

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - MEMBERS

(No. 1B/266) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third 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 National Human Rights Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to whether, since 2005 to date –

- (a) any member thereof has resigned, and
- (b) any member whose term of office has expired, indicating in each case, if any replacement has been made.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. 1B/266 and 1B/275 concurrently since they relate to the same subject.

The Protection of Human Rights Act provides for the National Human Rights Commission to be composed of a Chairperson and three other members. The Chairperson is still in Office. The contract of two members expired in April 2009 and September 2009, respectively while another member resigned in September 2009.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, consultations are ongoing at the level of the Prime Minister's office, the Attorney General's office, and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission regarding structural changes to be brought to the Commission with a view to broadening its mandate and increasing its independence so as to strengthen its efficiency and make it fully compliant with international principles on the status of National Human Rights Institutions. This exercise will require amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act as well as the enactment of new pieces of legislation, which are being worked out by the Attorney General's office in consultation with the Prime Minister's office.

In regard to the Sex Discrimination Division which is a Division of the National Human Rights Commission, it is composed of the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, a vice-Chairperson and another member, in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act 2002. The division currently consists of Mr Dheerujlall Seetulsingh as Chairperson since April 2003, and Mrs Vidya Narayan as vice-Chairperson. Mrs Vidya Narayan was first appointed in April 2003 for a period of 5 years, and her appointment was subsequently renewed. The division has the required quorum to perform its duties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the functioning of the Sex Discrimination Division is also being reviewed in the context of the ongoing consultations on the overhauling of the organisational structure of the National Human Rights Commission which I mentioned earlier.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether the commission has the required quorum at all its sittings?

The Ag. Prime Minister: At the National Human Rights Commission, the quorum is three, there is only one Chairperson. But it does not mean that it is not functioning. It is functioning. As to the Sex Discrimination Division, it is functioning, it has a quorum.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the commission is bound to inform complainants of the outcome of the inquiries and what he proposes to ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I don't think the supplementary emanates from this question. The hon. Member will have to come with a specific question.

The Ag. Prime Minister: If I may, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Yes, they do.

RELIGIOUS BODIES - SUBSIDIES

(No. 1B/267) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to subsidies to religious bodies, he will, for each of the last ten years -

- (a) give details of the total grants, and
- (b) state whether Government proposes to request the Director of Audit to audit the accounts of the beneficiaries.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions 1B/267 and 1B/276 concurrently as they relate to the same subject.

I am tabling the detailed information relating to the amount of subsidies allocated to each religious body for the last ten years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the Parliamentary Question 1B/267, I wish to inform the House that the religious bodies are requested to ensure that the religious subsidies are to be utilised as follows -

- (i) 80% to meet the salaries of priests including their travelling expenses, and
- (ii) the remaining 20% to meet expenses on construction and maintenance of places of worship and ancillary expenses, including expenses incurred on training of priests.

Furthermore, appropriate accounting and auditing arrangements are already existent whereby each religious body has to submit to the Director of Audit within two months of the end of the year, the relevant details of how the religious subsidies are distributed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a case regarding distribution of subsidies to affiliated religious organisations pending before the Supreme Court, in the presence of the Government of Mauritius. This case is scheduled for submissions on 29 July 2010. One of the issues in this case relates precisely to the distribution of religious subsidies to religious bodies and how the Accountant General and the Director of Audit exercise control on the manner in which subsidies are used by the religious bodies.

Being given that the issues raised in the part (b) of the Question 1B/267 are *sub judice*, it would not be appropriate for me to provide, at this stage, the information requested.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been a long tradition to help religious bodies in our country. But, as only some benefits from it, does our Government consider this an opportunity to review the whole mechanism or do away completely with the system?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take the point about auditing the accounts and who have access to the funds or not. It will be looked into. But, at the moment, the issue is *sub judice*.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell the House whether Mauritius is a laic State or not?

(Interruptions)

Est-ce que Maurice est une république laïque?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Well, this is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, je voudrais savoir du premier ministre par intérim sur quel critère on se base pour déterminer le montant des subsides pour chaque organisation religieuse ?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The allocation of subsidy is based on population census of 1972 corrected as time goes along by the Central Statistical Office and there is a *per capita* allocation for each religion which is then shared among all the members.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister table a list of the beneficiaries indicating the yearly amount of each group?

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the Ag. Prime Minister say that the religious subsidies are distributed on the basis of the 1972 population census. Fair enough! And then, he added - "corrected by the Central Statistical Office". How do they correct the 1972 population census, on what facts?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did ask this question to the Central Statistical Office. They assure me that the method they use is reliable and that the changes are so slight over a decade that there is no room for great error. Therefore, the figures are applicable. This is information I gathered from someone who is very trustworthy on this.

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION - SHARES

(No. 1B/268) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Cargo Handling Corporation, he will state if Government and the Mauritius Ports Authority intend to sell their shares in the Company and, if so, state the measures that have been or will be taken to safeguard the employment of its employees, particularly the casual workers.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the shareholders of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd are namely, the Government - 6%; the State Investment Corporation (SIC) Ltd - 54%, and the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) - 40%.

I am informed that in an Aide Memoire dated 05 February 2007, the then World Bank Director of the Africa region which includes Mauritius, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, had advised that Port Louis Harbour was well poised to play a lead role on the regional maritime and logistics scene, and in the process transform

itself into a major logistics and transshipment platform in this part of the world. It had also recommended that a strategic partner for Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd be selected with a view to capturing substantial benefits both in terms of container traffic growth as well as foreign direct investment as a result of the window of opportunity that was unfolding in the region.

In June 2007, Government agreed to the recommendation of the World Bank and appointed -

- (a) the International Finance Corporation, the Private Sector arm of the World Bank, as the Lead Transaction Advisors to assist in the selection of the strategic partner, and
- (b) a Steering Committee under the responsibility of the External Communications Division to oversee the successful implementation of the strategic partnership project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that as part of their assignment, the IFC has carried out a due diligence exercise in October 2008 and in its Inception Report has reiterated that the Mauritius Ports Authority divests its shares in the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd in order to be able to play its role as an effective regulatory body and landlord port in accordance with the provisions of the Ports Act.

Accordingly, in December 2008, Government, *inter alia* agreed to the Mauritius Ports Authority disposing of its 40% shares in the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. to a prospective Strategic Partner, the more so as the continued participation of the MPA in the shareholding structure of the terminal operator is against the principles of good governance and best practices.

As regards the second part of the question, I am informed that the CHCL is having recourse to the services of contract employees for a period not exceeding one year as and when the need is felt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Steering Committee that has been set up to oversee the implementation of the strategic partnership project is working with the IFC regularly. The assignment is still ongoing. I am given to understand that IFC is currently in the process of finalising the documents for the launching of the second phase of the project, namely, the Request for Proposal and a recommendation regarding the labour issue will be made to Government subsequently.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether there have been consultations with trade unions of the Cargo Handling Corporation to reassure them that once there is a strategic partner, all the terms and conditions of the existing employees will remain as they are?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have met representations from management and the trade unions who have come to see me on different occasions and we are taking their concerns on board.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the present Government has decided what percentage of its shares that strategic partner will hold and, secondly, whether this strategic partner will have full management control of the company?

The Ag. Prime Minister: For sure, Government will keep the majority shareholding and the strategic partner will have a minority shareholding. As to the management, it will be decided as it is still being discussed.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following this answer, we know that in the case of Mauritius Telecom, a minority partner still exercises substantial control. So, will it be the same in the case of Cargo Handling where you will have the minority foreign shareholder exercising control over the company?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all this is being taken care of as this is the whole point of the exercise. I am sure the hon. Member knows about it, he has been involved at some stage with it, so he knows what these issues are.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, prior to the past general elections, the then responsible Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval said that *privatisation* was not in the best interest of the day. Will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister confirm that his Government today is working on the same policy?

(Interruptions)

The Ag. Prime Minister: The vice-Prime Minister denies having said anything of this.

RODRIGUES - POLICE OFFICERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. 1B/269) 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 Police Force, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information for Rodrigues as to -
 - (i) the number of police officers posted thereat;
 - (ii) whether consideration will be given to recruit Police Constables from Rodrigues for future recruitment exercises;
 - (iii) the number of Officers from the Special Mobile Force posted thereat on a roster basis, and
- (b) state if Government intends to convert the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex into a Training Institution for all Law Enforcement Officers and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are currently 297 Police officers posted in different Stations, Units and Branches in Rodrigues.

As for part (a) (ii), I am informed that whenever the Disciplined Forces Service Commission carries out a recruitment exercise in the Police, equal opportunities are given to all eligible candidates from the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, to join the service. The policy is to encourage the recruitment of the maximum number of officers from Rodrigues so that, in the long run, the Rodrigues Police Force can be run by Rodriguan Police officers themselves. At present, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of 264 Officers running the Rodrigues Police Force, excluding the Special Mobile Force Task Force, 233 out of 264 are Rodriguan.

Regarding part (a) (iii), I am informed that the Special Mobile Force Task Force based in Rodrigues is made up of 33 Officers, of whom 12 are on a permanent basis, and 21 are on a tour of 45 days. Around 50% of the officers of the Special Mobile Force Task Force are Rodriguan.

As for part (b) of the question, I am informed that there is no proposal to convert the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex into a Training Institution for all Law Enforcement Officers. However, I would like to point out that all organisations concerned with law enforcement are responsible to carrying out training of their officers as it is the practice in Mauritius.

The training of police officers in Rodrigues is already being carried out by the Rodrigues Divisional Training Unit at the Jean Tac Special Mobile Force Complex.

Mr François: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ambit of my question was – I am aware that there is recruitment of Police officers, but I was asking for a higher number of Police constables from Rodrigues. May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware, despite that there is training, as he said that the Jean Tac complex, in the Police Department in Rodrigues there is a kind of frustration from a lack of thorough continuous training.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will transmit this to the Commissioner of Police to see what can be done to improve. We are always going for improvement wherever it is, we will look into it.

Mr Bérenger: If I have heard the Ag. Prime Minister correctly, I heard him say that out of so many SMF officers in Rodrigues, so many are there on a permanent basis. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister clarify, no one is in permanence in the SMF itself, the Police officers spend some time and then go back to the Police Force. So, what does he mean by that?

The Ag. Prime Minister: From the information that I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are 33 members of Special Mobile Force and out of these, 11 are Rodriguans posted on a permanent basis. This is the information that I have and, of those who are on rotation, there are four out of 21. So, it comes to about 15.

Mr François: The Ag. Prime Minister said that there are 53 officers posted there and I believe that this complex is underutilised and that there is also a newly built police station at Plaine Corail airport, will the Ag. Prime Minister consider the possibility of shifting those officers from Jean Tac to the newly built Plaine Corail airport and create this training institution, which I believe, is very important for the Police Force in Rodrigues. I will come later with another question more specifically about that, Sir.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will transmit whatever is being requested, but for sure, the Jean Tac Unit is strategically located and it will be difficult to find anywhere else as good as where it is now. But, as to the other proposal, I will certainly ask the Commissioner of Police to look into it.

PRISON INSTITUTIONS - REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/270) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether,

in regard to rehabilitation activities in the prison institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number, if any, meant for –

- (a) male inmates, and
- (b) female inmates, indicating the frequency thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rehabilitation of detainees forms part of the Prisons activities. The rehabilitation programmes include literacy and numeracy courses, educational and vocational training, moral and spiritual programmes, as well as leisure and recreational activities.

In addition, preventive and rehabilitation programmes are also being carried out to address the problem of substance abuse and proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the prisons. These include detoxification, HIV/AIDS care programme and offending behaviour courses which are run in collaboration with other governmental agencies and NGOs.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, there are 34 rehabilitation activities designed for male detainees and 16 for female detainees. I am tabling a list of the rehabilitation activities designed for male and female as well as the organisations which also run rehabilitation activities. So, I am giving the full information to the hon. Member.

Some of the activities, such as the vocational training courses, are run on a daily basis while others on a weekly, monthly or on need basis, as appropriate.

Some of the rehabilitation activities at the prisons are run in collaboration with non-governmental organisations. I would like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to put on record the important contributions of NGOs working with the detainees.

Mr Bérenger: Again, when a question is put concerning the prisons, *tout va très bien madame la marquise*. It is an ideal world, listening to the reply provided by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister. Will he care to check the mess that exists in the prisons in terms of rehabilitation activities? Will he care also to listen to the NGOs? They are fed up; *ils sont pleins de bonnes volontés*, but they cannot do what they are meant to do.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at no point did I say that everything is marvellous and beautiful. I gave the answer as it is; the number of activities and what is being done. As far as the contributions of the NGOs are concerned, I am circulating the list. So, there is no complacency, and there has never been that everything is

fine. But, having said that, there is a question of security and access in prison. We must be careful about how courses are run and who have access to prisoners. So, we have to balance it too. I am sure there must be some who feel that they do not have enough access and others who feel that they should be given more means. I go along with all these. Nobody is saying that it is a perfect world, but wide efforts are being made.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who carries out these activities, who gives the training apart from the NGOs? Second, I would like to know whether the officers dispensing the training have received a particular training, and the duration of the training they have received.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. There is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Institute of Development and Training Board. They have trained about 104 prisons officers. They have trained the trainers; they also accompany these trainers and issue certificates of competence and attendance. Things are improving. This was signed early this year.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether prisoners on remand also take part in these rehabilitation activities?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not believe so, but I will check.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that, since last year, NGOs have been refused access for rehabilitation programme. If so, has he been informed of the reasons why an NGO, who used to offer its services at the prisons, has been refused access? As a matter of example, there was another NGO that offered training in hair dressing, and this project has been turned down.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was made aware of two problems that arose. One, with 'Ki nous été' and the second with Mrs Rogers who, for personal reasons, stopped her prison activities. I looked into these two, but what I am told - this is what I said before - is that, sometimes, there is some sort of difficulty about access. If for security reasons, resource persons have to be security cleared and if they are not cleared - they happen to change resource persons without informing the authorities - problems can arise. I think that with better communication and understanding of how the system works, things will improve. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to say that we do not find this in the prison also. I am sure the hon. Member must know. If we take the Parent-

Teacher Association, we have the same problem of where one responsibility goes and when the other one lies. So, it is a matter of dialogue.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether any follow-up is done with the prisoners after they are released, to see if the rehabilitation has been effective or not?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, those who are interested to get back to normal life are identified and counselled before they leave prison, about three to six months before, and, following that, they are followed outside as well. But it depends largely on the voluntary bodies to do it and, as I said, they do a marvellous job though, from what I gather, there are limitations, of course.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow two more questions, one from hon. Barbier and one from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the rehabilitation programme, may I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether psychologists participate? *Est-ce que les psychologues sont impliqués dans ce programme ? Dans l'affirmative, combien ? Y a-t-il un programme à cet effet à la prison centrale ?*

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am given to understand that, yes, there are psychologists. How often and how many there are, I would not be able to say, but I will look into it.

Mr Bérenger: We have been talking about rehabilitation activities. Will not the hon. Ag. Prime Minister agree with me that the beginning of rehabilitation is giving possibility to these prisoners of performing productive work? From what I understand, even that has stopped recently; not yesterday, but recently.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that this has stopped, but I will look into it. The aim is eventually to get prisoners back into normal life, whether through training, counselling, mentoring or whatever it is.

BEAU BASSIN CENTRAL PRISONS – MR J. P. I. - DEATH

(No. 1B/271) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the interdiction of the Prison Officers in connection with the death of Mr J. P. I. on 4 March 2006 at the Central Prisons of Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons,

information as to whether, the inquiry thereinto has now been completed and, if so, where matters stand.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Prime Minister to Parliamentary Question 1B/143 at the sitting on Tuesday 29 June 2010, where he indicated that following the findings of the Judicial inquiry into the cause of death of late J.P.I by the District Magistrate of Rose Hill, the Director of Public Prosecutions had advised no further action in the matter on Friday 04 September 2009. The District Magistrate had concluded that there was no foul play in the case.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on the basis of a preliminary report by the police on the death of late J.P.I., whilst the latter was in custody at the Beau Bassin Central Prison, six prisons officers were interdicted as from Tuesday 14 March 2006 for alleged gross negligence of duty.

Upon obtaining the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions on the outcome of the Judicial inquiry, the Commissioner of Prisons informed the Disciplined Forces Service Commission on Monday 26 October 2009 of his proposal to withdraw the interdiction orders dated Tuesday 14 March 2006 served upon the six prisons officers, and of his intention to take departmental action against the officers concerned for possible dereliction of duty. I am informed that all the six prisons officers were reinstated in their respective posts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 23 November 2009, he had designated an Assistant Commissioner of Prisons to carry out a departmental inquiry to determine if there has been gross negligence of duty. I am further advised that the inquiry is still ongoing and that the report will be submitted within a week.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure that the hon. Ag. Prime Minister is aware what has taken place. When the DPP advises no further action, because he finds that there has not been no foul play, that's one thing. But there must have been officers guilty of gross negligence. That chap died in part of the prison, stayed there for several days, was recorded as present in and out of his cell and present at meals. And, all this time, the inquiry is still on. This again is the performance of this present Commissioner of Prisons.

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Commissioner of Prisons gave the responsibility to an Assistant Commissioner of Prisons.

He has taken some time, because I gather he has a problem of illness, absenteeism. But this week or next week, the report will be ready.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, though we had the answer from the Ag. Prime Minister, may I ask him whether he is aware that we had two independent inquiries, one from the Police department and one from the Prison department and that both inquiries at that time concluded that there was gross negligence? Now we are four years down the lane and the poor bereaved family is still waiting for a final conclusion. We understand, from a reply given earlier and confirmed today, that the Director of Public Prosecution has advised no further action and that the Prison officers are being reinstated to their posts. Which is which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I follow the Leader of the Opposition. There have been two different issues, one is gross negligence and one is no criminal offence in terms of the death. For negligence, the Police established that there has been negligence and there has been an inquiry ongoing at the moment to establish the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! We may carry on with questions to Ministers.

DAGOTIERE – FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTING FACILITIES

(No. 1B/278) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground of Lower Dagotière, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka/Flaca, information as to if consideration will be given for the provision of lighting facilities thereat.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that works for lighting facilities at lower Dagotière Football ground will start shortly and will be completed by the end of August 2010.

I am further informed that the works will be carried out in-house by labour and materials of the Council.

ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/279) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Additional Stimulus Package, he will -

- (a) give a list of the beneficiaries thereof as at to-date, stating, in each case, the total amount disbursed and the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether any monitoring exercise is carried out by his Ministry in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. 1B/279 and 1B/299 together since they relate to the same subject matter.

The Additional Stimulus Package relating to support to enterprises comprises five components -

- (1) the Mechanism for Transitional Support (MTSP);
- (2) the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Schemes (LEMS I, II & III);
- (3) Support to Manufacturing and Services Sector (SMSS);
- (4) Support to SMEs (SSME), and
- (5) Support to facilitate access to Finance.

These five components are regrouped under the Saving Jobs and Recovery (SJR) Fund.

I am informed that under the SJR Fund, two types of interventions are provided to enterprises, including SMEs: first, direct support in terms of working capital, debentures and government guarantees to enterprises in difficulty; and second, support to enterprises to make them grow and become more productive and competitive. A total amount of Rs3.15 billion has been earmarked for the SJR Fund. In addition to the SJR Fund, Government has earmarked Rs500 m. for Sale and Lease Back interventions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at 30 June 2010, Government has disbursed Rs226.3 m. under MTSP and under the Sale & Lease Back Scheme, Rs466 m. has been disbursed. The total number of beneficiaries under the MTSP is 15, out of which there are 5 small and medium enterprises. I am told that 4,979 jobs have been saved out of which 221 relate to SMEs. I am tabling the list of the 15 beneficiaries under MTSP.

As regards the second type of intervention aimed at helping enterprises including SMEs to grow and become more productive and competitive, I am informed that as at end of June 2010, Rs158 m. has been disbursed and some Rs153 m. have been committed for various schemes and projects. The areas of intervention cover SMEs in agriculture, manufacturing, services, catering, ICT, printing, seafood processing, fishing, utility

industries, building & construction, light engineering, hotel & restaurants and others. These schemes are being implemented by three sub-committees namely, SMSS, SSME and the MTSP itself.

The SMSS and SSME components are, in fact, being managed by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection respectively. The main implementing agencies under the SMSS and SSME sub-committees are Enterprise Mauritius, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC), the Development Bank of Mauritius and the Tourism Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that there is a Mauritius Approach for SMEs Scheme where commercial banks have agreed to earmark Rs300 m. to lend money to SMEs at repo rate on the basis of an analysis by an independent consultant and a guarantee from Government. This Scheme, however, is not working as planned. Out of 22 applications under this Scheme, only 5 have been approved for an amount of Rs26.5 m. I have requested that this Scheme be reviewed so as to make it more accessible to SMEs.

Enterprises get support from the various schemes in the following areas, amongst others:

- Upgrading of standards, quality and packaging for export readiness
- Productivity and competitiveness improvement
- Market Intelligence and export promotion
- Equipment Modernisation schemes
- Market Development and marketing
- Market Diversification
- Product Development

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that the SJR Fund has been in operation since July 2008 and that there are a number of schemes and implementing agencies involved, a list of all the beneficiaries including eligibility criteria for each scheme is being compiled and will be tabled. However, I can give the House an insight of the interventions as at date through certain implementing agencies.

For Enterprise Mauritius, 412 SMEs have benefitted and total amount disbursed is Rs39.7 m. For SMEDA, there are 119 beneficiaries for an amount of Rs15.7 m. For NWECC, there have been 1,471 participants for an amount of Rs1.1 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MTSP operates the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) which I mentioned earlier. This scheme aims at helping enterprises including SMEs to modernise their productive equipment and machinery through concessionary financing from Leasing Companies. Rs1.4 billion have been earmarked for this Scheme. As at 30 June 2010, Rs285m. has been disbursed and Rs375 m. are already committed. Some 210 applications have been approved, out of which 125 relate to SMEs.

Support is also provided to enterprises in the form of guarantees to enable them to secure funds from financial institutions. As at date, some Rs195 m. has been provided in the form of Government guarantees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the Finance and Audit (Savings Jobs and Recovery Fund) Act 2009, adequate safeguards have been put in place to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of Government money. Thus, the three sub-committees have adequate representation of Government officers on board and their accounts are audited by the Government Audit Office. In addition, the sub-committees operate under the aegis of an apex body, the SJR Steering Committee, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Disbursements are effected in phases while the project is being implemented. The Finance Section of the concerned Ministries has the responsibility to ensure that documentary evidence of expenses is available to justify the amount disbursed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with respect to monitoring, I am informed that the implementing agencies have the responsibility to submit to their respective sub-committees progress reports on a monthly basis. On their side, the sub-committees must report progress to the SJR Steering Committee on a quarterly basis. The MTSP has a team which monitors the schemes under its purview and the Ministry of Finance is kept informed of developments, including disbursements effected.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that we are currently reviewing the whole package of support to enterprises including SMEs.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister Finance confirm that the Mauritius Stationery Manufacturers Ltd. has benefitted although it has made losses for activities in the Malagasy Republic?

Mr Jugnauth: I think that the hon. Member is talking about the MTSP financing. According to the information that I have and the list that has been circulated, I can see that

the Mauritius Stationery, MSM Printing - it is in the printing business, not our MSM, it is a different MSM - has benefitted from the MTSP.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find it absolutely abnormal that the MSM Ltd. forms part of Mon Loisir Group which is itself a powerful economic player. Why then should Government rescue such type of enterprises which definitely can survive on their own?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, I am not aware about the activities of the company with regard to Madagascar because I heard the hon. Member saying that they are making losses in Madagascar. I do not have this information. Secondly, I can reassure the hon. Member that the MTSP functions on the basis that Government will put in 40% of the amount and there is also the Bank that is committed. So, this is my view that the Bank will not go and finance an enterprise if it believes that it will not recover in the future. So, that is the whole purpose of having a partnership with the Bank and Government under the MTSP.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Will the hon. Minister confirm to the House that he will look into the issue in the public interest?

Mr Jugnauth: I will definitely look again into the issue, but as I say, the MTSP has done its due diligence. They have also looked into the report that has been made by the financial institutions and they have acted on that basis. Of course, I take the point and I will look into that particular case.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it appears, therefore, that the Additional Stimulus Package has not been working satisfactorily according to what has been explained by the vice-Prime Minister. And in the case of SMEs, only five of them have benefitted from the Additional Stimulus Package scheme. In view of the fact that so much criticism has been leveled by him in the past about the failure of the Stimulus Package to help the poor; will the content, the nature and scope of the Stimulus Package still be maintained in the meantime?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the view of the hon. Member that the Stimulus Package or the MTSP has not worked. That is his view and I take note of it. Now, whether it has not been helping the poor; as I say, I have circulated the list under the MTSP and there are, in fact, five SMEs who have benefitted. But, I also take the view that it should be reviewed because what we want is to help more the SMEs. We all know that there have been criticisms of the Stimulus Package, but it is a matter - I have just said that in my reply -

that we are going to review. First of all, we have to assess the impact of the Additional Stimulus Package and, in the light of that, we are going to review if need be.

Mr Ganoo: Will the hon. Minister of Finance agree with me - since I have the list of the beneficiaries just tabled - that Infinity BPO should not have benefitted from the MTSP financing under the Stimulus Package inasmuch as Infinity BPO is in the IT and BPO sector and this financing was designed only for industries in the manufacturing sector? And, this is why, out of the 15 beneficiaries on the list, Infinity BPO is the only one beneficiary falling under the IT and BPO sector - all the other beneficiaries operate in the manufacturing sector?

Mr Jugnauth: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It was meant for any company which wishes to come to the MTSP. So, it was not limited. A Parliamentary Question has been asked about Infinity BPO to which I replied. And, I can remember having said - let me say it again - that the Infinity BPO had satisfied the criteria that were laid down before benefitting from this amount.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the vice-Prime Minister with regard to SMEs who have benefitted from the Stimulus Package? May we know in which sectors those SMEs are operating?

Mr Jugnauth: I can see one in the Textile and Garment, one in the Pharmaceutical, one in Jewellery, another one again in Textile and Garment, another one in Textile and Garment. So, there are three in Textile and Garment, one in Pharmaceutical and one in Jewellery.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question from hon. Li Kwong Wing!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I have heard in the reply of the vice-Prime Minister, it is very clear that the Stimulus Package which forms part of the reform of the previous Government has not worked ...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: My question, therefore, is: now that we have even a bigger crisis coming with the Euro Zone problems and turbulence, where the SMEs are going to face even greater difficulties, is it not urgent that the Minister of Finance reconsiders the whole Package for SMEs instead of waiting for the study of the failures of this scheme so far?

Mr Jugnauth: I think the hon. Member has not listened to what I have just said in my reply with regard to the Additional Stimulus Package. The Additional Stimulus Package is

not only about MTSP. I have mentioned a series of components which are under the Additional Stimulus Package and I have said, unfortunately, I do not have the list with me, it is only a partial list, but I will circulate the list of the number of enterprises and people who have benefitted with regard to the different components under the ASP. Now, with regard to the effectiveness, I have already replied. First of all, we are assessing, but I am not going to wait for the assessment before coming with other measures. I have just said earlier, in reply to different Parliamentary Questions, that we are monitoring the situation with regard to the new situation that is arising now in Europe with the decline of the Euro. And, we will be coming shortly to the House with a number of measures.

NAPOLEON BRIDGE-MALINGA – MAIN ROAD

(No. 1B/280) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the main road from Napoleon Bridge to Malinga, La Laura and Rivière Baptiste, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, if consideration will be given to its widening for the safety of the road users.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the road from Napoleon Bridge to Malinga, La Laura and Rivière Baptiste is a rural road, and falls under the responsibility of Moka/Flacq District Council. However, I will request RDA to have a fresh look at it.

At 1.00 p.m the sitting was suspended.

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

CHEMIN LA RETRAITE - UPGRADING

(No. 1B/281) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Chemin de la Retraite from La Laura to the cremation ground at Circonstance, St Pierre, he will consider the advisability of its upgrading.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Chemin La Retraite has not yet been declared public road, and Moka/Flacq District Council has initiated the necessary procedures to do so.

Once the road is declared public, the NDU will take appropriate action for the construction of same.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is very helpful as usual. Can I suggest if he could use his good offices to expedite matters? Because that part of the road from La Laura to Circonstance, via l’Avenir, is very busy. At some places, it is very narrow and cannot be widened. There are other facilities and amenities that can be available at Circonstance, which is not at La Laura.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already said that we are going to expedite matters.

M. RAMBURRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RENOVATION

(No. 1B/282) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the derelict state of the administrative block of M. Ramburrun Government School at St Julien d’Hotman and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given to its renovation.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the administrative block of the M. Ramburrun Government School at St Julien d’Hotman is accommodated in a stone building, which dates as far back as 1951, where upgrading works are indeed required.

My Ministry has already completed, since June 2010, the first phase of works, which comprise tiling, cladding, partitioning, internal painting and construction of false ceiling in some classrooms. As a next phase, it is now proposed to carry out further upgrading works like additional painting, plastering, repairs to false ceiling, replacement of shed and fixing of new gutters to shed.

For the information of the hon. Member, I wish to table a list of other works that may be needed to be carried out by the maintenance team of my Ministry.

AXLE WEIGH BRIDGE - PURCHASE

(No. 1B/283) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Axle Weigh Bridge, he will state the date of its purchase and the cost thereof, indicating if it is still in use.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an axle weigh bridge was purchased under the South Eastern Highway project by RDA in September 2008.

The cost is around Rs700,000 (inclusive of all taxes) at the time of its supply.

It was one of the equipment supplied by the contractor, Beijing Chang Cheng Construction Co. Ltd, and the cost was included in the contractor's bid.

At present, it is with the supplier for maintenance and recalibration. It is expected to be back in August 2010.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may we know from the hon. Minister what this equipment is used for?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this equipment is used to measure the weight of different vehicles in the country. According to the Road Traffic Regulations, it is stipulated that the maximum axle weight of a single axle shall not exceed 10 tonnes, and that is the mechanism by which we are able to find out whether the vehicle is fit to be utilised on the road or not.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that we don't have the equipment, does that mean that it has a detrimental effect on our tarmac?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we never had this in the past. Once we received this instrument, it was very difficult for us to utilise it because no one in the Police Department was properly trained for that purpose. Secondly, the machine itself was not properly calibrated, and that is the reason why we have sent it back to the supplier, to have a look at it over again.

MONT IDA - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/284) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a football ground at Mont-Ida, he will state if the works have started and, if not, state when, indicating the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, works were completed in April 2010. Once the maintenance period of one year is completed, including proper turfing of the pitch, the football ground will be handed over to the District Council for use for the inhabitants.

Mr Seetaram: Does the hon. Minister consider an additional investment for the erection of fencing around the football ground?

Mr Bachoo: This is a fresh request; I will try to transmit it to the NDU.

NHDC ESTATES, MONTAGNE BANCHE - BUS SHELTERS

(No. 1B/285) **Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of bus shelters at NHDC Estates, Montagne Blanche, he will state if the works have started and, if not, when, indicating the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TRMSU that works for the construction of bus shelters at NHDC Estates, Montagne Blanche, will start once land is acquired from the private sector on one side of the road. Land on the other side belongs to the State.

EVENTS MAURITIUS LTD - ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/286) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether he will, for the period 2006 to date, give details of activities carried out by Events Mauritius on account of –

- (a) his Ministry, and
- (b) any department falling under the aegis of his Ministry, indicating, in each case, the fees paid.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Events Mauritius Ltd, a Government-owned company, was set up for the purpose of identifying, organising and promoting national and international events in Mauritius. In this regard, Events Mauritius Ltd has been called upon to organise a series of events in partnership with the Ministry and the MTPA, namely -

- (a) in the year 2007, activities in the context of the first Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;
- (b) for the year 2008 -
 - activities in the context of the Second Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;

And other events which were organised in that year -

- family fun day;
- waiters race;

- Ebony, and
 - concert by DJ Aqueel.
- (c) In the year 2009 -
- we have the activities in the context of the third Edition of the *Festival International Kreol*;
 - two fairs for the benefit of Women Entrepreneurs, namely one at Grand' Baie and one at Flic-en-Flac;
 - the launching of National Brand Strategy, and
 - Divali Celebrations;

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that no fee as such has been paid to Events Mauritius Ltd. However, my Ministry and the MTPA have, among other partners, including the private sector, sponsored activities organised by Events Mauritius Ltd by contributing towards the costs of such activities.

QUATRE BORNES – MARKET - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/287) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a new market in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to where matters stand, indicating -

- (a) if land has already been earmarked, and
- (b) the budget allocated for its realisation.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has decided to construct a new market fair with dismantlable steel structures on the existing site at corner St Jean and Avenue Newton. In this context, the project has been submitted on 06 April 2010 to the Project Plan Committee for its consideration.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the land earmarked for the construction is 3,930 m², out of which 539.6 m² is owned by the Council and the remaining 3,390.4 m² has been leased by the Société Central Park.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, a request for provision of fund to the tune of Rs30 m. has been made through the Local Infrastructure Fund to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the implementation of the project and same is under consideration.

Although it is the decision of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes to house the project on the said site, concurrently, upon a suggestion of my colleague, hon. Ms Deerpalsing, I am looking actively into a possible alternative site which would be more appropriate for the construction of a market place together with parking facilities and which may, at the same time, offer the possibility of an integrated urban development plan.

Mr Ramano: M. le ministre, après 2005, il a été question de la construction d'un *tourist market*. Est-ce que nous sommes en train de parler du même projet ?

Mr Aimée: Non, M. le président.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, nous parlons d'un chiffre de R 30 millions. Le ministre est-il au courant d'une lettre en date du 05 mai 2009 du *Ministry of Public Infrastructure*, où mention est faite que *the covering of the existing fair - even though it will be with dismountable steel structures - will constitute an encroachment onto the mass transit alignment, as such the committee cannot recommend the implementation of the project?*

Mr Aimée: Bien sûr, M. le président. That's why I am looking for an alternative site to make provision for parking and other spaces.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je voudrais quand même souligner que mention est faite dans la réponse du ministre qu'il y a une demande de R 30 millions qui a été faite au *Local Infrastructure Fund*. Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant qu'une motion a été déposée par l'équipe municipale pour la démolition du stade de Candos pour faire face à un nouveau marché ? Est-ce que je pourrais aussi savoir du ministre s'il peut s'assurer que provision est faite pour la construction d'un nouveau stade, et deuxièmement qu'un *proper traffic impact assessment* soit commandité, vu la gravité de la situation dans la région de l'hôpital Victoria, Candos, et aussi dans la région de la Louise ?

Mr Aimée: Je n'ai pas cette information à l'effet que le stade de Candos va être démolé. Par contre le stade a bel et bien commencé à Palma. C'est tout ce que j'ai comme information.

**RAJKUMAR GUJADHUR GOVERNMENT SCHOOL, FLACQ – WASTE
WATER - SEEPAGE**

(No. 1B/288) **Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Rajkumar Gujadhur Government School at Flacq, he will state if he is aware of seepage of waste water emanating from the Police Quarters into the school yard thereof and, if so, will he state the remedial actions that will be taken, indicating the timeframe.

Mr Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a problem of seepage of waste water emanating from the Police Quarters into the school yard and the matter has been reported to the authorities concerned. According to reports available, this is due to the fact that the existing wastewater disposal system at the Police Staff Quarters is not functioning due to high water table.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) is currently working on a wastewater disposal system with the Police Department in order to find a solution to this problem.

As a short-term solution, the Wastewater Management Authority is proposing to sort the seepage of waste water through the pumping and carting away of the waste water by the Police Department. I understand that this is actually being done. The Health Inspectorate has also taken mitigated measures to disinfect and larvicide twice weekly the yard of the school.

**CENTRAL FLACQ, ISIDORE ROSE & LALLMATIE
- GREEN SPACES - MAINTENANCE**

(No. 1B/289) **Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the green spaces at -

- (a) Central Flacq, opposite Auguste Volaire stadium;
- (b) Isidore Rose, near the football ground, and
- (c) the Gandhi Road at Lallmatie, he will state the frequency at which they are cleaned and maintained.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the three green spaces are presently being cleaned and maintained by my Ministry once a month in winter and twice a month in summer while the collection of the refuse is ensured by the Local Authority.

I wish to inform the hon. Member that the green spaces will soon be handed over to the Local Authority for maintenance.

CENTRAL FLACQ - HAWKERS

(No. 1B/290) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the increasing business activities in Central Flacq, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka-Flacq District Council, information as to whether a survey on the number of hawkers operating thereat has been or will be carried out by the Council in order to relocate them.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that a preliminary survey conducted in May 2010 in the vicinity of Flacq market open fair had revealed that 92 illegal hawkers were operating thereat.

I am further informed that the Council intends to carry out a fresh survey in order to determine the exact number of hawkers operating in the Central Flacq region.

With regard to the last part of the question, I am informed that the Council has not taken any decision for the relocation of these hawkers.

Concurrently, upon the request of my colleague, the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, land Transport and Shipping, hon. Bachoo, additional provision will be made in the new market to be constructed to house some more hawkers.

MEDICAL COUNCIL - MEDICAL SPECIALISTS – APPLICATION

(No. 1B/291) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Medical Specialists, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to -

- (a) the number of applications for registration thereof which have been rejected as at to date, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether distance learning for post graduate medical gynaecological and surgical training is acceptable as formal specialist training to the Council for registration.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to PQ Nos. 1B/291 and 1B/292 together as both of them relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Medical Council that from January 2005 to date, three applications were rejected as they did not comply with the provisions of the Medical Council Act. Two of the applicants did not comply with the prescribed training period for registration as specialist as their course of study was less than three years, while the other one had followed an MSc Course which is not considered as a specialist qualification.

As regards distance learning for specialist training, I am further informed by the Medical Council that such a mode of learning is not acceptable by the Medical Council for registration purposes.

The Medical Council has confirmed that all specialists, including Medical Officers employed by my Ministry are duly registered in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Medical Council Act in force at the time of their registration. However, I wish to point out that from 2005 to date, seven specialists who were initially registered on the basis of documents submitted at the time of registration had their registration withdrawn in view of the fact that the Medical Council subsequently obtained confirmation on a basis of an enquiry carried out, that the duration of the training was less than three years.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there has been an admission by a former Attorney General, that he intervened by letter and caused the Medical Council to have a further sitting to review the non-registration of a doctor, I would like to ask the Minister whether she has caused an enquiry to be conducted on that matter?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have enquired from the Medical Council as to what happened in that particular case. In fact, I have the letter which was addressed to the Chairman of the Medical Council by the former Attorney General, in which he said that he is being given to understand that there are disturbing factors and whether the matter could be looked into. The Medical Council has, at its sitting, referred the matter to the legal adviser of the Council. The legal adviser has also given the following advice that, if the Council has good reasons to still believe that the doctor in question does not satisfy the criteria set out in Section 23 of the Medical Council Act to be able to be registered as a specialist, then it should not proceed with the registration. A *mise en demeure* also had been served on the Council.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, she said that “seven specialists” have had their qualification as specialist withdrawn. Can we know when that took place?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I don’t have specifically the dates, but I can tell you that it is between 2002 and 2005.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know the reasons as to why these applications were withdrawn?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I just gave the reasons in my reply. I said that, in the initial stage, what happened was that the Medical Council had examined the case on the basis of its face value. Following and pending an enquiry, it was found that those who were initially registered on the basis of documents which were submitted at the time of registration had less than three years.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the minister correctly, those seven cases had their specialist qualification withdrawn before 2005. Can I know whether there are not other cases which are pending these days where the Medical Council does not wish to act although Police passport enquiry has established, as in the case of those seven, that they had not been present where required to qualify for a period of three years?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have got specialists coming from Eastern European Universities in possession of a PhD who were registered as specialists prior to July 2008, because it was not specified then in the definition of specialist qualification that the training should be clinical or academic or both. In the circumstances, a number of specialists were registered as such. Now when this was found out, there were regulations which were made in 2008 and these regulations stipulate that to be registered as specialist, the candidate should undergo not less than three years of practical and clinical training. But it is the law which was prior to that which was there. In spite of the fact that an amendment was brought to the Medical Council Act in 2007, this loophole could not be corrected because we cannot backdate the law. That is why these cases are still there. Anybody will have to live with it. It was done in the days when Ashock Jugnauth was Minister of Health. He had to live with it. My predecessor had to live with it; I have to live with it. We won’t be able to do anything because we cannot backdate the law.

Dr. S. Boolell: What are the amendments being now contemplated by the Council as per the President’s Speech for certification of specialists?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: This is still ongoing. As at now, I cannot tell the hon. Member what are the amendments that will be brought because there is a committee looking into it and I'll come to this august Assembly for amendments to be made to the Medical Council Act.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is it possible to know from the Minister as to whether many of the specialists who work in Mauritius are recognised as specialists by the donor countries of the certificates?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, before registration we ask for information from the universities concerned and it is on the basis of criteria which are established that the Medical Council will register or reject the case.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are in post actually staff that have obtained postgraduate medical gynaecological and surgical training by distance learning?

The Deputy Speaker: This has been answered.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: If the hon. Member had listened to my reply, I just explained that this was the situation because the law as it was prior to 2005 did not make mention of whether it should be three years or whether he should have clinical or academic qualification or both. The law is such. In fact, there was an amendment which was made to the law in 2007. Even then we could not amend the law because the law cannot be backdated.

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she got any request to bring the regulation as it was prior to 2008? Has the hon. Minister got any request in that direction?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I am not in presence of any such requests?

Mrs Labelle: At times I think I have heard changes as from 2005 and then hon. Minister has mentioned 2008, maybe she could clarify as from which year there were these changes? Was it in 2005 or 2008?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, there was an amendment in the law in 2002 to 2007 and then there was an amendment which was brought to this august Assembly, but, in spite of this amendment which was brought in 2007, that piece of law could not be corrected. That is why I say we will have to live with it because we cannot backdate the law.

MEDICAL COUNCIL – SPECIALISTS - REGISTRATION

(No. 1B/292) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to whether all Specialists, including Medical Officers employed by the Ministry, registered by the Council, comply with the Council regulations for registration as Specialists.

(Vide reply to P. Q. No. 1B/291)

**RODRIGUES – TRUST FUND FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF
VULNERABLE GROUPS AND NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

(No. 1B/293) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Eradication of Poverty and Empowerment Programmes by the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups and National Empowerment Foundation in Rodrigues, he will state if Government proposes to bring them under one entity in order to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may wish to note that all the Programmes mentioned in the Parliamentary Question already operate under the aegis of the National Empowerment Foundation since January 2010.

I am informed that the NEF has set up a Programme Executive Committee specific to Rodrigues and that committee has been entrusted with responsibility for implementing projects under the Eradication of Absolute Poverty and the Empowerment Programmes.

Insofar as the projects under the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups Programme are concerned, I am informed that these fall under the direct responsibility of the Fund's Programme Executive Committee in Mauritius, with the overall coordination of all Programmes remaining within the purview of the NEF Board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that such arrangements were put in place for practical reasons to meet the requirements of Rodrigues. However, I have requested the NEF to carry out an assessment of all its programmes to gauge their overall effectiveness. Also, I propose to engage consultations with stakeholders during my forthcoming visit to Rodrigues. I should thereafter be in a better position to take an informed decision.

Mr François: I thank the hon. vice-Prime Minister for his answer, but I just want to ask him whether, during his visit, he could look into the coordination of these two institutions, because there is actually a situation where there is an increased *assistanat* which is opposing the idea of *autonomisation et responsabilisation*, which is quite contradictory to *l'esprit d'empowerment et l'éradication de la pauvreté*.

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we provide housing; we provide micro credits, loans to fishermen, in lagoon fishermen, etc. I'll look into it. I am not sure I agree, but I'll look into it.

RODRIGUES – LAVIMS PROJECT

(No. 1B/294) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Land Administration Valuation and Information Management System (LAVIMS) Project, he will state if the System will be extended to Rodrigues and, if not, why not.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scope of the LAVIMS Project is restricted to the island of Mauritius only.

I am informed that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has recently undertaken a complete cadastral survey of Rodrigues Island. I understand that this system will be maintained and updated so that it may, eventually, be integrated into an autonomous Land Information Management System for Rodrigues.

Mr François: The hon. Minister said that the LAVIMS project is restricted to Mauritius, but if you will allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to refer to the Government Programme, I'll quote page 14, paragraph 124, it says –

“It is an ongoing reform program that will deliver the essential building blocks for a modern Land Administration and Management System for the Republic of Mauritius.”

It does not say ‘Mauritius’, but ‘for the Republic’. That is why I put that question as to whether the project will be extended to Rodrigues. It is quite important also for the Minister, because there is a question of monitoring of land.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues forms part and parcel of integral Mauritius. So, when we refer to Mauritius, we mean the whole of Mauritius and all the islands.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when is it that the LAVIMS project will be totally operational in Mauritius?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said in my speech on the Government Programme, the LAVIMS project will be finished, all the surveys and everything will be finished by December this year and we are coming up with two Bills to integrate the cadastral and information system in it so that it will be complete. I hope that it will be operational as from January next year, but these two Bills will enable us to update it every time and again when we have got survey or parcelling of land.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister, with due respect to the autonomy of Rodrigues, whether the Ministry have had a look at the cadastral survey carried out by the Regional Assembly and is he satisfied that it is up to the mark?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the cadastral survey is being done actually by officers of my Ministry who have been seconded to the Regional Assembly. So, there is always a sort of liaison between my Ministry and the department of the Regional Assembly.

Mr François: Rodrigues forms part of the Republic of Mauritius, that's correct. With regard to good governance and control of access to State land, mainly in Rodrigues - as Rodrigues consists of 90% of State land - there is a sort of speculations going on on State land in Rodrigues, that's why I am asking whether the hon. Minister still considers to take on board this LAVIMS project to Rodrigues for a proper control. There are people from Mauritius who have residential property on State land or freehold land and they are still having access to State land in Rodrigues and there is a sort of poor control mechanism between these two islands. Can a system be put in place that will enable us to control both in Rodrigues and in Mauritius with regard to State land, mainly, because 90% of the State land is in Rodrigues?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, speculation on State land does not exist only in Rodrigues but in Mauritius and in the whole world for that matter. But as far as Rodrigues is concerned, with very due respect, we cannot encroach upon the independence of the Regional Assembly. I know there have been a lot of complaints about *une braderie du patrimoine*, but we have to keep our authority within the limits of what is allowed according to the Constitution.

The Deputy Speaker: One last question from both Members.

Mr François: We had the example of the NRPT which had been worked out by the new Minister of Finance, but probably a new tax system will be coming, what will happen in that line?

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: May I ask the hon. Minister if the public at large is going to have access to information provided by LAVIMS?

Dr. Kasenally: No, I think there is no question about that.

RODRIGUES - VISITING SPECIALISTS

(No. 1B/295) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to visiting Specialists of the Health sector in Rodrigues, she will state –

- (a) the frequency of their visits;
- (b) the number of visits effected by each specialist, since January 2010 to date,
and
- (c) the measures, if any, Government proposes to take to increase the frequency thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that visiting specialists proceed to Rodrigues depending upon the number of patients twice or thrice a year for a period of five days in the fields of Neurosurgery, Dermatology, Oral Surgery, Radiotherapy, Cardiology, Psychiatry, Physical Medicine, Ophthalmology, ENT and Orthodontics. In addition, a team from the Cardiac Centre visits Rodrigues as and when required.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling information on part (b) of the question regarding the number of visits effected.

As regards part (c) of the question, my Ministry proposes to take the following measures -

- (a) specialists in the fields of ENT, Ophthalmology and Psychiatry will now proceed to Rodrigues for a period of ten working days in lieu of five days;
- (b) specialists in the field of Radiology will also proceed to Rodrigues thrice a year, and

- (c) the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been advised to create posts of Specialists/Senior Specialists on its establishment so that recruitment may be effected to services restricted to Rodrigues only.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND - AMOUNTS DISBURSED

(No. 1B/296) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether she will for the period 15 April to 04 May 2010, give the amounts disbursed by the National Solidarity Fund, if any, indicating the regions where payments have been effected.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information asked for concerning disbursement made by the National Solidarity Fund for the period of 15 April to 04 May is being tabled.

NEW GEORGE V STADIUM - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1B/297) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to renovation works at the New George V Stadium, he will state –

- (a) the initial cost thereof; and
- (b) when the contract was awarded, indicating, the name of the contractor, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that contracts for renovation works at the New George V Stadium were awarded as follows -

- I. **Provision of lighting facilities** - Contract was awarded to Magnet Energise Ltd on 20 November 2008 for the sum of Rs18,948,903. Works have already been completed.
- II. **Rehabilitation of Playfield** - Contract was awarded to Active Decor Co Ltd on 01 September 2009 for the sum of Rs5,212,071. Works are expected to be completed by the end of July 2010.
- III. **Cleaning Works** - Contract was awarded to Sonalall & Sons Building Contractor Ltd on 09 February 2010 for the sum of Rs3,547,750. Works will be completed by the end of July 2010.

IV. **Paintings Works** - Contract was awarded to Sonalall & Sons Building Contractor Ltd on 03 June 2010 for the sum of Rs4,255,000. Works are expected to be completed by the end of September 2010.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre s'il est au courant que la firme qui est supposée effectuer les travaux de rénovation de la pelouse a effectivement l'expertise voulue pour effectuer ce genre de travaux?

Mr Ritoo: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded to Active Decor Co. Ltd. and they have other expertise, because we are dealing with them and we have got report on a monthly basis.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, concernant la rénovation de la pelouse, est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer qu'effectivement ces travaux ont pris du retard ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a report from the meteorological services whereby it is stated that we had heavy rainfall for quite some period, mainly, 01 October 2009 to 22 April 2010 on the various days when the rainfall was more than 5 millimetres.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais aussi savoir du ministre s'il y a des officiers de son ministère qui supervisent ces travaux actuellement.

Mr Ritoo: We have officers of my Ministry who submit the report.

Mr Guimbeau: J'aimerais demander au ministre si c'est la politique du gouvernement de changer les noms des infrastructures sportives existantes.

Mr Ritoo: I don't understand the question.

The Deputy Speaker: This has nothing to do with the question.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, le stade George V à Curepipe est un patrimoine du football mauricien. Je voudrais demander au ministre s'il pourra revoir la décision de changer le nom du stade George V qui, comme je l'ai dit, était le patrimoine footballistique.

Mr Ritoo: I don't know why the hon. Member is a bit scared about the name of Sir Ram Ruhee Stadium. I made a statement to this august Assembly quite some time back. Has the hon. Member any problem with the change from New George V Stadium to Sir Ram Ruhee Stadium?

Mr Guimbeau: *I am not scared, I am just saying that the stade George V est un patrimoine du football mauricien. Il y a un nouveau stade qui est construit dans le sud de l'île aux normes internationales. Pourquoi est-ce que le ministre ne donne pas le nom de Sir Ram Ruhee au nouveau stade et que le stade George V reste ce qu'il est?*

Mr Ritoo: I don't know if the hon. Member knows the *parcours* of Sir Ram Ruhee who has done a lot for football and sports in Mauritius and even abroad.

Mr Quirin: Concernant la rénovation de la pelouse, j'aimerais savoir du ministre si, dans sa réponse, il a effectivement cité le nom de Fineway Sandy Works comme étant le contracteur qui effectue les travaux ?

Mr Ritoo: Regarding the rehabilitation works, the contract was awarded on 01 September 2009 and works were expected to be completed by end of July 2010, but due to problems with the weather...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Can the hon. Minister repeat the name of the contractor?

Mr Ritoo: Active Décor Co. Ltd., Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je fais référence à un article qui a paru dans un quotidien en date du 22 mai 2010...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Can the hon. Member just put his question without referring to the article?

Mr Quirin: Effectivement, il y a le nom de Fineway Sandy Works qui effectue les travaux de rénovation de la pelouse.

Mr Ritoo: As at to date, my Ministry has never received any request from Sandy. We deal with Active Décor Co. Ltd., our contractor.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Guimbeau, last question!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table all the contracts awarded for the renovation of the new George V Stadium?

Mr Ritoo: I have no problem to table them.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'effectivement ces travaux de rénovation de la pelouse ont été sous-contractés à une autre entreprise ?

Mr Ritoo: I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL - COMPOSITION

(No. 1B/298) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he will give -

- (a) its composition, and
- (b) a breakdown of the grants made to Sport Federations since January 2010 to date.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information has been placed in the Library of the National Assembly and is available for consultation.

ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE - SMEs

(No. 1B/299) 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 Additional Stimulus Package, he will state –

- (a) the amount committed and disbursed to Small and Medium Enterprises as at 30 June 2010, indicating the names of the beneficiaries and in each case -
 - (i) the category of activities, and
 - (ii) the number of jobs saved
- (b) the eligibility criteria and mechanism for disbursement,
- (c) if any shortcomings have been identified regarding the scheme, and
- (d) whether the Scheme will be reviewed to facilitate greater access thereto to the Small and Medium Enterprises sector.

(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/279)

CORPORATE TAX, VALUE ADDED TAX & TAX ON INTERESTS

(No. 1B/300) 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 banking sector, he will for the period 2005 to 2009 -

- (a) state the amount of profits earned on its global and domestic business activities;
- (b) obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of revenue collected as tax thereon according to Corporate Tax, Value Added Tax or other charges, and
- (c) state the measures that are being taken, if any, to cease the withholding of tax on interests by banks at source during the current year.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, as regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am tabling the requested information obtained from the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I have already indicated in my reply to the PNQ on 22 June 2010 that this Government has taken a commitment to abolish the tax on interests as announced in the Government Programme 2010/2015. Accordingly, the tax on interests will be abolished as from the income year 2010 itself and necessary amendments will be made in the forthcoming Finance Bill.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are referring in this case, to a cash flow problem as such, because the banks are withholding tax on interest that is held at source. This creates a hardship in terms of cash flow to the small enterprise and the small man. Would the hon. Minister be prepared, as an interim measure, while the law will be amended to instruct to the appropriate parties, to cease the taking of the tax on the interests at source in order to relieve the burden of the small man?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we were not going to abolish the tax on interests, there would have been the withholding of interests at source. We have already taken a commitment to the people of this country that we are going to abolish this measure. We will do so - and I have stated earlier, we are not going to move in a piecemeal manner - in the forthcoming Finance Bill.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister of Finance aware that some private and State-owned banks are making multi billions profits due to a very high interest rate on loan and overdrafts which, in turn, are leading many businesses towards bankruptcy. Can the hon. Minister state the measures he proposes to take so as to review such abusive interest rates?

The Deputy Speaker: I won't allow this question. This does not relate to the original question. We move to the next question, please!

GARDEN TOWER - LEASE

(No. 1B/301) Mr 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 the Garden Tower, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) its final costs;
- (b) the total space
 - (i) available;
 - (ii) rented, and
- (c) the names of the lessees, indicating, in each case, the –
 - (i) space rented;
 - (ii) monthly rental, and
 - (iii) duration of the lease

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information asked by the hon. Member requires time to be compiled and verified as to its accuracy and precision.

It is thus being compiled as there are many aspects linked not directly concerning my Ministry. I will thus place the information in the Library as soon as the compilation and verification exercise is completed.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he has a time frame as to when the information would be ready?

Mr Aimée: Very soon.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I know how soon is soon?

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any intention on the part of the Municipality to lodge the hawkers in the Garden Tower?

Mr Aimée: Not at all!

**MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS – LORD MAYOR/COUNCILLORS –
OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

(No. 1B/302) Mr 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 overseas missions undertaken by the Lord Mayor and the Municipal Councillors of Port Louis, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information, in each case, as to –

- (a) the countries visited and the duration thereof;
- (b) the composition of the delegation;
- (c) the total amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) the purpose of each mission.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the same Parliamentary Question was asked two years ago by hon. Jhugroo and the former Minister gave the same answer that information is being compiled. Can I know...

(Interruptions)

It was exactly the same question and we got the same answer that information is being compiled.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister has answered that information is being compiled.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: What I mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that two years have elapsed since the Opposition asked the question.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point and the hon. Minister has taken note.

(Interruptions)

Mr Barbier: What we want to know is whether we have a time frame now for the submission of this information to the House.

Mr Aimée: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got the answer, but it is too lengthy.

(Interruptions)

Mr Barbier: When will this information be tabled?

Mr Aimée: Now.

Mr Bérenger: I would like to know whether it is in order for a Minister to say that the information is being compiled and then five minutes later admitting to have misled the House and putting on the Table the information requested.

Mr Aimée: In fact, I am not misleading the House. I am saying that I will place on the Table...

(Interruptions)

Yes, probably.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must tell the Leader of the Opposition that I have respect for any Member of this august Assembly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have got part of the information. There are parts that should be compiled. That is what I said. If it is only for the voyage, I can give it right now.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We move on to the next question now!

ROSE HILL MARKET - TOILETS - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1B/303) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the renovation works to the Rose Hill market toilets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to whether –

- (a) any tender was launched;
- (b) the name of the successful bidder;
- (c) the costs thereof;

- (d) the date of commencement and completion of works, and
- (e) whether the site has already been handed over to the Council.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that direct quotation was sought on a first time on 19 March 2010 from six firms, all of which were registered in the Council's annual list of firms, but no offer was received. Consequently, bid forms were issued anew to five other suppliers on 09 April 2010, and only one offer was received from A. N. Khoystate Co. Ltd.

With regard to parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the bid was awarded to A. N. Khoystate Co. Ltd for a total price of Rs261,400, inclusive of tax.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the Minister state if handing over has been made?

Mr Aimée: The work was completed and handed over to the Council on 11 June 2010.

NATIONAL FORM III ASSESSMENT

(No. 1B/304) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to national examinations at Form III level, he will state –

- (a) the purpose thereof;
- (b) when they will be introduced, and
- (c) the options that will be offered to students who fail thereat.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish first of all to thank the hon. Member for this question. In my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/40 on the same matter on 23 March 2010, I informed the House that the National Examination at Form III is a Human Resource Strategy Plan 2008-2020, following discussions with partners of the education sector, and that there was unanimity on its appropriateness.

The purpose of the National Assessment is to provide teachers with feedback on the attainment level of their students in each of the identified subjects against a national benchmark, since all of them would be sitting, after two years of further study, for the same international examination of Cambridge School Certificate. This will be an opportunity for schools to be aware of learning gaps and bring remedial measures in the next two years.

Given the importance and the innovative nature of this project, I have decided to adopt a phased approach for the conduct of the National Assessment and, following consultations with stakeholders on the modalities for its implementation and on the basis of feedback obtained, this methodology has been agreed upon.

We are hence proposing to institutionalise the National Assessment in the system as from 2012, for it to be conducted in all secondary schools. This will give us time, as a first step, to allow the assessment to be carried out on a pilot basis for this year and next year in a phased manner.

For this year, the common assessment will be held in four subjects, namely English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies. Marking will be done at school level in these four subjects - I must give a precision - not by the teachers who teach the subjects at school but by other teachers. As for the other subjects taught at that level, the schools will assume, as is currently the case, the responsibility for carrying out the examinations on papers set by the schools themselves. The overall assessment for the end-of-year examination and promotion to Form IV will rest on and be at the discretion of the schools, after taking into account the entire range of subjects taught there and their specific criteria.

I must inform the House that the modalities of the National Assessment are being finalised by a Steering Committee set up at the level of my Ministry, while the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is looking at the technical aspects of the examination. These include working on the syllabus, formulation of specimen question papers and their validation. In this connection, MES is also working with teachers of Form III, both from private and state secondary schools.

The pilot phase for this year will be carried out in some 32 identified secondary schools (16 State and 16 private secondary schools) and, for next year, in an attempt to cover more secondary schools, the number will certainly increase, and also the scope of subjects will be extended to include some other subjects like science and commercial studies. The list of 32 schools is made up of eight schools per zone, four from the State secondary sector and four from the private secondary sector. These schools identified for the pilot phase represent a good mix of rural and urban schools, with gender mix, and encompass a range of schools having different performance levels, all of which have expressed their willingness to participate.

The outcome of the pilot project for the 2010 and 2011 assessment will guide the orientation and help to fine-tune the modalities of the 2012 National Assessment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the purpose of this assessment is not to pass or fail the students, but to help in orienting them towards those learning areas best suited for them. The National Form III Assessment would be held on the same basis as the end-of-year internal examinations carried out at the level of school. There will be no duplication of the examination in the four subjects being assessed at national level. It would, therefore, be at the discretion of the school to decide whether to promote a student or otherwise, based on the criteria set by the school for promotion to the next grade and considering the entire range of subjects taught there.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether, since these exams are meant to be only a feedback, he does not consider the national exams at the level of Form III to be an additional burden on our students' shoulders.

Dr. Bunwaree: Not at all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because the students have to sit for the examinations at the level of the school, and they are not going to sit twice. The marks will be computerised and counted as if they were carried out in the school.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we all know, there is no standardisation of curriculum at the level of Form III. Will we move towards the standardisation of curriculum at the level of Form III in all schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, the syllabus will be a common one. It has been worked upon; it is going to be presented to the schools. They have worked on it in the course of the year and, as from next year, the syllabus will be set at the beginning of the year.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister himself had earlier in the year stated that the Form III National exams will be applicable both to the pre-vocational and to the mainstream in secondary schools. Is that not in total contradiction with what we have just heard, which is an exam on the basis of a common curriculum leading on to common examinations in two years, when we know full well that there is not a common curriculum for mainstream and pre-vocational and that pre-vocational students do not sit for the School Certificate?

Dr. Bunwaree: As from the beginning of the coming term, we are going to sit down and see what is the best way ahead for next year. In fact, *je pense que c'était sage comme décision de prendre un peu plus de temps pour introduire le système.*

Mr Obeegadoo: Reading between the lines, what I understand is that the National examination will not concern the pre-vocational stream.

Dr. Bunwaree: Not at this stage.

Mr Obeegadoo: We have 32 schools, according to the Minister, that will be concerned. Is the Minister in a position to lay on the Table of the House a list of those 32 schools, and confirm that the 16 private secondary schools concerned have been consulted and have given their agreement?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have no quarrel to circulate this list of schools. There is no problem. I have given the details of how they have been chosen. In fact, all of them have been consulted. I have been having requests of late to add up, but then, we had already decided on 32. So, we are leaving it at 32. In the beginning, we were thinking of including science in the first pilot project. Now that we are not putting science, we are going to leave that for next year and we have only four subjects: English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies. Many of the other colleges have thought that they could have participated, but in order to give the chance for the project to succeed, we are staying for the 32 colleges. I am tabling the list.

Mrs Ribot: The hon. Minister is talking about consensus on the Form III National exams, but these days we are reading something else on the parts of the managers, unions and teachers who do not all agree to the Form III National exams. Will the hon. Minister agree?

Dr. Bunwaree: Not really, because when we are in the four walls and we talk they all speak the same language.

Mr Obeegadoo: As the hon. Minister well knows, in the past when references had been made to an examination at the end of Forms III and IV, it was seen as an examination at the end of compulsory schooling, yielding a certificate, so that students leaving school at the age of 16 do not go away empty handed, they have a certificate testifying to their achievement. So, do we understand that the National Form III examination will be a certifying exercise?

Dr. Bunwaree: In the beginning I am calling it an assessment. Let it get into the system, succeed and then it will become an examination with the National Certificate.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am very grateful to the hon. Minister for providing all that information to the House. But is he aware that within public opinion at large, there is a state

of utter confusion and anxiety? Will he, therefore, consider embarking on a proper communication exercise, with a press conference, with communiqués as appropriate to provide information to all the players within the educational community so that people can be aware, as he has made us aware today?

Dr. Bunwaree: I started by thanking the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for this question. This question has been put on the third occasion by the same hon. Member. *Je voulais donner à la députée la valeur de ces examens parce que c'est elle qui a posé la question. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai retiré la question à deux reprises.* Now, that the question has been put, I wanted to give the importance to the House - as the question has been put here - and I have come today with all the information. In fact, the hon. Member is thanking me for that. The population will be made aware now about it. But I have already spoken with all the stakeholders and all of them were agreeable and we are going in that direction.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Will the hon. Minister agree that any exam produces passes and failures? Any exam will be worthwhile only if something else was offered to failures, be it technical, vocational, etc...

Dr. Bunwaree: I said that the philosophy of this examination is not to pass or fail. It is an assessment to give an idea to the students first of all, to the teachers, the rectors of the college where the students go and then to the parents about the situation concerning their children, and then to give the possibilities to adapt and even to move to a better course of action.

The Deputy Speaker: A final question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: If I may be allowed a double-barrelled question? Can I know from the hon. Minister who made the decision as to which four core subjects would be taken into consideration? Secondly, from what I understand it will be an assessment, but it will develop into a Form III Certificate in due course. In the hon. Minister's mind how does that impact on the CPE?

Dr. Bunwaree: First of all, the four subjects have been decided by people who are in charge of pedagogy, stakeholders and also examples from other countries on the international fields. All of these have been taken into consideration. It is so simple to understand: English, French, Mathematics are core subjects. Now Computer Science, of course, being given the

trend that the world is taking. There is also the question of Science and Commercial Studies which will certainly come next year.

To answer the second the part of the question as to what will be the impact on CPE, all will depend. If this strategy plan continues and if the Opposition - they have been giving us a helping hand, I must say until now - continues in that direction, maybe that will impact positively in the sense that the CPE will become only an assessment and not a rat race.

Mr Obeegadoo: National exams being of national importance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an element of absurdity in what we have just heard. Given that the hon. ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should withdraw that word, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Fair enough, I withdraw. My point is there is an element that does not make sense in what has just been said. Being given that hon. Mrs Ribot has put it as a matter of fact and the hon. Minister has agreed that there is no common curriculum for Forms I to III and that he said next year there will be a national curriculum prescribed as from the beginning of this year, are we to understand that since we are at the end of the second term, it is only at the beginning of the third term that the Ministry of Education will prescribe a common curriculum on which a national examination will be based a few weeks afterwards?

Dr. Bunwaree: Je pense que l'honorable membre est en train de prendre une autre direction. Le syllabus sur lequel les examens seront conduits est un syllabus commun. Il y a un travail qui a été fait pour finaliser ce syllabus ; c'est un syllabus qui est en cours. Je dois dire qu'il y a des différences entre les écoles, mais tout cela a été pris en considération. Les questions qui seront posées seront sur un syllabus commun pour tous les élèves de ces 32 écoles; au moins pour l'instant. L'année prochaine, quand le système sera généralisé, ce sera pareil pour toutes les écoles. Cette année, il y a eu les élections générales et on a travaillé en cours de route. L'année prochaine, cela va être beaucoup plus facile parce que le syllabus sera là dès le mois de janvier.

Mr Bérenger: Can I request the hon. Minister to clear with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what has just taken place. I agree the Chair can ask an hon. Member not to use an offensive word, but I don't think that the Chair can request an hon. Member to withdraw what is not an unparliamentarily expression.

The Deputy Speaker: This is a question; we have to take the word in its context. We were having a very fair debate on a matter of national importance. I consider that we should keep the proper tone and in a consensual manner to have everything in a dignified way.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't mind the word used.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: A last point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that my...

The Deputy Speaker: Please! If any Member has something to say, he catches my eyes first and then he make whatever comment he has to make.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I make an appeal to the hon. Minister that given the state of uncertainty within the educational community that this pilot national examination in Form III be postponed to next year?

Dr. Bunwaree: We do not want to postpone it; on the contrary, this is a mock exam. It is a simulation of exam. In fact,...

(Interruptions)

It is a mock exam. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must inform the House that even for the CPE before it became a national exam, it went through a trial process for many years.

STC/MANGALORE REFINERY - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - CONTRACT

(No. 1B/305) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the supply of petroleum products for the period 2010-2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the terms and conditions of the contract signed between the Corporation and the Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd;
- (b) if there was any -
 - (i) tender exercise; or
 - (ii) request for quotation and, if so, give the details thereof, and
- (c) if any company has been awarded the contract for the conveyance of the petroleum products to Mauritius and, if so, the terms and conditions thereof.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 01 July 2010, the State Trading Corporation and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemical Limited signed an agreement for the supply of petroleum products during period 2010-2013, amounting to 1.2 million metric tonnes per annum, at a total value of USD 2 billion for three years at current fuel prices. The agreement was signed in the presence of the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Government of India, as well as the Chairman, Oil and Natural Gas Group of Companies.

I wish to inform the House that MRPL is a subsidiary of the Oil and Natural Gas Group, in which the Government of India holds majority equity.

As regards the terms and conditions, there is a confidentiality clause within the agreement which prevents the Government from disclosing its contents.

With regard to part (b) of the question, in order to obtain a benchmark with regard to the market price, this year, quotations were sought from various companies which dealt with the STC in the past. I am going to place the relative documents in the Library of the National Assembly. Only one company submitted an indicative proposal which was not fully responsive, as it could not supply all the products from one source.

Regarding the contract for the conveyance of petroleum products, I wish to refer the House to the reply made on 16 June 2009 in reply to PQ No. B/542. I wish to remind the House that the decision to purchase a tanker was taken in the year 2005, and a study carried out in 2007 by a specialised firm concluded that it would be advantageous for the country to acquire a tanker.

In view of the high investment required for the acquisition of a tanker and the need for the experienced professionals to manage and operate such a tanker, Government decided that local firms be invited to participate in the project with a 15 years guarantee of operation. Based on this decision, 400 local firms were contacted through the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry and only six showed interest for the project. These firms were invited to submit formal proposals and were informed of the 15 years guarantee. Only Betamax Ltd in joint venture with Executive Ship Management of Singapore made a formal proposal.

On 12 January 2009, Government agreed to the proposal of the company subject to the conditions *inter alia* that -

- (i) the company should fully finance the purchase of a double hull tanker vessel, without any financial commitment of the Government;
- (ii) the vessel should be registered locally, and
- (iii) freight rates would have to be agreed with STC, based on rebates available with regard to the indicative market rate.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agreement relates to the supply of petroleum products worth USD 2 billion. Last year, the then Minister of Business Enterprise stated in this House that he was prepared to allow the contract to be inspected by Opposition Members at the State Trading Corporation. May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that this year for the same contract with the same party, the Minister has decided to have a confidentiality clause and not disclose its terms to this House?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I mentioned in my answer that we are dealing with Government to Government, not with a *courtier*, not with a trader or an agent with due respect to the Government of India. In Mauritius, we cannot just question this agreement. According to the information that I have, the former Minister invited the hon. Member, including myself - I was in the Opposition - nobody went to the office of the Minister to see the terms and conditions.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the importance of this agreement, may we know whether the price is fixed, is it fluctuating, do we have an exit clause if the world price crashes? We are completely in the dark as to what we have committed ourselves.

Mr Soodhun: I do not know what price the hon. Member is mentioning. Can he give more precision?

Mr Uteem: The price at which we are buying petroleum products. You yourself stated that the contract was worth USD 2 billion.

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Member is completely in confusion because he cannot differentiate the price of petrol. This is the premium and freight. We have to differentiate it. I would like to give the hon. Member a good explanation for all. This price of petroleum products rises on a daily basis as per '*Platts*' publication. There is no control over the price of petroleum products, but the premium is the fixed element and comprises the following: freights, insurance, profit margins of refinery, that is, when we purchase on CIF. This is what the hon. Member do no....

(Interruptions)

Why not? It is the freight. Let me tell you if you don't know. The price ...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should address the Chair, please!

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am only addressing the Chair, but it was for those who do not know. They cannot now ask me the question, because I personally negotiated; I know there is no way of getting back.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Have I heard correctly the hon. Minister saying that the petroleum product that is being purchased is on a CIF basis because if this is the case then that includes by necessity freight; 'F' in CIF stands for freight and, therefore, the contract for transport would be included in the price of petroleum products?

Mr Soodhun: I just explained that we don't buy petroleum as such. What we discussed is the premium, a fixed element. This is what we used to discuss and this is what we call FOB, Free On Board. It is on this basis.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just stated that there is a confidential clause because it is a Government to Government deal. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are here talking about taxpayers' money and I feel we have the right to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where our money is going.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Soodhun: This is because we are dealing with India. This is the only reason. There is no other reason. The hon. Member must sit down. He has asked me and I want to give him the answer.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition can address on a point of order.

Mr Bérenger: Our Standing Orders are perfectly clear that no Member can impute improper motives to anybody in the House. The hon. Minister is imputing improper motives that we want a copy of that agreement because it is India. This is improper, he should withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he mentioned the word 'mafia'.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I should first rule on the point of order and I think that it is not proper to impute motives. If ever the hon. Minister has imputed motives, he will have to withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Member used the word 'mafia'.

Mr Guimbeau: The hon. Member referred to India. This is not the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am talking about taxpayers' money, taxes which are coming from the pockets of the people of this country. We have the right to know whether we have got the best quotation from the STC and Mangalore.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

I understand that the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

I understand that the hon. Minister explained that there is a confidentiality clause which prevents him from disclosing whatever has been stated and the hon. Member made his point and we listened to the Minister.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to explain the position of this clause.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Soodhun: The fact that, in Mauritius we do have contracts at the CEB. We know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister and he knows very well. There are certain clauses in the contract that we cannot disclose and now let me explain why we cannot disclose. Mangalore Oil Refinery is a producer. We negotiated for a better price and we got it thanks to the good relationship that the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam has. On this basis we had a very good price which we cannot officially put on the world market because it is going to embarrass the Mangalore Oil Refinery when they export their products to other countries. This is the only reason.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow a last question from hon. Guimbeau!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I maintain it; we are talking here about taxpayers' money and we have a right to know. This is why we are asking the hon. Minister to table the agreement signed between the STC and Mangalore, if he has nothing to hide, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am ready to show all the files if the hon. Member comes and sees me. If he can get cheaper than we have received, I am ready to again consider this.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I can see the files, why not table it and let the public see the file? The hon. Minister just said that I can see the file. Does that mean that he is going to table the file?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please! Order! Order! I will allow, exceptionally, a last question from the hon. Member who sets the question. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have heard from the hon. Minister that there has been a contract signed between STC and Consortium of Betonix and ESM, and he also mentioned some of the clauses and one of them is that the STC will agree the price for the transport. May we know from the hon. Minister what price has been agreed between the STC and the promoters of this tanker for the transport of petroleum product for the Mangalore contract?

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Member must come with a very proper question and then I will answer to that.

The Deputy Speaker: We move to the next question, please! Hon. Baloomoody!

HORSES – EXPORTATION

(No. 1B/306) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he will state if during the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 to date, if any horses have been exported and, if so –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) the country of destination, and
- (c) whether any veterinary certificates were issued prior to the exportation.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Division of the Veterinary Services of my Ministry that in 2008, 204 horses were exported to France and the United Kingdom. In 2009, 67 were exported to the same countries and one to South Africa. No horse has been exported, so far, in 2010.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! No cross talking!

Mr Faugoo: As regards part (c) of the question, the Division of Veterinary Services had, in each case, issued a veterinary certificate prior to exportation. This is a mandatory procedure according to OIE norms.

Mr Baloomoody: I did not hear much. So, probably, you will have to repeat some answers. Can I ask the hon. Minister who are the exporters of the horses in Mauritius?

Mr Faugoo: I understand there are two groups - one is Gilbert Merven and the second one is Kevin Connolly.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know from which country the horses come from before they are exported?

Mr Faugoo: Mainly from South Africa.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know from the hon. Minister whether a veterinary certificate is issued prior for it being exported to the European Commission?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is mandatory under the OIE, they have to be accompanied by a certificate given by the competent authority which is, in our case, the Division of Veterinary Services.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the European authorities or European Union is satisfied with the certificate issued by the competent authority in Mauritius?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a FVO mission, which is the Food and Veterinary Office mission of the EU to Mauritius which carried out a study here from 24 March to 02 April last year in order to evaluate the animal health controls in place for horses destined for export to European Union, and they found that there were certain shortcomings in our system. In fact, they said the competent authority failed to identify that they were certifying horses for export to the EU, which did not comply with the required guarantees for AHS, which stands for African Horse Sickness, and presented a tangible risk of harbouring the AHS virus. The choice of systematically certifying the exported horses for temporary admission to the EU was not adequately substantiated, but required less stringent measures for residency and isolation, and after the visit of the FVO we have changed the norms now. We have put the norms according to the requirement of the OIE and the EU. We are actually working on a MOU with the EU.

Mr Baloomoody: We have changed, but can I know what action has been taken vis-à-vis the veterinary officers who issued these certificates when, in fact, they were not in consent with the European Union?

Mr Faugoo: They were, in fact, complying with the rules of the OIE and the EU had accepted those certificates. They had accepted those standards but now, there was a case whereby, in the first place, horses are exported on a temporary basis to France and, apparently, I am given to understand that there was one horse which was destined to France and then to another country from France, but it disappeared in France. I do not know what happened to it and this is where they started questioning, and they were under the impression that we were also having this African Horse Sickness here. This is what made them come to do the study and they found out that we are clear on most of the issues. The only issue which was not to the satisfaction was the number of days which was required for horses to be kept under quarantine both in South Africa and in Mauritius. As I said, we have corrected that and they are happy with the measures which we have taken so far.

Mr Bérenger: My information is that the report which that mission introduced is damning for Mauritius and it does not concern one aspect only of this *trafic de chevaux* between Mauritius and *Union Européenne*. Being given what the Minister has said, is he

prepared to lay a copy of that European Union Team report? Will he agree that this can have a very serious impact if the European Union starts challenging the way our veterinary work and so on is done here in the case of horses? This can have a very serious impact on other exports including tuna exports. Can we have a copy of that report in the Library?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that we have been exporting horses since 2004 and that we have been exporting tuna for the past, I do not know how many years. And today, as I said so many times in this House, we have a full-fledged competent authority, which has been segregated, which has been brought and made independent from the veterinary services, which is functioning to the satisfaction of the EU. The EU has come so many times here on mission and they have given report which is very positive and which shows that Mauritius can be a window to the other parts of tuna exporting countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As far as, horses are concerned, as I said, there were certain problems but, at that particular time, the horses were exported to EU, to France. If they were not happy they could have come to us, but there were certain issues which they took into account when they came and, as I said, we are in talking terms with them. We are trying to sign an MoU whereby we will agree on whatever was not to the standard set by EU, we are going to work on that and see to it that it is done.

Mr Baloomoody: Will not the hon. Minister agree that in that report the authorities made serious remarks regarding incorrect data entered - incorrect sampling, incorrect dates - into the certificates issued by the veterinary office?

Mr Faugoo: I do not know the details of the report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but not all that is said by EU is correct. I would tell you one thing, for example, which has been said in the report. They have said in their concluding remarks that Mauritius is regarded according to the OIE rules as AHS virus infected, which is not correct. In fact, why are we allowed to export? Why EU imports horses from Mauritius? We do not produce horses. They import from other places, other countries, they come here only for the quarantine period and it is re-exported to other countries. Why do they allow for this to be so? Because Mauritius is free from so many infectious diseases and this has been declared by the OIE which is the organisation responsible to declare countries free from these diseases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this report now is an official report of the European Unions. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether Mauritius has replied to that report? Because up to today, this is the official report which has remained unchallenged by Mauritius and by his Ministry.

Mr Faugoo: We do not have to reply. What I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are working with the EU. It is a report which has been given to us. We are in correspondence. We are talking to the EU to see to it that whatever shortcomings have been found by the EU, we are going to work on them and find a solution.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Minister aware that Mauritius is listed as one of the country according to the World Organisation for Animal as AHS virus infected and this rightly pointed out by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, will have serious effect on our export to the European Union with regard to food and animal products?

Mr Faugoo: I will ask the hon. Member to table a copy of that report from OIE.

(Interruptions)

You are confused, this is what I am saying, I said – EU, in its mission said that Mauritius is AHS virus infected, which is not correct. The hon. Member is saying that there is a report from OIE which classifies Mauritius as a VHS infected country. Table the report!

(Interruptions)

I just said the report is not correct.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister is answering, you should wait for the reply!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said that whatever EU has stated in the report does not mean that it is crystal clear, that it is the Bible, that it is totally correct. This is what I said. They have said this. I said we stand guided by the report of OIE. OIE report is not EU report. This is what I am saying and according to OIE, Mauritius is not classified as an infected country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Baloomoody: Serious remarks have been made by the European Union. The hon. Minister considers that these remarks are not factually correct. My question is: why is not the hon. Minister replying to that remark and challenging that report?

The Deputy Speaker: I understand that the hon. Minister has stated that he is having talks with the EU to try to sort out matters and to see what measures have to be taken. He did answer to that part of your query.

Mr Baloomoody: Does the hon. Minister intend to reply officially and let this House have a copy of the reply given to that report?

Mr Faugoo: I said we are talking to the EU. We are trying to sort out the problems which we had and sign a MoU. This is what I said. I don't see the need to table copy of correspondence at this stage and, as I said, the hon. Member can go and read – maybe it is online - the report of EU or OIE.

The Deputy Speaker: We move to the next question.

PORT LOUIS CENTRAL MARKET - STALLS

(No. 1B/307) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to stalls at the Port Louis Central Market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the number of stallholders who, since 2006 to May 2010, have been dispossessed of their stalls and, if so, whether any of the stalls have been re-allocated, giving the details in each case.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that, according to its records, no stallholder of the Central Market had been disposed of his/her stall during the years 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

I am further informed that 13 stallholders were disposed of their stalls at the Central Market during this year because of excessive arrears due by them. These stalls were subsequently reallocated during the same period.

With regard to the latter cases, on 19 January 2010, the Public Health Committee decided that all those who have an arrears of Rs150,000 and above be allowed up to February 2010 to settle the amount due, otherwise their stalls would be declared vacant.

On the 01 March 2010 the Public Health Committee decided to declare 13 stalls vacant. However, four stalls were not declared vacant because of arrangements made with the Senior Usher. Therefore only nine were declared vacant.

Out of nine stalls declared vacant, six have been reallocated to persons other than the previous holder. Out of the remaining, one has been restored to the spouse of the previous holder and two have been restored to the previous holder.

Six stalls have been reallocated to persons other than the previous holder as follows –

- (i) Mr Mohammad Rashid Khadaroo
25 Benares Street, Port Louis
- (ii) Mr Zamaldine Raffick Guillaume
Guillaume Lane, Terre Rouge
- (iii) Mrs Marie Anne Collet
12 Cité Briquetterie Road, Ste Croix
- (iv) Mrs Daniella Chowry
5 Rte Militaire, Terre Rouge
- (v) Mrs Mauricette Brigitte Sevère
Cité Briquetterie, Ste Croix
- (vi) Mr Maslamaney Tangonvel
Avenue des Mulets, Albion

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that one these stallholders, despite start reimbursement and according to the document I saw, he has reimbursed up to a total balance of less than Rs100,000 and as the hon. Minister just stated, those who owe more than Rs150,000 were dispossessed of their stalls, is the hon. Minister aware that there is, at least, one case which I know, owe less than Rs150,000, around Rs102,000 and despite of that he has been disposed of his stall? Is the hon. Minister aware of such case?

Mr Aimée: *Si tel est le cas, M. le président, si je suis en présence des noms et tous les renseignements possibles,* I will try to find information from the Council and come back to the hon. Member.

Mr Barbier : Is the hon. Minister aware that the stall has been reallocated to someone else? Is the hon. Minister also aware that one of these stallholders had a case still pending in court where he was challenging the arrears which the Municipality of Port Louis has asked for? I have just learnt that the case is coming tomorrow and despite of that he has been dispossessed of his stall which has been reallocated to someone else? Is this legally correct? Will the hon. Minister see to it whether action can be taken against those culprits who are

actually operating with the *complicité* of some people to have these stalls allocated to their families?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am somebody who wants justice to be done and seen to be done. *Si jamais il y a un de mes officiers qui a fauté ou même si c'est un conseiller, je vais prendre les mesures qui s'imposent.* You can rest assured.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister has mentioned six stalls and even gave the name of those who acquired these stalls which were reallocated. May I know from the hon. Minister what criteria were used to identify those six persons out of the totality of Port Louis?

Mr Aimée: For me this is the tip of the iceberg. *M. le président, nous sommes en 2010 et je regrette de dire dans cette auguste assemblée, nous avons deux lois qui font le même travail. Nous avons la loi qu'est the Local Government Act de 1989 et parallèlement nous avons la loi de 2003. La loi de 1989 section 61(1) met des critères pour les allocations des stalles dans le marché en général et l'honorable Barbier le sait, il était conseiller. Mais la loi de 2003, non. Cela a été fait par proclamation without repealing from the law existing in 1989.*

So, this is the way I suppose certain are misusing our law to do certain things which hon. Member mentioned. But I am prepared to look into it. That is why, right from my nomination as Minister of Local Government, *j'ai commencé à revoir les lois, parce qu'il y a plusieurs anomalies entre la loi de 1989 et celle de 2003.*

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the Minister whether he had a meeting in his office with the stallholders who were complaining about what was happening to them at the level of the Municipality of Port Louis concerning their stalls? Did he have a meeting with these stallholders as well as with some councillors or one councillor of the Municipality Port Louis? Will he state to the House what has been the outcome of this meeting?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je n'ai pas pu recevoir tous les *stallholders* qui ont eu des problèmes à la municipalité, mais effectivement j'ai reçu à mon bureau, quelques *stallholders*, suite à la requête de l'honorable Baloomoody, qui les représente en cour. Mais je crois que l'honorable membre est tout à fait au courant que, lorsqu'il y a une affaire en cour, *it is sub judice*. I won't be able to clear anything, until the case is over. If they can move out the case, then I can look into it.

Mr Barbier: Is the Minister aware that councillors at the Municipality of Port Louis pointed fingers at one councillor out there, which is being considered as *le manipulateur, la mafia à la mairie de Port Louis*? Is he aware of that?

Mr Aimée: *M. le président, je ne peux me permettre* to rely on hearsay evidence. If somebody has got something very concrete that substantiates what they are saying, I will be prepared to look into it.

Mr Baloomoody: The Minister has made very good speeches, but hasn't replied to my question. What criteria were used? We don't have to repeal an old law when a new law is passed. There is only one law regarding reallocation of *étal*. So, my question is: what criteria were used to select the six persons whose names have just been mentioned? Simple question!

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which law is he talking about? Is it the 1989 or...

(Interruptions)

No, the criteria are not the same. 1989 is something else; there are criteria. In the one they proclaimed in 2003, there are no criteria.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should just state what were the criteria used in these particular cases.

(Interruptions)

No, the question is simply to state what were the criteria used in those cases. If the Minister has the answer, he gives it.

Mr Aimée: As from 2003, the Council is *autonome* and they can decide for the criteria without even the intervention of the Minister or any other body.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Minister not aware of the criteria used, or he hasn't been made aware by the Council about which criteria they used?

Mr Aimée: I am not aware, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy 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.

At 4.14 p.m. the sitting was suspended.