder benefits in terms of higher Net Asset Value per unit.

May I seize this opportunity, Mr Speaker Sir, to reiterate my total personal commitment and that of this Government as regard future developments that will be carried out by the Trust.

The Employees Real Estate Investment Trust is meant for employees. It will remain as such. The objective since its launch is to enable the workers of this country to participate in land and property development as per the philosophy of Government to democratise the economy.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The fact that the purpose of the Trust is to engage in land and property development, for the last five years the Trust has not been deploying its funds for

that purpose, meaning that it has not carried out the objective for which it had been set up, would it not be fair for a cash distribution to be made out of the Trust in view of the fact that the people who are entitled to redeem the units of the Trust are in need of the cash?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, cash distribution is not envisaged by the scheme particulars, first of all. Secondly, let me inform the House that there are certain developments that have already started. For example, there are 52.7 *arpents* of land at Rivière du Rempart /Haute Rive village which is going to be developed into a residential/commercial *morcellement* and the proposed *morcellement* will comprise of residential and commercial plots, green areas and so on. Action has already been taken because the planner and the civil engineering consultant have already been selected, the Environment Impact Assessment consultant and so on. I am also informed that the Trust has already been granted the EIA licence and Land Conversion Permit with regard to that project.

There are other projects also, for example 178.5 *arpents* of land at Highlands/Côte D'Or village which is going to be developed again with the same view. I understand that there have been offers to buy other plots of land. So, the projects have already started and will be on going. I can assure the House that it will be accelerated.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I am sure that the Minister would agree that these are projects for the future which are likely to bring gains only in the future. But in the meantime, Rs350 m. in the Fund have not been used for the purpose for which the Fund had been set up. Therefore, the Trust beneficiaries are being unduly penalised for the mismanagement of the Trust. Would the Minister therefore consider not penalising the Trust beneficiaries and reconsider the issue of a distribution of a dividend because in the meantime, the beneficiaries are suffering from the fact that the funds have been stuck in the Trust and have not been used for the purpose for which it had been set up.

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, let me say that the beneficiaries are not being penalised because the value of the unit has increased from Rs1,000 to Rs2,549.44. So, all those who are willing to redeem their unit will be paid according to the Net Asset Value as it is today and that will be taken into consideration in the future also.

Secondly, it is not correct to say that - projects have not materialised but all the initiatives have been taken with regard to a few projects as I have mentioned. So, in due course they will materialise and there is no doubt that this will increase the Net Asset Value of a unit.

With regard to the Rs350 m. that was transferred by the then Government, I must say that this was done with regard to the National Savings Fund and therefore I am sure that the hon. Member will know that it is the employers who have contributed; at that time it stood at 348,129 employees. Therefore, I do not see how the beneficiaries would have suffered in the meantime.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the Minister confirm that between 2005 and now none of the *projets immobiliers* that were supposed to be developed by those responsible for the Employees Real Estate Investment Fund have been materialised. Has the new Minister of Finance had the opportunity to look into why this was the case?

Mr Jugnauth: What I can tell the House is that now that I am in the driving seat, I am going to accelerate those projects and we want to have those projects materialised as soon as possible.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister has not looked into the reasons and now he says that he is going to accelerate when nothing has been done during five years. Does he find it in order that he is supposed to start doing that after five years with the same people who have been responsible for nothing having occurred for five years? At the press conference that he referred to, they sat on both sides of him; those people who have been responsible for treating the Employee Real Estate Investment Trust like the Sugar Investment Trust had been treated in the past.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just said that action has been initiated with regard to a few projects. I have given some details and I can go on.

(Interruptions)

No! It is not now! It has been initiated. For example, let me repeat again, the land at Rivière du Rempart, Haute Rive Village, the consultants have already been appointed. The EIA licence and the Land Conversion Permit have already been granted. So, it could not have happened in a few days since this new Government took office, it happened quite some time before because for all this there has been a tender procedure before appointing the consultants. For the Highlands/Côte D'Or Village Project, with regard to 178.5 *arpents* of land, all the consultants have been appointed through tenders. As I said, there are other projects but these have to be accelerated of course.

Mr Uteem: If I may ask the hon. Minister, in respect to the Trust, according to their accounts, around Rs900,000 are being paid to the Trustees every year and around Rs3 m. are

paid every year to the Manager. Since they have not carried out any development, would not the Minister consider renegotiating the act with the Trustees and the Manager for them to refund the money to the State?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware of the sums that the hon. Member is saying have been paid to both trustees and the manager, but, as I have just replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, the philosophy of this Government is as a priority to democratise the economy and this is one tool where we want to go ahead as fast as possible in order that the number of employees and workers of this country do benefit.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Do you have a supplementary question on this?

Mr Uteem: Yes.

Mr Speaker: Last one!

Mr Uteem: In the light of what the hon. vice-Prime Minister has stated about democratisation, would he consider issuing new units to employees who were not initially part of the trust, beneficiary list?

Mr Jugnauth: Through the press conference that I have held, I have mentioned, amongst others, two things which I am going to highlight. First of all, give the opportunity to those people who are willing to review their decision, to redeem their units, they have been given two months, if they so decide.

Secondly, we are going to offer, at the most, 50 units for anyone who is willing to purchase; whether it be employees who are already holders of one unit or future employees.

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIERE - NDU PROJECTS

(No. 1B/30) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, he will give a list of the NDU projects already approved therefor, indicating which projects have not yet been implemented or completed, if any, as at 30 April 2010, and, if so, the reasons therefor and indicate the expected timeframe for the completion thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

TREFLES, CAMP LEVIEUX, PLAISANCE & ROCHES BRUNES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/32) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that the water supply in the regions of Trèfles, Camp Levieux, Plaisance and Roches Brunes is irregular and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons therefor and the remedial actions being taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the regions of Trèfles, Camp Levieux, Plaisance and Roches Brunes are supplied from Stanley reservoir of capacity 7,000 m³ from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Water supply has been disrupted in the past months as a result of damages to the network during the ongoing sewerage project in Roches Brunes and the adjoining areas.

To minimise disruptions, WMA in agreement with CWA has started installing temporary by-pass pipes along the roads where sewerage works are being carried out.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what action will be taken by the CWA to replace the existing pipes that exist for more than 30 years and are often the cause of leakage in these regions?

Dr. Beebeejaun: This is an ongoing project and I am glad that the hon. Member has mentioned it. He has said more than 30 years; he should add a bit more to that.

Mr Bérenger: For the last 5 years we have seen absolutely no progress in improving the situation. I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware; this is the fifth question concerning water shortages across the island. It is not a coincidence, from the East, South and now Rose-Hill. So, when is his Government going to shake up the CWA for it to deliver?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem of water supply; there is no doubt about it. It is not now; it has been there for the last 20 years at least if not to say more. There is no evidence that today is worse than the previous years, quite the reverse and we have set up an emergency unit and many Members of the House from the opposite side and here have benefitted from the services rendered by this special unit.

Mr Bhagwan: *En connaissance de cause*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that one of the main problems affecting the CWA is mismanagement at the head of the CWA.

I can say at the head. The General Manager, Mr Harry Booluck, has not been performing for the past five years. I would not come and say that he has been doing political meetings, which is apart, which is *dans le domaine public*; he spends most of his time in other things than managing the CWA. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is now the time to sack this gentleman?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I can hardly comment on that, but what I can say is that we are getting the help of the regional managers to help with these problems.

PLAISANCE & ROCHES BRUNES - SEWERAGE WORKS

(No. 1B/33) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to major sewerage works in the regions of Plaisance and Roches Brunès, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to the expected date of completion, indicating if the roads in the above regions will be resurfaced with hot pressure concrete and, if so, when.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the regions of Plaisance and Roche Brunès, along with west Rose Hill and Mont Roches are covered under Lot 1B of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project which includes 40 km sewer network, replacement of 10 km of CWA pipes and 4,000 house connections.

Works started on 10 December 2008 and are on schedule. They are expected to be completed by December 2011. Works in the regions of Roches Brunès and Plaisance will be completed in August and November 2011.

When pipe laying works are completed, trenches are backfilled with crusher stone in the first instance and are followed by trench width reinstatement using 50mm thick asphaltic concrete after a period of three months.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether drains will be constructed after completion of sewerage works?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Yes, they are part of the contract.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, Roches Brunès is adjoining to my constituency. When we talk of Roches Brunès region, it has the same faith as Quatre Bornes. There has been a major sewerage project. Although we have been receiving names of persons

responsible on site and so on, I think there is a real follow up as far as Government is concerned regarding roads and drains rehabilitation. I raised that issue at Committee Stage and even the hon. Prime Minister agreed to what I was saying, that Government should set up a high-level committee presided by the Deputy Prime Minister himself, at least to see to it that these roads *redeviennent comme c'était auparavant*, if not even better. People have been suffering; we have been talking about tuberculosis this morning. So, we are all for development, but what has been happening in Quatre Bornes, Roches Brunes and Beau Bassin areas? Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if, at least, an emergency action can be taken at the highest level of his Ministry to see to it that there is progress as far as road rehabilitation is concerned?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question on Quatre Bornes; I will include it in my answer when I reply.

Mr Speaker: It is a general answer!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (NEW) - INTRODUCTION

(No. 1B/34) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will state if Government proposes to introduce a new Local Government Bill and, if so, when.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of the National Assembly who were present last Tuesday in Sir Harilall Vaghjee Memorial Hall have all heard during the President's address on the Government Programme 2010-2015 that a major review of local government legislations will be undertaken in order to better meet the aspirations of the population.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a new Local Government Bill is being worked out by my Ministry and the Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly in the near future after appropriate approval has been obtained.

Mr Nagalingum: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether consultations have been completed with stakeholders concerned?

Mr Aimée: As I said, if the hon. Member would go to the President's Address, everything is mentioned in it. I am prepared, with the approval of Government, to render public all the works done in the meantime.

Mr Bhagwan: Those who have been present here since 2005 would know that we have heard the same thing in the Government Programme of 2005. I hope that again we

would not suffer the same faith as that of 2005 that Government will come with a new legislation. Can the hon. Minister, at least, give us a time schedule for the coming into force of a new Local Government Bill?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that action is being taken actually and in a very near future this will be in public. Very soon, yes!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that there has been some contradictory statements by Members of the Government, could the hon. Minister clarify whether it is the intention of Government to come with new legislation prior to municipal elections being held?

Mr Aimée: Our intention is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. But time will tell.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm that Government has now been converted to the old idea mooted by the MMM/MSM Government as to the creation of seven new municipal areas?

Mr Aimée: No. The answer is no.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, consultations have already started with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly concerning this Local Government Bill coming soon?

Mr Speaker: Consultations with the Rodrigues Regional...

Mr Aimée: Can the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

Mr François: Yes, may I ask the hon. Minister whether consultations have already started with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly concerning this Local Government Bill coming soon?

Mr Aimée: We have not yet reached the stage of consultancy, neither Rodrigues nor any other situations. We are still deciding on the piece of legislation.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Then, if this is the case, can the hon. Minister let us know where they have reached with regard to the preparation of this new Bill?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, j'ai bien expliqué au début. On travaille sur le *piece of legislation* et cela va venir en temps et lieu. Un peu de patience cher membre!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next Question! Hon. Nagalingum!

CAMP LEVIEUX, ROSE HILL – NHDC - BUS STAND

(No. 1B/35) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to NHDC, Camp Levieux, Rose Hill, he will state if it is proposed to put up a bus stand thereat, indicating -

- (a) if land has already been earmarked for the project, and
- (b) the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NTA and the TMRSU that there is already a bus stand which can accommodate six buses, situated at a distance of 135 metres from the junction of Ratsitatane Street near the NHDC Complex at Camp Levieux and my Ministry has not received any request in this connection.

I am also informed that in the NHDC Project in the region, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has earmarked a plot of land for a traffic centre and if there is any request for same due to consideration will be given to that project.

Mr Speaker: Yes, next Question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - MANUAL WORKERS AND REFUSE COLLECTORS

(No. 1B/36) Mr S. M. A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to manual workers and refuse collectors, posted at different sites in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if any transfer exercise has been or is being carried out, indicating the reasons therefor.

Mr Aimeé: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that no transfer exercise has been or is being carried out in respect of the manual workers and refuse collectors posted at different sites in Port Louis.

Mr Speaker: Yes, next Question! Hon. Ramano!

QUATRE BORNES - SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. 1B/37) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the expected duration of the works indicating if –
 - (i) the existing drains will be re-instated;
 - (ii) the roads will be resurfaced and, if so, when, and
- (b) the measures, if any, to alleviate the problem of air pollution resulting therefrom.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/816 of 14 July 2009, where the issues were extensively raised by hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing.

As per the reply I then provided to the House, sewerage works in Quatre Bornes, Sodnac and Belle Rose are covered under Lot 2 of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project.

Works started on 14 January 2008. Works in the region of Berthaud and La Louise would be completed by March 2011, while in the remaining parts of Quatre Bornes, they would be completed by July 2012.

Under the works contract, provision has been made for –

- (i) the reinstatement of existing drains which are damaged during the sewerage works;
- (ii) the full width resurfacing of roads using asphaltic concrete. Such works are normally carried out within three months, as from the date of the temporary reinstatement works to allow for the settlement of the trenches, and
- (iii) the regular sprinkling of water and cleaning of sites by the contractor, to alleviate the problem of dust.

Following the intervention of hon. Ms Deerpalsing and other hon. Members of the House and representations of the residents, the Public Relations Unit of WMA and representatives of the Contractor and the Consultant have regular meetings to monitor the situation closely and ensure that sites are well maintained. They also address grievances and

take appropriate remedial measures to minimise the inconvenience that inhabitants will inevitably face. The Public Relations Unit will reinforce its communication in order to keep inhabitants informed of developments and receive feedback from them. And I invite hon. Members of this House to contact the unit should there be any problem or we will inform them whenever there are meetings onsite.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il existe une mauvaise coordination entre les différents contracteurs qui travaillent sur les lieux et c'est ce qui explique ce problème aigu qui persiste. Est-ce que je peux suggérer au ministre une meilleure coordination entre les différentes parties ?

Dr. Beebeejaun: It is open to anyone.

Mr Ramano: Suite à ces travaux d'envergure, il existe aussi un véritable problème de congestion routière et nous avons l'impression que les contracteurs travaillent indépendamment de la force policière. Est-ce qu'à ce niveau aussi on peut s'assurer que la coordination soit faite au niveau de la force policière ?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I can assure the House that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit is fully involved and I take note that we should probably post more sign posts to warn motorists about road deviation. We are doing it and we are still doing it and the problem in *Quatre Bornes* is going to be with us for some time. I wish to inform the House that we are looking at all the issues especially also traffic congestion and the Police have been asked to help.

Ms Deerpalsing: A supplementary question, thank you. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether - given the experience of the contractor's work - the contractors could liaise with other Departments such as Telecom, CWA and CEB because there are new areas where there is no telecommunications post. So, whether these units can be harmonised before they resurface the roads so that they do not resurface and then two days later CWA or CEB or Mauritius Telecom comes around and dig the road again. Can there be a total harmonisation with the new development areas so that these things are not causing double or triple inconveniences to the inhabitants?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I thank the hon. Member for the suggestion. It is one of those problems which are in front of us over the years; different departments with different works, at different times, with little coordination. Sometimes it is possible to coordinate, at other

times, due to the time lag and the lack of the preparedness of the different Ministries, it is difficult, but we will do our best so that there is coordination and not duplication of work.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister now that the works, I understand, are moving from Belle Rose to Sodnac and I know there are several hon. Members of this House who live in Sodnac and they are going to shout very loud so that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister can ensure that the planning of the closures of the road is made very carefully so that in other areas like in Belle Rose and in La Source, they encircle the area so that people do not even know how to get into their own yard. So, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to ensure that people are not left three blocks away from their house without any entrance into their own area?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know two points that have been raised. One is about what goes on in Sodnac. That people do complain bitterly there and it is a fact, that the inhabitants of Sodnac have a tendency to complain and quite a reverse of experiences, for example, in Roche Bois, where we did the works and there were hardly any complaints and everyone was happy that the works were going on. But, this is a state of affairs. Secondly, yes, we will make sure that with a Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that roads are not closed unnecessarily.

Mr Speaker: Last question.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether, it would be possible for the Wastewater Management Authority, to circulate the documents to the House, through your Ministry, to Members of Parliament on the progress of work, on the planning of work so that, at least, we, as Members of Parliament we are informed, as we have been informed of the different officers on site, whom to contact in case of emergency. At least, when such and such roads are going to be completed, the resurfacing can be sped up and even other problems can be solved.

Dr. Beebeejaun: This proposal was made and it got interrupted because the House was not sitting. The answer is yes. But, I would be more interested still that members representing the constituency get together so that we meet them with the *forces vives* and the Municipality and discuss all the issues. And certainly, we will issue a progress report.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES – L'EXPRESS NEWSPAPER
- PURCHASE**

(No. 1B/38) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to daily newspaper l'Express, he will state if directives have been issued by his Ministry to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for its purchase and, if so, the nature thereof.

Mr Aimé: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of any directive that may have been issued by my Ministry to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes in regard to the purchase of daily newspaper l'Express, and what is the nature of the directive, if any has been given.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que je dois comprendre du ministre que cela relève d'une décision purement administrative au niveau de la mairie de Quatre Bornes?

Mr Aimée: Je n'ai pas cette information. D'après les informations recueillies auprès de la municipalité, il n'y a pas eu de directives, et il n'y en a pas eu non plus émanant de mon ministère.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, les 25, 26 et 27 du mois de mai, il y a eu une déposition faite à la station de police de Quatre Bornes à l'effet de la non-disponibilité des journaux 'l'Express'. Est-ce que le ministre, en tant que *parent minister*, pourrait faire des commentaires à ce sujet ?

Mr Aimée: Je ne suis pas au courant de ces déclarations, mais je vais quand même essayer d'avoir les informations et je les déposerai sur la table de l'Assemblée. Néanmoins, les informations des journaux sont *online* un peu partout, particulièrement à la municipalité.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, dans un souci de respecter la liberté d'expression, qui inclut aussi le libre accès à l'information, je pense qu'il est tout à fait normal que des journaux, quel que soit leur bord, soient mis à la disposition des collectivités locales.

Mr Aimée: Je vous ai dit au préalable que je n'ai pas cette information.

Mr Speaker: Oui, vous avez répondu. Hon. Bhagwan !

Mr Bhagwan : Venons-en à quelque chose de plus sérieux.

Mr Aimée: Je suis sérieux.

Mr Bhagwan: Tout le monde à l'île Maurice n'a pas l'internet. Il y a des gens pauvres qui n'y ont pas accès. Lorsqu'on parle...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Everyone does not have access to internet. Some people don't know how to operate a computer; poor people or even other types of people. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether *cette épidémie* de boycottage contre l'Express et les journaux de la Sentinelle s'est propagée dans d'autres mairies ? En temps que ministre responsable des collectivités locales, est-ce qu'il y a eu...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry hon. Bhagwan. The question relates to Quatre Bornes. If you feel that you have to come with similar questions for other Municipalities, you are free to do so.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance, while reading l'Express, what is happening at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes?

Mr Aimée: I don't read l'Express, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question.

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, puisque le ministre est membre d'un gouvernement qui professe une adhésion aux valeurs démocratiques, voudra t-il bien se renseigner par rapport à ce qui se passe à la mairie de Quatre Bornes pour s'assurer que, comme il se doit dans toute démocratie, la bibliothèque municipale de la mairie de Quatre Bornes offre aux habitants de cette ville la possibilité de consulter tous les journaux publiés à Maurice ?

Mr Aimée : J'accueille la proposition de l'honorable membre. Certainement, je le ferai.

COLLINE, CANDOS – STATE LAND LEASE

(No. 1B/39) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State lands in the vicinity of Colline, Candos, Quatre Bornes, he will state—

- (a) if there has been any allocation thereof since 1995, and
- (b) if his Ministry is in presence of applications for the lease thereof and, if so, indicate in each case the names of the lessees and the applicants.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer to both parts of this question is no.

TOURISM INDUSTRY – EURO CRISIS

(No. 1B/40) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the tourism industry, he will state if following the Euro crisis -

- (a) his Ministry has carried out a study to evaluate its impact thereon, and
- (b) the measures, if any, being taken at the level of the Ministry to protect the industry.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. My Ministry is closely following the Euro crisis with a view to assessing the real impact on that sector. A conclusive and reliable impact assessment on the sector demands a careful scrutiny and evaluation of individual components of the costs and revenues structures of the sector as well as such elements as budgeted exchange rate against the realised rates, whether the budgeted rates were realistic or overly optimistic in view of fundamentals; the percentage of the cost elements that actually benefits from an appreciating rupee, the level of Gross Operation Profit, the level of profits in general, and dividend distribution of the sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is very concerned with the prevailing Euro crisis in view of its possible serious adverse impact on our export-oriented economic sectors, including the tourism industry, owing to the heavy reliance of these sectors on the European market.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to finding possible ways and means to mitigating the adverse impact of the Euro crisis, a Technical Working Group, comprising stakeholders from both the private and the public sectors, has been set up at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, as the House is aware. The terms of reference of the Working Group are as follows -

- (a) to review the developments in the Euro zone and assess its impact on the Mauritian economy;
- (b) to monitor closely developments in the Euro zone, and
- (c) to formulate an action plan to mitigate the adverse impact on our economy.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pursuing consultations with the representatives of the main stakeholders of the tourism sector, including the hotel operators, tour operators, AHRIM and the SMEs, and I have requested them to come up with proposals that could help

to alleviate the impact of the Euro crisis. They have, accordingly, submitted various proposals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of Euro crisis is a complex one, and it demands a careful attention. We need to identify sustainable long term measures rather than quick emergency solutions, such as artificially depreciating our currency, not backed by economic fundamentals. I have accordingly set up a Committee at the level of my Ministry to examine thoroughly the proposals submitted by the tourism stakeholders and to work out, jointly with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, an Action Plan, detailing measures to be taken as a matter of urgency and measures to be taken in the short term and in the long term.

Mr Bhagwan: I have not heard the hon. Minister, in his reply, mentioning the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority as one of the stakeholders. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has met the Chairperson of the Mauritius Tourism Authority, as one of the stakeholders of the tourism sector, to discuss this issue?

Mr Bodha: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have never mentioned the Tourism Authority. Second, I have met the Chairperson. In fact, the Chairperson was present to a meeting we had with the PRs coming from over the world.

STC – RICE – TENDER EXERCISE

(No. 1B/41) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the supply of rice for 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if -

- (a) the Corporation launched a tender exercise for the purchase of 20,000 metric tonnes in-
 - (i) October 2008, and
 - (ii) December 2009, indicating in each case the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee
- (b) the award was cancelled after the successful tenderer had already ordered a first consignment in January 2010, and
- (c) the Corporation is presently negotiating with an unsuccessful tenderer and, if so, why.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

FAMILY HEALTH CLINIC, HENRIETTA – CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/42) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Henrietta Health Care Centre, she will state if –

- (a) she is aware of the present state thereof, indicating if it is proposed to have the centre renovated, and
- (b) a review of the services offered thereat is being envisaged.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I suppose the hon. Member is referring to the Family Health Clinic at Henrietta.

The building housing the clinic is not in a good state, and it is already planned to construct a new building to house the new Family Health Clinic at Henrietta. This project has been included in the Capital Budget 2010 of my Ministry for implementation within this financial year. Arrangements will be made for patients to be directed to Glen Park Community Health Centre for treatment.

With regard to part (b) of the question, it should be noted that the clinic had been set up since a long time back, but it does not offer the same services as a Community Health Centre.

I, therefore, propose to request for a needs assessment to be carried out, to know about any new services which will be required.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when she will be considering new services? Because there is no Health Care Centre in the vicinity. There are only pre-natal and post-natal services. I would like to know whether, with regard to the diabetics, old aged persons or for minor injuries, these services could be considered for the persons of this region.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are only four such clinics in the country, namely at Henrietta, Soulliac, Mont Roches and Trèfles and the present criteria for the setting up of the Community Health Centre is that the health service point should cater for a population of about 5,000 and that any citizen should not travel more than three kms to reach a health service point. So, this is why we have got a Community Health Centre at Glen Park which is only within three kms away. But, as I said, I will have a need assessment and then

I'll see whether those services are required there.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she has or her Ministry has taken into consideration the inhabitants of Camp Savanne, Camp Mapou who could benefit from a Health Centre at Henrietta, because there are more than three kms from Camp Savanne to the Glen Park Community Health Centre for example.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will take these into consideration when establishing new criteria.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - STUDY

(No. 1B/43) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to domestic violence, she will state if she has taken cognizance of the recent findings of a study carried out by the United Nations Development Programme thereon and, if so, indicate the measures taken or being envisaged to address the issue.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 21 April 2010, my Ministry has received from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a Draft Report on the study of the 'Extent, Nature and Costs of Domestic Violence to the Mauritian economy' undertaken by the Mauritius Research Council.

Following a request made by the UNDP, a technical committee comprising representatives of the UNDP and my Ministry is examining the draft report thoroughly in order to finalise it and to decide on the course of action.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she has an idea or could she inform the House of a time schedule when this final report will be ready?

Mrs Bappoo: I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Technical Committee is completing this exercise, then the submission of the report will go back to the UNDP and from there it we will go for publication.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she could inform the House of the composition of this Committee and the date of their last meeting?

Mrs Bappoo: I know it is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, the Head of the Family Unit and one representative of the UNDP. I have been informed that they have had some three to four meetings, and even this morning they had another one. They are still

waiting for the finalization of the technical committee, because the report was submitted on 21 April, and all Members know that we were in the electoral campaign. No action was taken by the Ministry. While assuming my responsibility at the Ministry, I have requested that they put up the technical committee. There have been three to four meetings.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the urgency of this issue - we have reports every single day in the press as to cases of domestic violence - would the hon. Minister agree, while we have the report from the technical committee or whatever, to set up urgently a permanent hotline operating round the clock to offer immediate practical advice and assistance to battered women?

Mrs Bappoo: It does exist, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we have just put up also another mechanism which I just described as an emergency team because there are so many cases; on one side it is domestic violence, on the other side it is child abuse, and we need to have immediate action taken. I do agree to what the hon. Member is saying.

TUBERCULOSIS CASES – 2007-15 JUNE 2010

(No. 1B/44) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to patients diagnosed with tuberculosis, she will state the number thereof in -

- (a) 2007,
- (b) 2008,
- (c) 2009 and
- (d) since January 2010 to date.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of patients diagnosed with tuberculosis for the years 2007 to date are as follows -

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of TB Cases</u>
2007	106
2008	108

2009

116

January

58

2010 to date

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether, among the patients that have been diagnosed and admitted to hospitals, how many foreigners are admitted in hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, I don't have the information right now, but I know that foreigners also are being screened.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there are any precautions or advice given to visitors when they visit people at hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Usually, advice is given because tuberculosis, as you know, is a contagious disease, and obviously they are being given advice.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware of any precautions or advice that are being given to visitors when they go to hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As I just said, there must be advice which is being given to them because it is a known fact that tuberculosis is a contagious disease.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the reason of my concern, because actually there are no precautions, no advice given to persons visiting this hospital. So, may I ask the hon. Minister if she could see to it that this is being done because it is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Sure, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I would perhaps, for the information of hon. Members, inform them that according to the rules of procedure, supplementary questions are asked to clarify the answer that the Minister has given. Now, in this particular question, the hon. Member could have inserted in her question the protocol of whatever advice put to her and then that could have been easier for the Minister to answer and save the time of the House.

CAMP CHAPELON – SPECIAL LANE

(No. 1B/45) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and

Shipping whether he will state if he has received a request from the inhabitants of Camp Chapelon for the putting up of a special lane along the highway towards Camp Chapelon with a view to facilitate entrance of vehicles from the direction of Plaines Wilhems to facilitate connection thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that a special lane at the entrance of Camp Chapelon along Motorway M1 cannot be constructed due to site constraints and the existing footbridge which is located some 50 metres from the entrance.

However, I have requested the RDA to have a fresh look at the whole issue.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether the Minister got the question. It concerns motor vehicles coming from Plaines Wilhems to go into the village of Camp Chapelon on the left side of the road. Actually, it is a very short lane, left sided, and the conductor has no time to apply his brake and to have a proper driving to go into Camp Chapelon. This is causing much difficulty for other users on the road. This is why a letter was sent to the Road Development Authority with copy to the Minister to have some proper actions taken at this point of the circulation of the traffic at Camp Chapelon. I think the Minister should give due consideration to this request and find a solution in favour of the inhabitants of Camp Chapelon.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have got a big problem there because there is an existing building and a footbridge at the entrance of Camp Chapelon. That is number one. Secondly, according to our existing legislation, from an engineering point of view, a deceleration lane will require a length of 150 metres and an acceleration lane will require a length of about 200 metres, which is not possible there. A little bit at the entrance of St. Louis, we do have a deceleration lane which the people of Camp Chapelon are utilising actually, but, at the same time, we are very much concerned for the safety of the inhabitants of that region. I have requested the RDA to have a fresh look at that particular spot in that region and to come forward with certain suggestions because this is a very delicate and difficult issue. Since long we have been battling to find a solution there.

Mr Barbier: Actually, major works are being carried out there. Would the hon. Minister see to it that this is being done soon, immediately I would say?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we are working on that issue. But, unfortunately, as I have just mentioned, because of the two footbridges and the entrance of the existing building we are having problems; but I am going to have a fresh look again on this issue.

SUICIDAL CASES - STUDY

(No. IB/46) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to cases of suicide and attempted suicide, she will state –

- (a) for each of the past five years the number thereof, and
- (b) whether a study has been conducted to establish the causes thereof with particular reference to the work place environment.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In reply to part (a) of the question, the figures are being tabled.

As regards part (b) the House may be informed that no study has so far been carried out on the work place environment as a cause of suicide. However, two research studies on the risk factors of suicide were carried out in 1997 and 2003. According to the findings of the studies, the main causes highlighted in the reports are -

- i. Social economic disadvantage such as low level of unemployment and education.
- ii. Childhood trauma.
- iii. Substance abuse.
- iv. Mental illness.
- v. Dysfunctional family atmosphere.
- vi. Conflicting marital relationships.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that following the submission of the two reports, an Action Plan based on the findings have been published and a Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary has been set up. The main function of the Steering Committee is to oversee the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Action Plan. In that respect, the various stakeholders involved at the level of the committee are actively working in their respective fields and actions are targeted at the different population groups to prevent suicide.

The situation is being closely monitored and if required consideration may be given to a study being carried out on the work place environment as a risk factor.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that we have the France Telecom epidemic, where people tend to commit suicide in their workplaces and in view of the fact that there seems to be a total disregard by many employers and heads of departments including government institutions concerning suicide, I would ask the Minister whether she would not consider it a matter of emergency to look into the high figures of suicide which have not been circulated, but which I estimate to be quite high for this country and, as a matter of emergency, instruct all heads of departments, all directors not to take suicide as a kind of democratic exercise on the part of someone who wants to die, but that it should be something very serious so that we reduce stupid death.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to be informed that there is already at the Ministry a Suicide Prevention Unit and a lot of awareness campaign is being carried out on various workplaces and as from January 2010 onwards several work sessions have been carried out in different departments to make people aware of the risk of suicide.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I suggest that the Police department be made aware of the dangers of suicide?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I inform the House that the police department, the SMS, the Fire Services have all benefited from such awareness campaigns.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has been asked for the number of suicides and attempted suicides over five years. Truly this would not have wasted the time of the House, it would have been so easy to give us the figures for five years, but being given that it is being circulated can we know, at least, what the trend looks like over the last five years? Has the situation being been deteriorating or not?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Speaker Sir, I may give the values. The numbers, fortunately, have been decreasing although one suicide is one too many. Mr Speaker, Sir, may I give the values with your permission? In 2005, there were 99 cases; in 2006 - 97 cases; in 2007 - 95 cases; in 2008 - 84 cases and in 2009 - 83 cases.

Dr. S. Boolell: There seems to be a request for attempted suicide cases as well. Are they successful or unsuccessful?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, in the cases of attempted suicide, the number is more or less the same though, as I have mentioned earlier, one is too many; the number ranges between 355 to 385 attempts.

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister mentioned in her reply that a steering committee has been set up. I would like to know when and if there has been any recommendation that this committee has already been submitted. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there is any psychological support given to the Police Force. She mentioned awareness campaign, but I would like to know what psychological support is being given to the Police Force.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, to start with the implementation programmes of the committee, I would like to inform the House that the committee has five subcommittees and these subcommittees are making recommendations on training, advocacy, assistance of Police, fire services and prisons as well as limiting access to dangerous chemical products. Now the Ministry has a psychologist and several other psychologists working on sessional basis and providing their support to the Suicide Prevention Unit which is based at the NPF building at Beau Bassin. On top of that, we have the Principal Probation Officer who is a holder of an MSc in the Community Services Management, who is also helping in this Unit. At the time, the Suicide Prevention Unit was set up in 2005 and the Implementation Committee has been working since September 2009.

HOSPITALS – HIGH-TECH SERVICES

(No. 1B/47) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical services offered by the Government, she will state if Government is envisaging any change in its policy, and in particular to hi-tech medicine, including cardiac surgery.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Medical Services in our hospitals including High Tech Services as well as Cardiac Surgeries performed at the Cardiac Centre, Pamplemousses are provided free of charge to the population.

As regards cardiac surgeries undertaken at the Cardiac Centre operating under the aegis of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, it has been decided that only those having a personal health insurance cover will be required to meet the cost of cardiac surgeries

and other invasive and interventional procedures. In this respect, the regulations are being finalised accordingly.

Dr. S. Boolell: Are we given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this is the end of the Welfare State as far as the health services are concerned? And that if we start paying for cardiac surgery what is going to become expensive next, whether you're going to charge for renal transplantation, renal services and whether someone who has an insurance for cardiac surgery will have priority on the list as opposed to someone who has no insurance?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Surely not, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is bent on maintaining the Welfare State. The second thing is that, no priority will be given to anybody whatsoever, but I think that since on an average, we have around 550 cardiac surgeries per year and that those who come to the cardiac surgery much prefer to come to our cardiac centre than going to the private clinics. If they have a medical insurance, well they pay to the private clinics why not pay to the cardiac surgery at Pamplemousses?

RODRIGUES – FLOUR AND RATION RICE - PRICE

(No. 1B/48) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to flour and ration rice presently on sale in Rodrigues, he will state –

- (a) if he is aware of the change in the quality thereof and, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the reasons thereof, and
- (b) if government intends to subsidise the products to cover the cost of freight charges and other costs involved for the transfer from Mauritius to Rodrigues to put them at par with the price in Mauritius and if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the STC that there has been no change in the specification for rice and flour and that the same quality of rice and flour are sold in Mauritius as well as in Rodrigues. I am tabling the specifications of rice and flour that have been in force for the last 10 years.

In regard to part (b) of the question, there is also a firm request from the Minister of Rodrigues and my Ministry will examine the request.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister is saying is that the quality is the same?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, the quality is the same, Mr Speaker, Sir. The quality of the rice that we are eating every day is the same. I just want to table a copy of the specifications.

Mr François: Is the hon. Minister aware that the rice being sold on the market is not eatable and there is a majority of people using ration rice in Rodrigues? Is it agreeable that dirty ration rice sold on the market is not of good quality?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that the same quality of rice is being sold in Rodrigues as well as in Mauritius. I am going to check again whether the information of the hon. Member is correct or not.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, the quality of rice is very, very, very bad and people in Rodrigues are saying that even the pigs cannot eat this type of rice.

Mr Speaker: I know the hon. Member is new. The hon. Minister has said that is going to look into the matter. I would ask him to talk to the Minister and if he is not satisfied, he can still come to this House and raise the matter at Adjournment.

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, puis-je demander au ministre s'il est possible d'informer la Chambre du pourcentage de brisure dans le riz présentement sur le marché?

Mr Soodhun: 25%, M. le président.

BEAU BASSIN – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/49) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he has received complaints from the inhabitants of Beau Bassin, namely in the regions of Chébel, Barkly, Maingard, Mont Roches and Vuillemin in regard to the frequent disruptions of water supply and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons therefor and the remedial actions that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that prior to April 2010, the regions of Chébel, Barkly, and Maingard were supplied with water on a 24-hour basis pumped from two boreholes.

In April 2010, Chébel, Maingard and Barkly regions were connected to the new service reservoir of capacity of 2500 m³ constructed by CWA at Meldrum. However, it was observed that there was a decrease in pressure in the supply system in particular at Barkly and Chébel, due to heavy leakages in the network at Cité Barkly.

As an interim remedial measure, Cité Barkly has been disconnected from the service reservoir and reverted to the old system of pumping. Water supply is now generally satisfactory, according to the CWA. The CWA is undertaking works to replace the defective network.

As regards Chébel, it is still supplied from Meldrum reservoir and water supply is presently satisfactory.

Mont Roches is supplied from Roches Brunes reservoir. The water supply has been restored to normal following the repair of old water supply pipes, which were damaged during wastewater works.

Regarding Vuillemin, I am informed that on 13 May 2010, there was a burst on the existing service main, resulting in decreased pressure. On the next day, repair works were completed and the water supply restored.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he has been made aware of the problems following the commissioning of the new reservoir at Meldrum Street? There is a new reservoir at Meldrum Street which is operational to cater for the lower Beau Bassin region. From what we understand from a reliable officer – the hon. Deputy Prime Minister knows whom I am talking about – who is not an engineer but a sort of a PRO, there is a technical problem following the commissioning of the new reservoir. Either it has not been built according to specification or there is a technical problem which has a direct impact on the water supply of the lower Beau Bassin region.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not my information. The hon. Member did mention it to me and I checked. The real issue has been the unexpected, unknown and undetected losses along the Barkly network. Once this has been closed and water supply restored from the pump, the issue has decreased and we are replacing the pump.

As to the site and construction of the new reservoir, there was a question of whether it was properly sited, I am told that the height and the level are appropriate. But I will check again.

TROMELIN ISLAND – *COGESTION* – MAURITIAN & FRENCH GOVERNMENTS AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/50) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

whether, in regard to the *cogestion* of Tromelin Island, he will give details of the agreement recently signed between the Mauritian and French Governments.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will seek your indulgence and that of the House because the reply I am going to make is rather lengthy as it pertains to a very important subject of national interest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, Mauritius and France signed on 7 June 2010 a Framework Agreement on Economic, Scientific and Environmental Co-management relating to Tromelin Island and its surrounding maritime areas. Mauritius and France also signed, at the same time, three implementing agreements relating to archaeological research, fisheries and protection of the environment respectively.

The Framework Agreement concluded by Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin is of historical importance and testifies to the existence of a strong political will on the part of the hon. Prime Minister and the French President.

It is recalled that co-management of territories in our region which are the subject of disputes with France was first proposed at the Indian Ocean Commission Summit held in December 1999 in Reunion Island. Following the Indian Ocean Commission Summit, the Special Cell on Tromelin, operational at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until early 2000, undertook to examine the implications of co-management. However, the co-management proposal did not gain momentum until the official visit of the hon. Prime Minister to Paris in 2006.

Subsequently, when the hon. Prime Minister met the French President, Mr Sarkozy in June 2008 in Paris, it was agreed that modalities for the co-management of Tromelin should be worked out by Mauritius and France. The hon. Prime Minister, however, made it clear that the sovereignty issue should not be postponed indefinitely and should be resolved as soon as possible.

Three meetings at Senior Officials' level between Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin were held in December 2008 in Mauritius, in October 2009 in Reunion Island and in February 2010 in Mauritius. The Mauritius delegation was led by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and comprised the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Solicitor General.

As a result of these meetings, Mauritius and France agreed upon a Framework Agreement which provides for the establishment of a regime of economic, scientific and

environmental co-management relating to Tromelin as well as its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. The initial draft of the Agreement was prepared by the Mauritius side with the assistance of late Sir Ian Brownlie, Q.C. and submitted to the French side for consideration.

The Framework Agreement on the co-management regime will initially cover the following areas -

- (a) protection of the marine environment, conservation and promotion of terrestrial and marine biodiversity;
- (b) fisheries;
- (c) monitoring of natural phenomena in the region, and
- (d) archaeological research.

The Framework Agreement also provides for the establishment of a Co-management Committee for the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee, which will comprise an equal number of members from Mauritius and France, will meet, at least, once every year, alternately in Mauritius and in France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian and French Senior Officials also finalised three implementing agreements on archaeological research, fisheries and protection of the environment respectively. These agreements define modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement in the areas falling under its purview.

Under the implementing agreement on archaeological research, the following measures will be taken by Mauritius and France following the two archaeological campaigns on Tromelin Island in 2006 and 2008 -

- (a) setting-up of a Franco-Mauritian scientific team in the context of the third archaeological campaign to be undertaken in 2010 once the necessary financial means have been raised;
- (b) contribution to a scientific publication that would take into account all the aspects of the history of the site of Tromelin;
- (c) an inventory and analysis of the state of the archaeological objects that have been found in Tromelin and determination of the treatment required for the

preventive preservation of the objects likely to be exhibited in museums or in exhibitions;

- (d) organisation of an itinerant exhibition in Mauritius, Reunion Island and mainland France;
- (e) conduct of a joint study on the construction of a monument to commemorate Tromelin as a remembrance site, and
- (f) organisation of a lecture tour to Reunion Island and Mauritius as a follow-up to that already initiated in mainland France.

As for the implementing agreement on fisheries, it provides for the implementation of a common fisheries policy which will deal in particular with the evaluation of fish stocks, the elaboration of measures for fisheries management and modalities for the issue of fishing licences. It is to be noted that agreement on the issue of fishing licences was reached after protracted negotiations. The French side had initially proposed that only the French authorities should deliver fishing licences to all vessels authorised to fish in the surrounding maritime areas of Tromelin. The Mauritian side objected to that proposal. It was finally agreed that the Mauritian authorities would issue fishing licences to Mauritian flag vessels while fishing licences for French flag vessels would be delivered by the French authorities. As for vessels from other countries, they would need licences from both the Mauritian and French authorities.

As regards the implementing agreement on the protection of the environment, it establishes a framework for the responsible management of the environment of Tromelin Island, the *platier* and its surrounding maritime areas. The agreement further provides for the conduct of an environmental inventory, following which a master plan for the management of the environment of Tromelin will be prepared. A joint oil spill contingency plan will also be worked out by Mauritius and France.

The three implementing agreements equally provide for the setting up of specialised expert groups which will make proposals for consideration by the Co-management Committee to be set up under the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin.

During the talks, the Mauritius delegation insisted on the need for the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin to be of limited duration and for the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin to be resolved as soon as possible. The Framework Agreement and the implementing agreements have thus been concluded for a period of five years. They

may be renewed for another further term of five years, unless one of the parties gives notice of its intention to terminate them six months before their expiry. During the duration of the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin, Mauritius will continue to have discussions with France on the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin.

Appropriate provisions have been included in the Framework Agreement and the three implementing agreements to ensure that the conclusion of these agreements is not prejudicial to the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin.

I will table copies of the agreements which have been signed by Mauritius and France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since there have lately been press reports to the effect that Madagascar is claiming sovereignty over Tromelin, I wish to inform the House that Madagascar had renounced in the 1970s its sovereignty claim over Tromelin. A mutual agreement was reached between Mauritius and Madagascar whereby Madagascar would support the claim of Mauritius over Tromelin and Mauritius would extend its support to the claim of Madagascar over the “Iles Eparses”. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin.

NHDC ESTATES – REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. 1B/51) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to rehabilitation works to be carried out on the NHDC Estates, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as we are all aware inhabitants of NHDC housing estates are owners *de plein droit* of their housing units, and as such are solely responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their housing units and housing environment. However, this Government being extremely sensitive to the living conditions of these people, made an unprecedented effort to undertake rehabilitation works in some of these housing estates considered as a priority.

As a matter of fact, provision was made in the budgetary exercise of June 2009 to carry out rehabilitation works in some NHDC housing estates. Works identified as priority were -

- (a) water proofing;

- (b) repair to cracks, renovation to bathroom and toilet areas and associated ancillary works, and
- (c) repairs to CEB meter cabins which were vandalised.

Subsequently, contracts in respect of the above mentioned works were awarded to successful bidders for a total sum of Rs150 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, rehabilitation works have already started since November last and are ongoing. Eight housing estates were identified for waterproofing, 90% of the works have been completed on three housing estates and are in progress on the remaining four.

In regard to repair to cracks and associated ancillary works, 65% of the works have been completed in the eight identified housing estates. There has been some delay in the progress of works due to the reluctance of certain inhabitants in allowing access to their housing units. Unbelievable, is not it? Officers of my Ministry and those of the NHDC are carrying out a PR exercise to that effect.

Sir, in regard to repair to CEB meter cabins on 13 housing estates, works started in January of this year and are expected to be completed by August 2010.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE – INQUIRY

(No. 1B/52) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to reported cases of medical negligence for each of the last five years, she will state the number thereof, indicating if an inquiry has been carried out in each case and the outcome thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that in all, 226 cases of alleged medical negligence have been reported to my Ministry and the Medical Council of Mauritius during the period January 2005 to date. Out of these, 205 cases have been directly reported to the Medical Council by both the public and private sectors as well as private individuals. The breakdown of cases is as follows -

- 44 cases in 2005;
- 41 cases in 2006;
- 39 cases in 2007;
- 46 cases in 2008;
- 37 cases in 2009, and

19 cases from January 2010 to date

I am also informed by the Medical Council that out of the 205 cases reported to the Council, 46 cases involving public officers have not yet been investigated as the Council is awaiting the delegation of power from the Public Service Commission to proceed ahead.

With your permission, Mr Speaker Sir, I am tabling the information with regard to the outcome of the cases investigated so far by my Ministry and the Medical Council.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Will the hon. Minister state whether there have been cases whereby after inquiry, decision has been taken to interdict a public officer, if so, in how many cases?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have circulated the information, but I can say that in some cases, as regards public officers, we are still waiting for the regulations to be promulgated with regard to the delegation of power for the PSC.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: In cases of victims, has there been any compensation paid to the victims or their families?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I do not have this information for the time being, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister since when have we been waiting for the Medical Council to delegate its powers?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, I am given to understand that these cases have been pending for some four to five years.

Mr Bérenger: It is obvious that the Public Service Commission is not prepared to delegate its powers. Is it a fact that legislation is being prepared to correct the situation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a meeting with my colleague the Attorney General and things are moving now. We are expecting to receive the delegation of power at any time from the PSC; otherwise, the Medical Council Act will have to be amended if we do not get the delegation of power.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the access to the medical file, one of the main problems which alleged victims of alleged medical negligence face is to have access to the medical file. Will the hon. Minister see to it that whenever somebody complains for medical

negligence, especially in the public sector, access to his medical file will be made available to him/her?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I will have to discuss with the Medical Council on this aspect, Mr Speaker, Sir.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES/FATAL ACCIDENTS – MEASURES

(No. 1B/53) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to cases of industrial injuries and fatal accidents on the site of work, he will state -

- (a) the number thereof which have occurred during each of the last three years, and
- (b) the actions that are being taken to ensure a safer working environment.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of occupational accidents notified under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 for the last three years are as follows – (I am not circulating it because it is only for the last three years that the hon. Member was looking for).

Year	Non-fatal cases	Fatal cases
2007	149	10
2008	151	13
2009	184	15

I must say that even though any accident is one too many, I am of the humble opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, that with the excellent work, there has been some good work done at the level of the Ministry and particularly in the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, there has been therefore a drastic reduction because in 2002-2003, we were already at the figures of over 200 non-fatal cases, even 249 at one stage. At fatal levels, in 2003-2004 were the highest 24 at that time. So, there has been always a reduction.

Now, I come to part (b) of the question. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that it is the duty and responsibility of every single employer, by virtue section 5 of the relevant legislation, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, to ensure that the safety, health and welfare of his employees at work are being taken care of. In addition to the

Statutory Provisions under section 5, my Ministry is implementing several measures which comprise *inter alia* the following, with a view to ensuring a safer work environment -

- (a) we have regular inspections that are being carried out at the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate of my Ministry to ensure compliance with the legislation. During the past three years - and I believe those figures are very important - there have been 8,563 inspections carried out and 365 complaints investigated into. Court actions have been initiated in respect of 427 cases of breach of the provisions of the legislation;
- (b) on-going training programmes by the Ministry for the benefit of all stakeholders are conducted, so as to create a safety and health culture at workplaces;
- (c) there is a continuous upgrading of the legal framework which is being looked into, to address changes in work patterns, processes and technology. In this context, a new Regulations on electricity at work was promulgated in June 2009;
- (d) there is also a guideline on Risk Assessment which is being finalised in consultation with the International Labour Organisation. I have had discussions recently. I came back only this morning from the ILO, Geneva. There are discussions that are on-going for us to finalise the Risk Assessment document, and this document will be a valuable tool for employers to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of any risk to the safety and health to which any employee is exposed whilst he is at work, and also
- (e) additional staff has also been recruited at the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate with a view to providing a better delivery of service to stakeholders, such as inspections.

I must also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that only last week I was at the ILC in Geneva. I had the honour to meet one of the executive directors responsible for Occupational Safety and Health, Mr Machida, and he has come to Mauritius at the beginning of this year. He has suggested something, which I am seriously considering at the level of my Ministry, which is to amend section 5 of the Occupational Safety and Health legislation to include within the workplace also the lodging of the employee for foreign workers.

Another amendment that we are considering at the level of the Occupational Safety and Health legislation is the possibility of - as is done in other countries, such as Singapore, under the guidance of the ILO - coming up with the amendment that states that it shall be mandatory for every single employer to take his responsibility under section 5 vis-à-vis his employees and to give the relevant training to each and every employee of his establishment. Once the training programme is confirmed as being the right training programme by my Ministry, those workers will be trained mandatorily by each employer under the control and supervision of my Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister what actions are being taken with regard to foreign contractors who are employing foreigners? Many seem not to be aware of the regulations, especially the Health & Safety Regulation. I would like to know what specific actions are being taken, and whether they are forced to abide with regard to these regulations prior to be given a permit to work in Mauritius.

Mr Mohamed: In fact, I welcome the question by the hon. Member. True it is that, as soon as I took office, I have noted that there is indeed a problem with regard to the way foreign employees are being treated. There is also the legislation. I would like to reassure the hon. Member that one of the means of making sure that everyone is responsible and has to adhere to their responsibility is for us to pass a law. The law was passed; that was an excellent piece of legislation, which is being reviewed accordingly as we need to. But section 5 imposes upon all employers of local workforce or foreign workforce of certain responsibilities.

In practice, I totally agree that it is problematic. The problem is that we have identified, at the level of my Ministry, that not only is it important for employers to be aware of what their responsibility is and where it starts and where it stops, but it is also important for the employee, being local as well as foreign, to know what his rights are under the legislation. Therefore, we have taken a decision, and I have instigated something new at the level of my Ministry, which is that, each and every time a single foreign worker lands in Mauritius, before he even meets his employer, he is to be given a sheet. We are working on the process by which we can put it into practice. He will be given an information sheet in the language in which he understands. Just as he is given a sheet at the Immigration for health purposes, he is also given a sheet with regard to his rights under the Occupational Health & Safety and under the Employment Rights and Relations Act. What we are doing also, as I have said, is thinking of amending the law for it to be mandatory upon each employer

employing foreign as well as local to train their workers under our supervision. My Ministry has already conducted many training sessions, where we have trained trainers. So, what we are going to try to do now is extend that, to make them liable and responsible.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is with regard to foreign contractors, especially in the construction industry, who are employing foreign and Mauritian workers on construction sites. It seems that they are not aware or do not care about the safety of workers. So, my question is with regard to specific contractors.

Mr Mohamed: The definition of contractor or foreign contractor, as the hon. Member puts it, falls within the ambit of employer, as defined under section 5 of the relevant legislation. Therefore, the law does cover them. With regard to what we are doing additionally, we are going to them in virtue of an amendment to the law in order to make mandatory upon them to train, because if they want to ignore the law, if they want to make as though they do not understand what the law says, I can reassure the House that, at my Ministry, we will be very, very strict on this particular issue. There will be no discrimination between local workforce and foreign workforce, and no discrimination in responsibility that is owed by a local or a foreign company. The law is the law, and I will see to it that it is adhered to, to the letter of the law.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister will surely agree that what is of critical importance is that the law and compliance can be monitored, and that the law can be enforced. Since the hon. Minister is aware that the factory inspectorate is notoriously understaffed and has been for many years, would he be in a position today to inform the House what is the number of factory inspectors entitled to carry out inspections around the island and also in Rodrigues?

Mr Mohamed: What I can right away say from the very outset is that I totally agree with the hon. Member that it is pointless to have a law that is not policed. I must reassure the hon. Member and the Members of the House that there has been a recruitment exercise immediately before I took office, where inspectors were recruited additionally in order to come and sort out this big problem of understaffing that existed and also with regard to the officers responsible for the Occupational Health & Safety. So, both issues of understaffing were real, and those matters have been taken care of with regard to Mauritius and Rodrigues.

With regard to the exact figure of recruitment, I do not have it with me. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I shall give it to him, or I can give it to him if he gets in touch with me.

POINTE AUX SABLES, TERRASSON & SUGAR PLANTER - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

(No. 1B/54) **Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if the inhabitants of Pointe aux Sables, namely, Terrasson and Sugar Planter will be connected to the main sewerage system.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the region of Sugar Planter, commonly known as Cité Ilois/Debarcadère is already sewered, and presently the Wastewater Management Authority is implementing a project to connect about 110 houses. The project is scheduled to be completed by September 2010.

The region of Terrasson, comprising about 1,000 houses, is unsewered and does not form part of Phase 1 of the first National Sewerage Master Plan of 1994, which is being implemented presently. Consideration will be given to the construction of a sewerage network in Pointe aux Sables in the next phase.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is being confused, Sugar Planters is not Cité Debarcadère. It is another region near Cité Debarcadère. So, it is not sewered yet. The problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, is very acute for the residents of Terrasson and Sugar Planters. At some point in time there has been a special fund for CHA residents who encounter this problem because to make *vidange* at a regular interval costs a lot of money. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state whether, this fund is still operational and, if not, whether he will see the advisability of re-instating it?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, if there has been confusion about names, I can assure the hon. Member that Sugar Planters is sewered...

(Interruptions)

That is the information I have, unless we are calling the same thing by different names or different things by the same name; it could be. As to the region of Terrasson, Pointe aux

Sables, unfortunately, houses were built there too close and the nature of the soil is such that it is difficult and that it is impermeable and there is overflow risk easily. It is difficult to maintain, difficult to know how to proceed because I am told that the Policy Guidelines of the Ministry of Housing and Lands were not followed when the constructions were made. They are much too close. But we will see to it how to improve the service.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the special fund, if fund can be made available for those people who are encountering hardship.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I will look into that.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.22 p.m. the sitting was suspended.