

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL - DETAINEE B. L. – DEATH

(No. 1B/313) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to detainee B. L. who died a few hours after his admission to the Intensive Care Unit of the Jawaharlal Nehru hospital on 14 May 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to –

- (a) when he started complaining of health problems, and
- (b) the treatment which was administered to him prior to his admission to hospital.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that detainee B. L., aged 38 years, was admitted to the Beau Bassin Prison on 17 April 2008. He was treated twice for dental problems on 18 May 2008 and 19 January 2009. From that last date up to 04 May 2010, there were no health complaints from the detainee.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 05 May 2010, the detainee complained of breathlessness and pain in the chest region and was admitted to the Beau Bassin Prison hospital ward. He was examined by the Prison Medical Officer who prescribed analgesic tablets, anti-inflammatory suppository and he was discharged the next day, which is 06 May.

On 08 May, the detainee was re-admitted to the prison ward as he was complaining of pain in the right knee following a fall. Anti-inflammatory treatment was prescribed and he was put under observation.

On 09 May, the condition of the detainee was found to be stable.

On 10 May, the Prison Medical Officer referred him for an X-ray at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital to exclude any bone injury. No bone injury was revealed by the X-ray results.

The Ag. Prime Minister: On 11 May, antibiotic was prescribed to him by the Prison Medical Officer as he complained of a burst abscess in his right finger. As he was also complaining of spitting blood, his sputum was sent for laboratory test, I gather, for tuberculosis. The results received on 14 May showed no abnormality.

On 12 May, he was discharged from the Beau Bassin Prison Hospital about noon, but was re-admitted in the afternoon at about 16.15 hours complaining of vertigo. Upon the

advice of the Prison Medical Officer, he was put under observation once again and vitamins were also prescribed.

On 13 May, the patient complained of general weakness. Upon examination by the Prison Medical Officer no clinical abnormality was found. I gather from this no clinical abnormality, blood pressure, his pulse system/pressure, everything that could be recorded, was recorded as normal. As the visit of the Visiting Medical Specialist was postponed on that day, the Prison Medical Officer referred the detainee to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital the next day on 14 May.

This, I understand, is because he could not make out what was going on, there was no sign of any severe illness, but he was looking for a diagnosis. At Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, he was diagnosed with a chest infection and intravenous treatment started at 15.00 hours. At 15.30 hours, he was seen by the medical specialist who increased his intravenous fluid.

At 16.25 hours he was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit because of respiratory distress. He was examined by a Chest Specialist who advised to continue the antibiotics and prescribed other treatment as well.

The patient unfortunately collapsed at 19.10 hours on the same day and despite resuscitation measures, he passed away at around 19.40 hours.

On 15 May 2010, a post mortem examination was carried over the body of the late detainee and Police Medical Officer concluded that the death was due to septicaemia.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he has been supplied with information that on 30 April, when the late detainee received the visit of his mother, he was not able to speak, he was breathless, *essoufflé*. So, he was suffering as from the 30 April. May I know whether this information has been supplied to the hon. Ag. Prime Minister?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to say that this information was not supplied. What I have here is that he complained of chest pain on 05 May. As far as I understand the beginning of his illness has been communicated to me.

Dr. Boolell: Would the hon. Ag. Prime Minister consider upgrading the quality of care at the Beau Bassin Prison, which seems to be consisting ...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, this is a general question!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister has given us a list of treatments that were administered to this detainee, but the fact is that he has been admitted at hospital at 16.25 hours, according to a document which I am going to table and he passed away some minutes after 19 hours. The document stated that he was admitted with a chest infection. Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we are surprised that this person had this acute infection in some hours, while he has been in treatment. So, may I know whether the hon. Ag. Prime Minister will have some information as whether this chest infection was detected prior to his admission to the hospital?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I go along with what is being said and what I have asked is that the Ministry of Health appoints a Consultant to look at the notes and tell us whether the case was properly handle or not. But as for the information given, it seems to me that he spent the best part of his last four days of his life under observation in the Prison Medical Ward.

MBC - EMPLOYEES - INTERDICTION

(No. 1B/314) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, for the period 2005 to date, information, as to –

- (a) the names of the employees who have been interdicted and
- (b) the salary paid to each of them during the period of interdiction.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling a statement giving the information requested by the hon. Member, as provided by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether a fast-track mechanism has been put to look into the matter?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, comments have been made about what should and should not be done regarding interdiction. A fast track mechanism is being put into place.

PASSPORTS – APPLICATON - PROCEDURES

No. (1B/315) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External

Communications whether, in regard to the application for, or renewal, of passports, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in relation to the review for the procedures thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the procedures for application for new passports and renewal of passports have been revisited. In regard to application for new passports, for security reasons, it is not proposed to bring major changes to the existing procedures. However, the list of professionals who can countersign an application is being extended so as to include -

- (i) Dental Surgeons;
- (ii) Pharmacists;
- (iii) Veterinary Surgeons;
- (iv) Members of the academic staff of the University of Mauritius or University of Technology, Mauritius;
- (v) Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- (vi) Registered Professional Architects;
- (vii) Registered Professional Engineers, and
- (viii) Registered Professional Accountants.

As for renewal of passports, new procedures have been finalised and an applicant will now be required to fill in a new shortened form. He will no longer be requested to have his application form countersigned and to submit a Police Certificate. He will only have to produce his old passport, his National Identity card and two recent photographs, provided there has been no change in his name or marital status.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regulations to give effect to these new procedures are being promulgated.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister what are the limits of responsibility of the two professional persons, now it has been enlarged, called upon to countersign the applicant's passport?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it that whoever signs will exercise his wisdom and judgement. I can't speak for others.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, will not the hon. Ag. Prime Minister agree with me that this procedure is obsolete because any information required on the applicant should be the responsibility of the Police, not on the person countersigning the passport?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I would submit it is an exercise for all three of them, Mr Speaker, Sir. They all have different responsibilities and I would not disregard what the hon. Member has said.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, now that we have identity cards, we have to go to the Police Station to certify the address of the applicant and his residence, what is the use of having two professionals to countersign?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Not only to say who he is, but also to say what sort of person he is.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, this question of person signing the passport has been brought to this House on several occasions. I think the last time is when the Catholic priests no longer sign passport. They have issued letters stating that they are no longer doing it and this question was brought to the House. So, at that time it was being stated that this procedure will be reviewed. I think it was two or three years back. May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether there has been a follow up on that issue and where matter stands as at now?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have stated where matters stand, Mr Speaker, Sir.

BOIS MARCHAND CEMETERY - LARCENY

(No. 1B/316) 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 reported cases of larceny and larceny with violence in the region of the Chinese section of the cemetery at Bois Marchand, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information, for each of the past three years, as to the number thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the past three years, one case of larceny has been reported in 2008, one in 2009 and one case of larceny with violence has been reported in January 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the local Police is maintaining regular mobile patrols and has increased its vigilance in the region of Bois Marchand with the

support of the Emergency Response Service, the CID and the Divisional Support Unit with a view to preventing the recurrence of such cases.

PRISONERS – HALFWAY HOUSES

(No. 1B/318) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to prisoners, he will state if Government will consider the creation of halfway houses to enable prisoners serving long-term sentences to re-adjust to normal life without immediate relapse.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the purpose of halfway houses is to allow detainees who are likely to be released from penal institutions to begin the process of reintegration in society while being monitored and supported by the relevant authorities, with the hope that detainees will not be at risk of recidivism or relapse. In fact, the halfway house programme is an extension of the rehabilitative efforts carried out within the penal institutions. This programme is operational in many western countries and in Asia.

Mr Speaker, Sir, so far, the programme of halfway houses has not been put into place in our Prisons Service. However, in the Government Programme 2010-2015, it has been stated that wide consultations will be held with a Non-Governmental Organisations, the “*Forces Vives*” and researchers with a view to elaborating a long-term reform of the Prisons Service, including the rehabilitation of detainees to meet the requirements of a modern country. Government will certainly consider the establishment of halfway houses during the consultation exercise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that pre-release programmes are currently being run by the Prisons Service with the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organisations, religious organisations and private enterprises to facilitate the re-integration of detainees into the society.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Local Government may I request you if you have to speak to your friends and turn the back could you please move out of the House and let the proceedings of the House carry on without disturbance.

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the hon. Ag. Prime Minister please ascertain that in the setting up of the halfway houses some form of job placement agency be associated with it in view of the problems which detainees do get to get job outside?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand this is part of the problem.

APPASAMY, MR TEEREN - EXTRADITION

(No. 1B/319) 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 extradition proceedings against Mr Teeren Appasamy, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to if the Commission has received the note by counsel for the United Kingdom Crown Prosecution Service in relation to the discharge of the extradition proceedings and on the steps that need to be taken for an eventual renewed request to make it an apple pie order and, if so,
- (b) will he table a copy thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the contents of the correspondence dated 05 June 2009, from the Crown Advocate of the Crown Prosecution Service from UK to the ICAC, which was tabled in this House on 06 July 2010 in reply to the Private Notice Question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind the House that the ICAC, which has been established under the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002, operates as an independent body. Its operation is monitored only by the Parliamentary Committee set up by virtue of section 59 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Furthermore, according to section 81 of the Act, all Board Members and officers of the ICAC are required to take an oath of secrecy and they have a duty to maintain the confidentiality of, and not divulge, any official information that becomes known to them, except as provided under the Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to add, that the correspondence tabled on 06 July 2010 relates to the outcome of the extradition proceedings and may be disclosed by the ICAC. However, information pertaining to the instructions sought and received between lawyers of the Crown Prosecution Service and the ICAC fall in the category of privileged information and cannot be divulged in accordance with section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Consequently, the note from the counsel of the Crown Prosecution Service to ICAC cannot be tabled. As regards an eventual renewed request for the extradition of Mr Teeren Appasamy, as already stated in reply to the Private Notice Question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 06 July 2010, the Crown Prosecution Service has informed the Court in the UK and Mr Appasamy's lawyers that if ever his health improved, there would be a resubmission of his extradition case in the Court.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that the correspondence is dated June 2009 and it is more than one year ago, can we know, in the space of one year, whether Mr Appasamy's health has improved and whether a renewed request has been made?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, all I can say is that the Mauritian authorities are doing the follow up and, at this stage, I cannot reveal what is being done...

PRISONERS – DRUG ADDICTION CONVICTS – REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/320) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the rehabilitation activities for prisoners convicted for drug addiction, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number of

- (a) male inmates, and
- (b) female inmates following these activities, indicating, in each case, the number of officers running these programmes.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Prisons Department runs a well-structured rehabilitation programme for prisoners convicted for drug offences. In that regard, a Drug Secretariat was set up in the Prisons Department in 2007 to plan and monitor all activities concerning the rehabilitation and prevention programme for substance abusers.

The Drug Secretariat has worked out a comprehensive Drug Strategy whose objective is to help the detainees concerned to refrain from using illicit drugs so as to achieve ultimately a drug-free life. In this regard, a multidisciplinary therapeutic and drug prevention programme is being run in Beau Bassin Central Prison, Women Prison and Petit Verger Prison with the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organisations.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that 569 male and 62 female detainees follow the rehabilitation activities designed for detainees convicted for drug offences. These activities are run by Prisons Officers with the assistance of NGOs. Seven Prisons Officers are involved in rehabilitation activities designed for male detainees and four Female Prisons Officers for female detainees.

I am tabling a list of the rehabilitation activities designed for male and female detainees convicted for drug offences as well as the number of detainees following each activity and the organisations which assist the Prisons Officers to run these activities, so we have a complete breakdown of the situation as it is.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister with regard to the female prison whether there is a dispenser to dispense medicines which are provided to inmates following treatment at Brown Sequard Hospital?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there exists a pharmacy service, I am sure it will include all prisoners including the drug one and I would like to add Mr Speaker, Sir, for the information of the House that the prison department is planning to expand the drug related rehabilitating programme and it is training additional prison officers to act as trainers. It will also set up with an additional residential care centres at women prison and the Petit Verger prison. I would like to remind the House as well as Mr Speaker, Sir, that prior to 2005 there was no such rehabilitation programme available and since 2005 there were an increasing number of attendees, from 816 to 1259.4 so it is an ongoing programme.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that up to today there is no dispenser dispensing medicine at the female wards and that the protocol for the dispensing of medicine is not being followed in the female prison?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will look into the matter, but I am surprised that after 100 years of medical practice, we still don't know how to dispense, I am surprised at this statement, that we need a protocol to provide drug.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir, I just feel sad about the information that has been given to the Ag. Prime Minister and which is being given to the House. I would ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to go and seek additional information regarding the rehabilitation programme that is said to be on at the prison.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister has stated that the prison officers are carrying out the Drug Rehabilitation Programmes. May I know from him

whether these prison officers have been trained for such programmes, such therapy, and the duration of same?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will get the information and supply it. But certainly, I take the point. We have talked about numbers, and the hon. Member is interested about the quality. I will certainly look into that.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Ag. Prime Minister has been unfortunately misled in his answer concerning drug rehabilitation activities. Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that there existed the Lotus Project, which was set up by Commissioner Bookhun at that time, well before 2005, relating to prisoners convicted of drug offences? This was a well known project! Perhaps, it has been improved in the course of time, but the Lotus Project was in operation well before 2005, and this project concerned the drug addicts!

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will look into the matter and see what was and what is now.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, first, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware that NGOs are facing a lot of difficulties to carry out their activities at the prisons? Second, is he aware that counselling is being carried out in the corridors of the prisons, and does he think that the corridor is an appropriate place for counselling? While we are talking about shortage of prison officers, does he think that prison officers have time for rehabilitation programmes?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the last remark speaks for itself. There is shortage, but they are also being used for rehabilitation programmes. I would not quarrel with that, but I will look into all the comments that have been made. I can only stand by the answer I have been given, but I will look further into all the issues that have been raised including who counselled, what training they have had, where they are counselled, what type of medicine and who gives them. I will certainly look into that.

Mr Bhagwan: The Ag. Prime Minister has said that he will look into it. Can I make a request to the Ag. Prime Minister to make a surprise visit at the Rehabilitation Centres at Barkly, Beau Bassin? He will see by himself what the Ag. Commissioner of Prisons is doing there.

Mr Speaker: The Ag. Prime Minister has said that he will look into the matter. Hon. François, last question on this matter!

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, at Pointe La Gueule Prison, convicted prisoners with drug addiction are transferred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for administration of drugs, as there is no such service in the prison?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will look into that!

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE - REFURBISHMENT

(No. 1B/321) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the refurbishment of the Old Parliament House, he will –

- (a) give details of –
 - (i) the date the tender was launched;
 - (ii) the name of the bidders, indicating the value quoted in each case, and
 - (iii) the date the tender was awarded, and
- (b) table copy of the contract agreement.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, following consultations with the Clerk of the National Assembly, I am informed that the tender for the refurbishment of the Old Parliament House was launched on 13 August 2009.

The initial deadline for the submission of the bids was Wednesday 16 September 2009 and was later extended to Wednesday 14 October 2009.

In regard to parts (a) (ii) and (b) of the Question, I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

In regard to part (a) (iii) of the Question, I am informed that the Central Procurement Board conveyed its approval for the award of the contract to the successful bidder on 29 December 2009. In accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, the Clerk of the National Assembly sent notifications of award to the successful and unsuccessful bidders on 30 December 2009. Subsequently, two of the unsuccessful bidders challenged the award of the contract. The two bidders were informed of the reasons as to why their bids had not been retained on 11 and 15 January 2010 respectively. They had the right to appeal to the Independent Review Panel of the Central Procurement Board in case they were not satisfied. As no application for review was received, the Central Procurement Board gave its green

light to the National Assembly for the award of the contract on 10 February 2010. The tender was awarded on 01 March 2010.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know the name of the company to which the contract was awarded?

The Ag. Prime Minister: This is of public knowledge; it is Ireko Construction Limited.

Mr Guimbeau: Can we know the amount for which it was tendered?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The tendered amount was Rs327,976,539,042, and this was subsequently corrected at Rs327,574,781. As I said, it was previously Rs327,976,539,042, and corrected downwards.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether, in the *cahier de charges* of the project, provision has been made for a new *stèle* of late Sir Harilal Vaghjee, the first Mauritian Speaker? There was one in the old building.

(Interruptions)

Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to inform the House where matters stand? Has that aspect been taken in the project?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The answer is yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guimbeau: Will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister table a copy of the signed contract?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, of course.

FIFA WORLD CUP 2010 - OFFICIAL VIDEO CLIP - BROADCAST

(No. 1B/322) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the official video clip of the FIFA World Cup 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) whether the broadcast thereof was discontinued and, if so, when and the reasons therefor, and
- (b) by whom was the decision taken, indicating if it was approved by the Board.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the broadcast of the official video clip of the FIFA World Cup 2010 was never discontinued.

During the period 11 June 2010 to 11 July 2010, the clip was broadcast on a regular basis on the three MBC Channels, namely TV1, TV2 and TV3.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Director General of the MBC that there was flexibility in the broadcast of the official video clip of the FIFA World Cup 2010 because, in addition to that clip, the MBC also had to broadcast a video clip entitled “Beautiful Game”, which was produced by the Asian Broadcasting Union in collaboration with the MBC.

The MBC is a member of the Asian Broadcasting Union.

The video clip “Beautiful Game” was broadcast by stations of Member States of the Asian Broadcasting Union, including Mauritius.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister agreeing, therefore, to the fact that the broadcast was on a very irregular basis? Was it the decision of a body of the MBC or was it the decision of one individual officer that it should be broadcast as irregularly as it was?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the information. But, for a fact, when I look at the times of the FIFA video clip, it is ample; it covers two pages of time. I will communicate the information to the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. 1B/345, 1B/346 and 1B/354 have been withdrawn. Hon. Dayal!

ST PIERRE TRAFFIC CENTRE - REDESIGN

(No. 1B/326) 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 layout of the St Pierre Traffic Centre, he will state if consideration will be given for the reviewing thereof, in view of the fact that it represents serious risks of accidents.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TRMSU that it has already carried out the Road Safety Audit at the St. Pierre Traffic Centre, and it has decided to re-design the Centre completely. Works will start after the procurement exercise is completed.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. In the same breath, can I ask him that all formalities be carried out in the meantime? Because there are buses which rush in and out, causing many accidents. Could this be monitored?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already given instructions to TRMSU to start monitoring the problem till such time works order will be issued.

ST PIERRE-CIRCONSTANCE ROAD - RESURFACING

(No. 1B/327) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if consideration will be given to the resurfacing of the strip of the road from the State Bank at St Pierre to the curb leading to L'Avenir along the St Pierre-Circonstance Road in view of its deplorable state, especially during rainfalls.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, works order has been issued to the district contractor Colas and works have started already on 19 July 2010.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister a little further along the same road there is a junction at la boutique Madame, Circonstance, St Pierre, if a traffic light could be installed to regulate traffic?

Mr Bachoo: I will look into that issue, Mr Speaker, Sir.

RIVER BALLAKSING, FLORÉAL - RETAINING WALL

(No. 1B/328) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if consideration will be given to the construction of a retaining wall at River Ballaksing at Floréal in order to avoid the recurrence of floods during torrential rains.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, works may start around September 2010.

MANGALKHAN, FLORÉAL – FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/329) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground at Mangalkhan, Floréal, he will state where matters stand in regard to the lighting and fencing works thereat.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that owing to the financial constraints, the National Development Unit has been approached with a view to financing the lighting and fencing of the football ground at Mangalkhan.

Consequently, a bid exercise has been launched on 04 June 2010 by the National Development Unit for the lighting and upgrading of the football ground at Cité Mangalkhan. I am informed that the bid evaluation of the project is in progress and the contract will be awarded shortly.

VACCINATION CAMPAIGN - CENTRES

(No. 1B/330) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the vaccination campaign against flu, she will state –

- (a) the number of vaccines administered as at to-date, and
- (b) the regions and vaccination centres selected, indicating the criteria used for their choice.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regards to the anti influenza vaccination programme 2010 for the elderly, the Ministry ordered 75,000 doses of vaccines and these have already been utilised for the campaign which was held from 17 May 2010 to 10 June 2010.

As regards part (b) of the Question, the information regarding the regions and the vaccination centres selected is being tabled.

As far as the choice of the centres is concerned, I wish to point out that, over the years, the vaccination has generally been held in regions where there are Social Welfare Centres, Community Centres, Village and Municipal halls. In certain regions, where no appropriate Government building was available, the Ministry had recourse to private halls which could cater for a larger number of elderly persons.

During the 2010 campaign, vaccination was carried out in the Centres mentioned in the press as well as in a few other centres following requests made by Senior Citizens Associations.

CITE LA CURE - ROADS AND DRAINS

(No. 1B/331) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the resurfacing of roads, construction and re-instatement of drains at Cité La Cure, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded on 09 May 2008 to Trio Development Ltd for the sum of Rs10,976,750 (inclusive of VAT).

As at November 2009 only 15% of the works has been completed. After 18 months the contractor left the site unattended.

Fresh contracts will be awarded by the NDU once the District Contractor is nominated by the Central Procurement Board.

ARTISTS – CONCERT FACILITY

(No. 1B/332) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he is aware that, in the past, local artists have made representations to his Ministry to the effect that they do not have an appropriate space for the holding of concerts and, if so, will he state the remedial measures Government proposes to take.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware that local artists have made representations to be provided with a Concert Hall and access to football grounds for the holding of concerts.

My Ministry has liaised with the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the identification of one plot of land in the central part of the island which is accessible to the transport network for putting up a concert hall to accommodate about 2,500 persons. The same goes for a mega concert facility. We are looking for the ideal site. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this has already been announced in the budget.

Regarding football grounds, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has advised that considerable damage has been caused to the pitch, synthetic track and other infrastructure at stadia when they had been made available for the holding of concerts in the past.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the parking area of Anjalay Stadium which was identified for concerts has now been earmarked for the “Ecole de Foot Project”. I am also informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports is looking for ways and means to protect the

synthetic track of Germain Commarmond Stadium at Bambous, which is also being considered for the holding of concerts by artists.

Furthermore, an exercise is being carried out to identify the basic infrastructure that would be required for football grounds to be used as concert venues.

In the meantime, my Ministry has enlisted the collaboration of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to survey four halls of State Secondary Schools in different regions of the island with a view to improving their sound and light systems so that they may be used for the holding of concerts. This survey has already started.

Mr Speaker, Sir, pending the construction of more concert venues, my Ministry is presently providing financial assistance to the tune of Rs30,000 to artists for the renting of existing infrastructure such as the Serge Constantin Theatre, Mahatma Gandhi Institute Auditorium, Octave Wiehe Auditorium, Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture, the Swami Vivekananda Conference Centre, Grand Bay International Conference Centre, Rabindranath Tagore Institute at Ilot, Institut Français de Maurice at Rose Hill, Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterand at Quatre Bornes and l'Eglise Chretienne Hall at Trianon.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister has mentioned that he has liaised with the hon. Minister of and Youth Sports, is he aware that in the last Budget there was item for the appropriate equipment to be installed at the Anjalay Stadium for concert- this was budgeted – and may I know from him whether he has been appraised of the situation? What has happen to this item?

Mr Choonee: I mentioned it earlier in my reply that an exercise is being carried out to identify basic infrastructure that would be required in football ground to be used for concert venues.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - STUDENTS – ROAD CROSSING

(No. 1B/333) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the precautionary measures that are taken for students crossing the roads on arrival at and departure from educational institutions.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, child safety and security are a central concern of my Ministry and are already well embedded in our curriculum. Precautionary measures that are taken to ensure the security of our children are as follows -

- Policemen are posted in the vicinity of schools every morning and every afternoon to help students to cross the road and to canalise the traffic flow in the school vicinity. There is also the posting of ancillary staff at main gate and caretakers standing whenever necessary with the child crossing signs especially in case of the absence of Policemen.
- Projects concerning construction of new schools take on board the need for security measures such as placement of pedestrian crossings (humps) or handrails after consultation with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.
- Reinforcement of awareness and sensitisation on precautionary measures and good practices relating to safety on the roads is offered through curriculum materials especially those that have been newly developed. Equally, children are sensitised during morning assembly about the risks involved if they disregard basic precautionary measures that have to be taken when on the roads.
- The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit also carries out sensitisation campaigns. Pupils are sensitised at school level to use pedestrian crossings both those in close proximity of the schools and on the roads. This is part of the process for creating awareness about the highway code in general.
- The Management at school level, in close collaboration with the Police Force and other competent authorities, exercises constant vigilance to ensure the safety and security of pupils and students on arrival and departure from schools.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned Police Officers in front of schools, this is what we see daily, but in many cases there are no Police officers and one of the main problems is the school buses. *Il y a une anarchie dans beaucoup d'endroits - je vois cela presque tous les jours - en ce qu'il s'agit du parking et comment est gérée l'arrivée de ces minibus. Est-ce que le ministre pense rencontrer l'association de ces minibus pour leur sensibiliser eux aussi ?*

Dr. Bunwaree: *M. le président, cela se fait et effectivement on est en train de voir comment on peut améliorer le système davantage.* There is much to be done and much room for improvement also.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all aware that it is very difficult to have Police officers at all the schools in Mauritius. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider the setting up of a network of volunteers around the schools as it is the case in many countries? I know that in Canada it is the case. There are people from the community, some are pensioners and so on who volunteer to help the kids while coming and leaving the schools. Will the hon. Minister consider setting up such a network around the schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: The idea is interesting, but of course it has also to take into consideration the responsibility in case some problems crop up. The legal aspects also have to be looked into, but there is also the question of - I mentioned it in fact, in my reply - posting of ancillary staff at the main gate. They can deal with the Police when they are there and when they are not there, they go outside with the child crossing signs. And they can take on board what the hon. Member is mentioning, of course.

PLASTIC CARRY BAGS - USE

(No. 1B/334) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether he state the measures taken by his Ministry to curb the use of plastic carry bags with a view to minimising its impact on the environment.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, a series of measures have been taken by my Ministry over the past years to curb down the use of plastic carry bags.

First, regulations to prohibit the local manufacture and import of non-degradable plastic carry bags with wall thickness of less than 20 microns are already in force. Whilst this measure has a positive impact as regards imports of plastic carry bags in the country, it has not yielded the expected results in terms of production and use of non-degradable plastic carry bags.

Secondly, following a proposal made by my Ministry, an excise duty of one rupee per plastic carry bag with handle produced locally or imported is applicable with effect from July 2006. This fiscal measure is being enforced by the Mauritius Revenue Authority at the manufacturers' premises and retail outlets.

Following this measure, feedback reports indicated a drastic reduction in the use of plastic carry bags by about 60% in most supermarkets. However, it has been observed of late that plastic manufacturers have shifted their production pattern to non-excisable plastic bags

without handles, which are being distributed freely in many retail outlets, particularly in markets and fairs.

Thirdly, with a view to promoting alternatives to plastic carry bags -

- (i) Local plastic manufacturers have been requested to produce eco-friendly alternatives to plastic bags.
- (ii) Supermarkets and Shop Owners' Associations were requested to promote and raise awareness among their customers on the use of eco-friendly alternative bags. To date, several supermarkets and shops are proposing suitable alternatives including paper bags, green bags, and long lasting and reusable bags.

With a view to discouraging the use of plastic carry bags and encouraging the shift towards alternative re-usable bags, my Ministry has been undertaking a sustained awareness campaign using all communication channels targeting the public at large for the past years. Some 50,000 cloth bags have also been distributed to the public during this ongoing sensitisation campaign.

To give a further boost to this initiative, my Ministry will undertake an intense sensitisation campaign from September 2010 to November 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to curb down the use of plastic carry bags, my Ministry is presently consulting the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with a view to considering an increase in the excise duty and its extension to plastic carry bags with or without handles.

Ms Anquetil: Would the hon. Minister consider promoting environmental project with the money collected in terms of tax on plastic bags?

Mr Speaker: That is not relevant to the question. Next question, hon. François!

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, along the same line, as Mauritius is moving towards the *Maurice Ile Durable* and sustainable development concept, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether he will consider the promotion of the use of eco-friendly substitute like *tente* Vacoas, which can also become a good economic activity for hooligan artisans and Mauritians also?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, we can look at that.

At 12.55 the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

EPAs - NEGOTIATIONS

(No. 1B/335) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) within the Eastern and Southern African configuration with the European Union, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Housing & Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) configuration and the European Union (EU) were launched in Mauritius in February 2004. These negotiations were expected to be concluded in December 2007 in view of the expiry of the WTO waiver for the Trade Provisions of the Cotonou agreement on 01 January 2008. However, in view of serious divergence on certain key issues, in particular on the development component, including on additional financial resources to be made available by the EU to the ESA countries to meet adjustment costs, the negotiations could not be concluded as scheduled. With a view to preventing any disruption of trade, it was agreed to conclude an interim Economic Partnership Agreement covering those aspects that would have to be compatible with the provisions of the WTO. The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) negotiations were concluded in November 2007 and initialled by some ESA countries, including Mauritius, in December 2007.

Mauritius signed the EPA interim agreement on 29 August 2009 together with Seychelles, Madagascar and Zimbabwe at the Grand' Baie Conference Centre. Comoros and Zambia, which had initialed the interim EPA, indicated that they would sign at a later stage. The other ESA countries, namely Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi and Sudan have neither initialed nor signed the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement in view of their concern over certain issues which they consider to be contentious in the Agreement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contentious issues have been divided into two baskets. Basket I contains the infant industry clause, the standstill clause, regional preferences, quantitative restrictions and modification of tariffs. At the ESA-EC meeting held in the margin of the signature of the IEPA in Mauritius in 2009, consensus was reached between the ESA Member States and the European Commission (EC) on the standstill clause, infant

industry clause, modification of tariff commitments and prohibition of quantitative restrictions.

Basket II is made up of export taxes, the MFN clause, the definition of substantially all trade, the non-execution clause and flexibility in applying special safeguard in agriculture. These issues are considered to be important to the ESA region, in particular the LDCs. So far, the two sides have yet to reach agreement on these issues.

The Interim EPA covers a trade in goods chapter, a development and fisheries chapters. It also contains a *rendez-vous* clause on outstanding issues such as trade in services, trade related issues, including trade facilitation and agriculture, amongst others, which are expected to form part of the full and comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement currently under negotiations.

Several rounds of negotiations have been held between the EC and the ESA at technical and senior officials' level between the period January 2008 and the signature of the IEPA in August 2009. Progress has been registered on issues such as trade in services, trade facilitation and competition policy, although several more rounds of negotiations would be necessary to reach a final agreement on these issues.

However, after the signature of the Interim EPA in Mauritius, the negotiations had to be kept on hold because of persisting divergence, on the one hand, on some of the contentious issues in Basket II, and also because of the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the appointment of a new EU Trade Commissioner in replacement of Baroness Catherine Ashton. An informal ESA-EC Ministerial meeting was held in Brussels in April of this year, where it was agreed that negotiations should resume at the technical and senior officials' level both on the remaining contentious issues and outstanding issues such as trade in services, trade related issues, and on the development chapter.

At the ESA level, a technical meeting was held from the 28 to 30 June 2010 to define the groups' position on the issues at stake. An ESA Ministerial meeting was held on 20 July 2010 to take stock of the ESA position on some of these issues, and to provide guidance to the negotiators at technical and senior officials' level. It is also expected that a reality check with the EC would be undertaken at a later stage on what is possible in the medium term and what could be included in a *rendez-vous* clause for future negotiations.

There is also a proposal from Malawi to transform the ESA configuration into a COMESA configuration, given that all ESA countries are also members of the COMESA. The COMESA Secretariat has prepared a paper for the consideration of senior officials and Ministers at the meeting on 20 July 2010.

I will keep the House posted of developments on the matter.

Mr Bérenger: I have two questions although the substantive Minister is not here. Can the hon. Minister let us know whether a final and complete Economic Partnership Agreement has been signed between the European Union and any of the different ACP regional groups?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with due respect to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have just taken this seat for a couple of days, and I think it would be proper that the question be put to the substantive Minister who is well versed in all the *rouages* of these very tricky negotiations.

Mr Bérenger: I'll put a few more questions, which would give the opportunity to the substantive Minister to make a statement when he is in the country.

The hon. Minister has just told us that COMESA is coming in, and there is a suggestion that, instead of discussions being between Eastern and Southern African configuration and the European Commission, it should be between COMESA and the European Union. Is Government happy with the fact that we are in SADC? SADC is supposed to be the block moving towards integration and so on, and a number of SADC countries are neither in the Eastern and Southern African configuration nor in COMESA and there is trouble between the SADC configuration and the European Union. Instead of moving in this direction, why does COMESA go all the way up to Libya? Is Government giving serious consideration to putting into question the Eastern and Southern African configuration?

Dr. Kasenally: The fact is the very number of issues which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has mentioned. That's why they could not come to an agreement, but they put it to a committee for further negotiation, which means there is not total agreement on this measure, that COMESA should negotiate with the European Union.

COTONOU AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/336) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Cotonou Agreement, he will state if there has been any revision thereto and, if so, indicate the merits, if any, of the revised Agreement.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall answer again to this question.

The Cotonou Agreement was concluded for a period of 20 years commencing 01 March 2000. The previous Agreements between ACP Group of States and the EU were concluded for a duration of five years. Between 1975 and 2000, the ACP Group of States and the EU had concluded five Conventions.

Since, the Cotonou Agreement was concluded for a period of 20 years, provision was made in the Agreement for the possibility of amending it through a revision process after each 5-year period in order to incorporate developments in ACP-EU relations, to provide the possibility for consultation and discussion on the emerging issues and to adapt cooperation to new realities.

Negotiations for the revision of the Cotonou Agreement were concluded in Brussels on 23 February 2005 and the amended Agreement was signed in Luxembourg in 2005.

Negotiations for the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement were officially launched on 29 May 2009 and were concluded in Brussels on 19 March 2010. The Agreement amending the Cotonou Agreement for a second time was signed in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 22 June 2010 during the 35th Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers.

Fifty (50) of the 77 ACP States and 18 EU Member States as well as the European Union signed the revised Agreement.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, my colleague, Dr. Arvin Boolell, signed the revised Agreement on behalf of Mauritius.

Merits of the revision exercise

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the merits of the revised Agreement can be categorised as follows -

- (a) amendment of the trade pillar to reflect the joint ACP-EU decision to negotiate WTO-compatible Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) at the level of the ACP regions;
- (b) modification of certain financing instruments pertaining to Development Finance Cooperation (DFC);
- (c) review of the joint ACP-EU institutional structures to reflect changes, and
- (d) new areas of cooperation.

All four aspects of the revision just enumerated are beneficial to Mauritius. I am tabling a paper which elaborates on the merits of the revision of the Cotonou Agreement giving full information as may be required by the hon. Member.

GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES – FIRE FIGHTERS - GRIEVANCES

(No. 1B/337) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Government Fire Services, he will state –

- (a) whether he has been made aware of the grievances of the fire fighters in connection with their conditions of work, namely –
 - (i) state of equipment;
 - (ii) unpaid supplementary hours of work;
 - (iii) understaffing, and
 - (iv) the delay in promotion of officers to the rank of Senior Station Officers and
- (b) the remedial measures Government proposes to take.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I have assumed my function as Minister, I have on three occasions visited the fire stations and invited the fire fighters to submit to me any difficulties they may be facing in discharge of their duties.

Subsequent to the visits, the Government Fire Services Employees Association, in a letter dated 06 February 2010, informed me of various grievances from the officers of Fire Services Department, which according to me are justified.

I had a meeting with the representatives of the Government Servants Employees Association to look into the following issues raised by them, in respect of Industrial Relation in Government Fire Services, review of Fire Services Order, casual leave, filling of vacancies, payment of extra hours, bank of fire fighters, allowances amongst others.

With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Chief Fire Officer that all vehicles and equipment in the Fire Services Department are in good working condition.

Furthermore, procedures have been initiated for the purchase of –
six water tenders;

nine sets of rescue gears;
450 length of delivery hoses;
20 branch pipes;
20 floating pumps;
20 breathing apparatus sets, and
12 hazmat boots.

Provision is also being made for purchase of helmets, tunics and leggings.

Unpaid supplementary hours of work

With regard to part (a) (ii), I am informed that the Government Fire Services is in the process of paying for work performed on public holidays. And in this regard, the views of the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs have been sought as to how work performed on public holidays should be computed. Necessary action is being taken to pay night duty allowance and also to pay in September an allowance in lieu of time off for work performed on public holidays.

Understaffing

I am further informed, with regard to part (a) (iii), that the scheme of service for the post of fire fighters is being amended in line with recommendations of PRB Report 2008. It is presently at the level of the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs. Approval is awaited.

Promotion to rank of Senior Station Officers

With regard to part (a) (iv), I am informed that the scheme of service has been forwarded to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and its reply is awaited to proceed further.

Mr Ganoo: I am very grateful to the hon. Minister that he has agreed that the problems which have been raised are real ones. Can he enlighten the House as far as the equipment are concerned? May we know when these equipment will be made available, because we are talking of people who are working in very difficult conditions, as we all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Can the hon. Minister tell us when the lorries, hoses and all the other equipment he has mentioned will be made available to the fire fighters?

Mr Aimée: In fact, I want to inform the hon. Member that on the various visits I had at the fire station, I have been made aware that one lorry equipped with hydraulic ladder of

the Government Fire Services is not being used due to mechanical failure. I am currently studying the possibility of either returning it to the agency or selling it to another country...

(Interruptions)

... and to use the money to purchase equipment.

(Interruptions)

In fact, the hon. Member is right in his question. Some equipment must be changed.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should give the dates. I understand that was the question.

Mr Aimée: Once fund will be made available, not immediately.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other urgent complaint is the question of understaffing. Is the hon. Minister aware that this department is working with an under capacity of about less than 100 fire fighters? And this makes their work more difficult, that is, there are 100 fire fighters to be recruited?

Mr Aimée: Je dois dire à l'honorable membre que je suis au courant qu'il y a un manque de *staff*. Je ne sais pas s'il y a au moins 100, mais il y a un manque de *manpower*. Avec la collaboration du ministère de *Civil Service and Administrative Reforms*, on fait le nécessaire pour remplir tous ces postes.

Mr Ganoo: This exercise of promotion or this new grade which has to be created dates back to the PRB of 2008. We are now two years afterwards. Can the hon. Minister see to it that this complaint of fire fighters is also looked into?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je fais un suivi. A plusieurs reprises, j'ai enquêté sur ce qui se passe et on va le faire très bientôt.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the complaints of the fire fighters forwarded to the Ministry is concerning ladders. We have more and more high-rise buildings and many of these ladders are created by them on site. This has been reported on many occasions. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many operational high-rise ladders - with the lorries - the fire services have today and whether there are orders which have been placed for high-rise ladders?

Mr Aimée: I don't know how many there are. I will inquire and let the hon. Member know. But from the information that I got during my visit, the ladder lorry which is the longest one has got a breakdown since years.

(Interruptions)

No, we have various ladder lorries, but only one has got a breakdown.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have had understaffing and frustrations because of lack of promotion in the Police department; then it was the Prison service and now we have reached the fire services. Naturally, this is a pretext, referring to the PRB, the scheme of duties that has to be changed and so on. Will the hon. Minister see to it that the required in terms of promotions and understaffing is done urgently?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je crois que c'est un mal nécessaire. Il faut le faire. Je viens d'arriver, il y a à peine trois ou quatre mois. Je vais voir.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have one last supplementary question. Unpaid supplementary hours of work has been construed by the hon. Minister as working on Sundays. Can I also inform him that these fire fighters have also been working during pre-election and election days, also at night and they have not been paid yet? This is also another claim. Can the hon. Minister kindly look into this issue also?

Mr Aimée: I have already answered to the question of the hon. Member. I said, in this regard, the view of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is asked for work performed on public holidays and should be computed.

FIRE FIGHTERS – TRAINING COURSES - MALAYSIA

(No. 1B/338) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to training courses for Fire Fighters in Malaysia under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), he will state -

- (a) the names of the officers who have been nominated for the last training course, and
- (b) whether his Ministry has received any letter of protest from the President of the Fire Fighters Union in relation to the selection of the participants and, if so, the measures taken, if any.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following an invitation from the Malaysian Authorities under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, two officers of the Government Fire Services have been nominated to attend the following training courses in Malaysia -

- (1) Mr Sanjive Ramchurn, Station Officer in “Handling Hazardous Material Incident” Course from 26 July to 20 August 2010, and
- (2) Mr Dyanand Jahul, Station Officer in “International Structural Fire Fighting” Course from 26 September to 01 October 2010.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my attention was drawn to a letter of protest from the President of the Fire Fighters Union addressed to the Chief Fire Officer and copied *inter alia* to my Ministry in relation to the nominations for these courses.

I wish to inform the House that the Malaysian Authorities offer such training courses on a yearly basis and I wish to assure that opportunities will be given to the other fire fighters to benefit from the training.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as much as I have been kind to the hon. Minister in asking my supplementaries for the previous question, But this time, can I just put it to him, therefore, that there has been *un cas de flagrant injustice de passe-droit* in choosing these two officers whom he has just named. Can I ask him whether he can confirm that there was a first letter sent to his Ministry from the Chief Fire Officer suggesting two other names and this letter dated 19 April? These two officers who have been discarded were chosen by the Chief Fire Officer precisely on established criteria. Year after year, the most senior officers, being aged less than 40, are chosen automatically. This has been going on year after year, but this time, the way of choosing the two officers has been changed and this was done before the election. Can he confirm that?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, c’est vrai qu’il y a eu cette recommandation, mais il y avait une liste des officiers sur cette recommandation du *Chief Fire Officer*. Sur cette liste, il y a plusieurs d’entre eux qui ont déjà suivi des cours tout récemment. Il n’y avait que deux qui n’y ont pas été, qui ne sont peut-être pas au même rang que ceux qui ont été recommandés, mais ils sont là depuis longtemps. C’est pourquoi ils ont eu l’opportunité d’être choisis.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to differ with the hon. Minister. These two officers whose names have been suggested by the head of the department and whose

names have been eliminated by his Ministry were the two most senior officers. There were the automatic choice on the list, they fulfill all the criteria and they were even given the forms to fill in. They underwent the medical check-up and so on, but the Ministry then changed this choice, that is, discarded these two officers and suggested two other officers whose names have just been revealed by the hon. Minister just now.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said before, there was a list of proposals for officers of different grades. In fact, I have taken those who have been in the service before. I think everyone should get the opportunity, not only the one who has been recommended. Otherwise, I think the other fire fighters would not get the opportunity to get training. They will stay there forever.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that these two officers who have been eliminated from the list will now no longer be eligible for this Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme because they will be over 40. This was the last opportunity for them. They were just below 40. Next year they will be above 40 and they won't be able to assist this Cooperation Programme?

Mr Aimée: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the offer of training is not made only by the Malaysian Government, but also by many other countries. It is to be noted that each donor country has its own criteria for the award of training. In time, all officers will definitely have the opportunity for training overseas.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to know the truth. These two officers who have been discarded, had they benefited, in the recent past, from such opportunities?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have benefited from such opportunities on two occasions before.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister to check his information because I have the two names of the officers who have been discarded? I don't want to give the names in the Assembly, but they have never benefited from any Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether these two officers who have been chosen now live in Bambous?

Mr Aimée: I will check the information, but in this context, *je voudrais attirer l'attention de l'honorable membre...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Aimée: *Dans ce contexte, je dois quand même dire à l'honorable membre que j'ai reçu d'autres invitations des Russian Authorities.* For example, in that context, "Members may wish to note that invitation has been received from the Russian Authorities through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for nomination to attend the following." which means that most of the staff would get the chance to go on training, but I have given the chance to those who have been in service much before the others.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Ganoo: Although I reiterate that these two officers who have been eliminated are most senior to the two officers chosen, I will ask a last question, can the hon. Minister confirm that he has received a letter of protest from the President of the Fire Fighters Union in relation to the choice of these two officers?

Mr Aimée: I mentioned this at the very beginning of my reply.

SCHOOLS – PUPILS - DROP OUTS

(No.1B/339) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to pupils who drop out of schools or training institutions before the age of sixteen, he will state if an annual survey is carried out to determine the number thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the Statistics Unit of my Ministry normally carries out an annual survey which covers, *inter alia*, enrolment at primary and secondary school levels and gives an indication on promotion rate, repetition rate and of the trends regarding drop outs.

The situation with respect to enrolment is monitored at school level with a view to ensuring that there is continued schooling. Heads of Schools ensure at the level of their respective schools the follow up with responsible parties regarding the prolonged absence of their wards. Such cases are closely monitored and in many instances, they are backed by home visits by educational social workers for investigation into the reasons for such absences.

Drop out rate at the end of the primary cycle is negligible. In the secondary sub-sector, statistical compilations for drop-outs within the system undertaken as a whole, show

that students drop out for the years 2007 and 2008 in respect of the academic stream for secondary sub sector up to Form IV is on average 2.5% and 2% respectively. The exercise for 2009 is still in process. I have given these figures although they have not been asked for. I think that this is interesting for the hon. Member, but I must say that we took 2007 and 2008 because before that, I personally believe that the figures that were there and the way that they were calculated are not reliable.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since education is compulsory up to 16 years, may I ask the hon. Minister what measures he is contemplating to ensure that our youngsters have any training programme up to 16 years so that we do not have children aged less than 16 years out of schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is in fact a problem and we are looking into it. I have given instructions at the beginning of this year in certain specific cases, for example, where children who ought to go to the pre-voc sector and have not attended school when it started, to try to find out the reasons. The survey has given some positive results and we are seriously looking into the matter and trying to find ways and means to curb this situation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that according to the Education For All Global Monitoring report, Mauritius is a country at risk of not attaining universal primary education by year 2015? On the MDGs, there is the universal primary education. Is he aware that according to the statistics obtained from official sources in Mauritius, the survival rate for children joining primary is only 96%? Is the Minister aware that according to these international statistics, there are some 6000 out-of-school children of primary school going age?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that I gave the reply to the hon. Member last week and try to give the reasons also for this situation. But, this is an important factor that we are looking into.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Minister referred to education and social workers who follow up in case of prolonged absences, would he inform the House what category of civil servants are being referred to? Are these employees of the Ministry of Education? How many of them are there and where are they deployed?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have, first of all, the school psychologists themselves because in the survey that we carried out, the main reasons are family problems in fact, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir, and this is why the psychologists are actively involved. But, we also liaise with the Ministry of Women's Rights in charge of family and children to enrol social workers to go and do the job.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: The Minister knows that is not the case, the parents *médiateurs* are no longer there. Will the hon. Minister ensure that in a country where there is a duty incumbent upon the State to ensure that all children below 16 are in school that we cannot tolerate the situation where according to those figures that the Minister quoted, and with which I do not agree, 2.5% of children joining secondary are drop-outs?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, but the situation is not alarming as such, Mr Deputy Speaker, sir. While listening to the hon. Member, we get the impression that he is being pathetic and so on. The situation is not alarming and I can assure the hon. Member, the House and the country that all the necessary is being done to try to improve the situation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister quote one single measure since 2006 to ensure that children below 16 are made to attend school?

Dr. Bunwaree: Of course, there is the Second Chance Programme, the Special Needs Education Programme and the close follow-up by the school psychologists. In fact, there are other measures that have been taken. There is the enhancement programme. We are trying to make the school environment become more attractive for children and students.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow one last question from hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I think that I heard the hon. Minister mentioning that psychologists do follow up for prolonged absence. I would like him to confirm that and to inform the House how many psychologists the Ministry has so that this particular work can be done. Regarding the Second Chance programme are qualified teachers attached to this programme? When were these teachers being recruited and whether this Second Chance Programme is suitable for school leavers after Form II or III, that is aged 12 or 13, whether this programme was meant for this category of students and what are the qualifications of those persons who are actually working on this enhancement programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: You allow the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I think that a proper question should be put. I will give all the information concerning the Second Chance Programme, it's so long a reply. But in the part reply that I gave, I said that was one of the

measures which has already started in the sense of making the school environment become attractive for the children. The first part of the question with the psychologists, - this is part of the reply - but I also said that social workers get involved first and when they find that there is any psychological disorder, not only with the children but sometimes with the environment around, not to say the parents, the psychologists enter into play.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Li Kwong Wing has informed the Chair that he has had to leave; therefore, we will move straightaway to question 1B/342.

RDA - GENERAL MANAGER - WORLD CUP FINALS 2010

(No. 1B/342) **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 General Manager of the Road Development Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to whether the AJMC-Colas firm met the expenses incurred by the General Manager in terms of air tickets, stadium ticket and hotel accommodation in the context of the FIFA World Cup Finals 2010 and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Independent Commission Against Corruption has informed my Ministry of an inquiry related to the matter.

My Ministry has given its approval for ICAC officers to get access to all information from the Road Development Authority.

My Ministry has also reassured ICAC of its full support and collaboration in the matter under investigation. The hon. Members will appreciate that, at this particular junction, it will not be in order for me to disclose any further information relating directly to the investigation being carried out by ICAC.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not go into the investigation carried out by ICAC, but I am sure that the hon. Minister will have looked at the file AJMC Colas. Can the hon. Minister tell us how many tenders has it won over the last two or three years?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a question which has been asked by one of the Members and I am going to place a copy of all the tenders in the Library of the National Assembly. If I am not mistaken, out of 26 contracts, they have obtained 14 and all through the Central Procurement Office, with an exception of one which was internal.

Mr Bérenger: Can the Tender Board rely on the recommendation of the RDA? Can we know that in all those cases, the contracts won by Colas, whether in every case it was not the RDA recommendation in favour of Colas?

The Deputy Speaker: Since there is a question specifically on that issue perhaps the hon. Leader of Opposition could just wait for that question to make whatever supplementary.

Dr. Sorefan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there was an ICAC case on the same person for having given the tender documents before tendering exercise was done to Colas?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of whether there was an investigation on the same person.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House that in the past Colas has been regularly financing, giving favours directly to officers of the RDA, not only in terms of air travel, but in other sort of facilities, that is, hotel staying in Mauritius and outside?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if such is the case the hon. Member can easily go to ICAC and deponé. I am not aware of any such allegations and they have never come to me so far.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether pending the outcome of the inquiry by ICAC, he has taken measures for the General Manager to be suspended or being interdicted pending the outcome of the investigation?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there must be the presumption of innocence. I cannot take an action against him because investigations are on. Let the report be out and I'll take my responsibility as a responsible Minister.

CUREPIPE/PLAISANCE - - LIGHTING SYSTEM - BREAKDOWNS

(No. 1B/343) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that frequent breakdowns occur on the lighting system along the highway from Curepipe to Plaisance and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this question. I wish to inform the House that the Municipal Council of Curepipe is responsible for the installation, maintenance and operation of the street lighting system from Wooton Round About to Midlands area. The

lighting system along the highway from Midlands up to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Airport is taken care of by the Grand Port-Savanne District Council.

I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the black out which occurred in early July at Wooton Round About was due to 33 defective lamps. 14 defective lamps have already been replaced whereas the remaining 19 will be replaced by early next week.

I am informed by the Grand Port-Savanne District Council that there was a black out between Midlands and Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital on 12 July 2010 and remedial action was taken on 15 July 2010 to address this problem. I am further informed that 32 defective lamps out of the 66 defective lamps detected in the course on inspections carried out by officers of the Council, have been replaced so far and the remaining 34 will be replaced by next week.

Dr. Sorefan: One supplementary question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning this issue of lamps going to the Airport lasting for some weeks and every now and then we see black out going there. It is going to be very dangerous and I think personally...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan put your question directly!

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Minister see with the District of Grand Port/ Savanne that they do their job properly and that this does not happen every now and then twice or three times in a week?

Mr Aimée: Oui, M. le président et je dois ajouter que cela va se faire tout de suite cette semaine mais les employés du *District Council* n'ont pas la compétence voulue pour stopper le *timer*. Ils n'ont pas le *know-how* d'électricité. Ils sont là simplement pour changer les ampoules...

(Interruptions)

Voilà pourquoi il y a ce *laps* de temps quand il y a la défection et la réparation.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was driving through this highway last night and it was a total black out. I would like to refer to PQ No. B/262 in September 2005, the then hon. Minister stated that frequent breakdown do occur due to earth leakage sensitive circuit breaker. In July 2007, in another PQ No. B/777, the then hon. Minister stated that breakdown and black out were due to the tripping of a main solar switch, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Five years later, we still have breakdowns, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, we would like

to know from the hon. Minister what concrete action he is going to take to avoid any accident?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, les lampes électriques, ça saute assez souvent surtout...

(Interruptions)

Ce que je dois dire ici, c'est qu'il se peut que, de temps en temps, il y ait des *breakdowns*. Mais les autorités locales ne sont pas directement responsables des lampes. Nous changeons seulement le *bulb*, alors que nous avons, d'après les documents que j'ai devant moi, des arrangements avec le CEB.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please address the Chair!

Mr Aimée: Ce ne sont pas les employés des autorités locales qui vont changer une ligne, qui vont s'occuper du *timer* et qui vont changer quelque chose qui est défectueux. Ce sont seulement les lampes, *that is, the bulbs only*.

Mr Bhagwan : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question has been raised here on several occasions, people have died, not only at La Vigie, but also in the North, on the main highway. Can the hon. Minister state or, at least, inquire, because the Local Authorities do not have the know-how, they are not equipped, they do not have funds to look after the lighting on the highway and it is high time to have a specialised unit or contract out in the public interest to save lives of people?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

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

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we would like to know one and for all, who is the responsible party for maintenance? Is it the Energy Service Division, A. J. Maurel Construction who got the contract, the Grand Port District Council or the Central Electricity Board and now we hear that it is from the Municipality of Curepipe? We would like to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who is the responsible party to get this problem fixed?

Mr Aimée: According to five years, Mr Deputy Speaker, there is a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Central Electricity Board and the Local Authorities in year 2007. The salient points of arrangement are as follows -

“As the provider of electricity for the street lighting applications, CEB shall be responsible for the following, as the case may be.

Connecting and disconnecting the supplies leads to street lamps and decorative garlands where the leads are connected to CEB conductors;”

The Deputy Speaker: I think that this is clear enough, we move to the next question please. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

NTA - PRIVATISATION

(No. 1B/344) 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 National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation information as to whether privatisation thereof is envisaged, indicating if any offer has been received and

- (a) if so, by whom, and
- (b) give details thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that privatisation of the National Transport Corporation is not on the agenda of the Government.

ATHLETES – INSURANCE COVER

(No. 1B/345) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to insurance cover for athletes, he will give a list of the sports federations complying with paragraph 2 (d) of the Third Schedule to the Sports Act, indicating, in each case, details of the insurance policy.

(Withdrawn)

COMMISSION NATIONALE DU SPORT FEMININ (CNSF) - BOARD

(No. 1B/346) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin* (CNSF), he will give -

- (a) the composition of the Board, and
- (b) the date of the appointment of the Chairperson, indicating the activities organised since her appointment as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

PLAINE VERTE MEDI-CLINIC - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/347) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Medi-Clinic at Plaine Verte, she will state -

- (a) the cost of construction thereof;
- (b) the expected dates of;
 - (i) completion of the construction works, and
 - (ii) it will be operational, and
- (c) the services that will be provided thereat.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract value for the construction of the medi-clinic at Plaine Verte is Rs53,412,624.00, inclusive of Value Added Tax.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is expected that the construction works will be completed by end of October this year, and the medi-clinic will be made operational one month after the handing over of the building.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the services that will be provided will be the same as those offered at other medi-clinics. These include –

- General consultation
- Non-communicable Disease clinic
- Dressing
- Dispensing of drugs
- Midwifery/Antenatal clinic
- X-ray and ultra sound
- Pharmacy
- Dental services
- Ayurvedic medicine
- Laboratory services (mini lab services)

- Community Based Rehabilitation
- Family Planning
- Vaccination
- Health education.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the Idrice Goomany Area Health Centre would be closed when the medi-clinic will be operational?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Sure, this is what will happen.

STC - RICE (RATION) - QUOTATIONS

(No. 1B/348) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to ration rice, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information, for the last order, as to –

- the name of the companies from which quotations were sought;
- the quantity;
- the price;
- the percentage of broken rice, and
- whether the rice was sold to STCM Ltd and, if so, indicate the quantity and the price thereof.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, for the last order –

- On 11 March 2010, 14 companies were invited to submit quotations for the supply of 16,000 metric tons for period 01 April 2010 to January 2011. I am tabling a list of the 14 companies.
- As at the closing date, that is, on 15 March 2010, six companies had submitted quotations as follows –

	Company	Price CNF in USD/MT

1	Garibsons Pvt Ltd	404.04
2	B.A. Partners Ltd	434.00
3	Asia Golden Rice Co Ltd	530.00
4	Export Trading Co Ltd	422.00
5	Meskay and Femtee Pvt Ltd	430.00
6	Meskay and Femtee Trading Company Ltd	426.32

- (iii) The contract was awarded to Garibsons Pvt Ltd for 16,000 metric tons, at the rate of 404.04 USD per metric ton.
- (iv) According to STC specifications, the percentage of broken rice is 25%. I wish to inform the House that inspections of the quantity and quality of rice are carried out at the loading port by an independent surveyor, namely either SGS Ltd or Bureau Veritas (Pakistan), and that analysis of samples is carried out by the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB). On 22 June 2010, the MSB carried out analysis of samples and certified that the rice meets the STC specifications. The percentage of broken rice was 23.34%.
- (v) As regards part (e) of the question, I am informed by the STC that the rice was not sold to STCM Ltd.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the same commodity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that, over a period of six months, the STC had recourse to two tenders, three quotations and three orders placed over a period of three months. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the case where order was placed ...

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer first. If he confirms, then the hon. Member can put another question!

Mr Soodhun: According to the question that has been asked, it was the last order. But, in fact, it's true; order was placed on different occasions.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether compensation was paid with regard to the first order, that is, the order which was placed in January, and the amount of compensation paid?

The Deputy Speaker: Are we with the first or the last order? The question is with regard to the last order.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister has replied also for the first order.

The Deputy Speaker: So, if the Minister has replied, there is no problem.

Mr Soodhun: No compensation was paid to any company.

Mr Bérenger: I am given to understand that, when we import ration rice, it must be accompanied by a certificate from the country of origin's Standard Bureau. I heard the hon. Minister refer to other certification. Did we get that certificate from the country of origin's Standard Bureau, and, if yes, can it be laid on the Table of the National Assembly, and, if not, whether whatever certification the Minister referred to can be laid on the table of the Assembly?

Mr Soodhun: I thank the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, we have both; Pakistan and Mauritius. I am going to table both.

Mr Bérenger: We are buying rice from Garibsons, Pakistan, not through a tender but through quotations. Does the hon. Minister find it normal that Garibsons from Pakistan defaulted in 2007, took part in the October tender - not quotation – and was ruled out non responsive? It took part in the second tender exercise in November last year - the first one was October and the second one November last year – and, again, it did not qualify. It was non responsive. Does the Minister find it normal that a company that defaulted and was found twice to be non responsive gets finally a chance to supply Mauritius, because it is not through tender but through so-called quotations?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware about any default of this company. In fact, I personally do not agree with the consignment of this company. This is why the Prime Minister himself called me, and I have asked the CEO of Garibsons Ltd to come to Mauritius. He came to Mauritius, we discussed, and I warned him that we have 10,500 metric tonnes remaining. We have insisted that he has to change the quality of the rice. They have already signed the contract; we can't just withdraw the contract. They can

sue us in court. But what we can do is insist on the quality, and I did it. We have warned him that, if next time the consignment is the same, it will be the last time that we are going to choose the company.

Mr Bérenger: *C'est incroyable !* The Minister says that he is not aware of what I am saying. At least, he would check that they defaulted after having obtained the tender in 2007! They were non responsive every time a tender was issued in October and November. So, he does not check on what I am saying, so-called quotations are issued, and he deals directly with the number one man at Garibsons.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is just asking the question. As I mentioned, I have no information, but I can assure you that, at no time, there was any default from this company. What we have is a tender of 2000 metric tonnes...

Mr Bérenger: Not a tender, a quotation!

Mr Soodhun: We did have a quotation, and he complied with it.

(Interruptions)

I am not telling what? The hon. Member does not know! The hon. Member does not know what he is asking!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, address the Chair, please! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Minister did mention that he is not aware. We have his answer.

(Interruptions)

The question was regarding a particular order, the last order. I allowed the hon. Member a question as regards the previous exercise and the hon. Minister stated that he is not aware. He cannot be more precise than that.

Mr Seeruttun: Being given that the hon. Minister has said that the broken rice level was 25%, may I ask him whether he is satisfied with the quality of the rice and, if not, what does he intend to do?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I myself mentioned that I was not satisfied with the quality of the rice. We have taken action immediately.

Mr Lesjongard: When I asked the hon. Minister whether STC had incurred any loss with regard to the cancellation of the offer from Chaiyaporn rice and Food Products

Company Ltd., his answer was in the negative. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he, himself, stated the following in a PNQ -

“This caused us a big problem at that time. We had to cancel this consignment and it is true to say that there has been a loss because of this problem”.

May we know which is which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know which part of my PNQ the hon. Member was referring. They themselves have asked for the quotation.

The Deputy Speaker: The question was regarding a particular order. We cannot now open the floodgate and answer questions on consignment in general. I will allow a last question from hon. Ganoo.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since this matter is of so much importance, can the hon. Minister - since he himself has confessed that he does not know the past record of Garibsons - therefore make a statement to the House on the next occasion to enlighten the House on whether this company has defaulted, has been non-responsive in past exercises? Can he also tell us what are the guarantees and performance bonds that have been asked from Garibsons for this present order?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first I will have to look into the matter to see what are the measures that can be taken, first if the performance bonds may be ceased immediately if we are not satisfied and, second, if the contract may be terminated by default. This action can be taken at any time.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister saying that they are purchasing now from Garibsons through a simple quotation? Is he saying that there is a performance bond in force? The hon. Minister should check well before answering. Is he saying that there is a performance bond of this order concerning Garibsons although it has been only through quotation?

Mr Soodhun: We do have a contract signed on this quotation. Among six quotations, this was the lowest bidder.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, the question is simply if you have got a performance bond for this order. If you have got one, you say so.

Mr Soodhun: I'll have to check. I can't give the answer offhand.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: If we could now move to basmati rice after '*du riz ration*'!

'BASMATI' RICE – IMPORTATION

(No. 1B/349) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to basmati rice, he will, for the period 2005-2010, state -

- (a) the amount thereof imported;
- (b) the measures in place to ensure that the rice meets the quality expected of rice with the label basmati, and
- (c) if any sanction is taken against importers who pass off rice as basmati.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, importation of rice is liberalised and import permits are granted by the Import Division of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that out of a total of 349,178 tonnes of rice imported for the period 2005 to 2010, 135,849 tonnes have been declared as Basmati rice.

As regards part (b), it is the Mauritius Standards Bureau which again falls under the purview of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce which normally prescribes norms and standards. There exists a Mauritian standard which is MS 106:1993, for rice which is based on the ISO 7301: 1988. This standard is, however, being revised. On the other hand, importers are required to submit a certificate of conformity of the consignment to specifications of basmati rice, as established by the country of origin. This serves to ensure that the quality of the rice is protected.

As regards part (c), no complaint has been registered up to now at the Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the basmati rice has a strong brand name. Can I know from the hon. Minister what measures are taken to ensure that the Basmati rice that is being sold in Mauritius is actually of Basmati brand? We heard from the hon. Minister that a certificate is required from the country exporting the rice to Mauritius, but what about the case of mixing occurring in Mauritius once the basmati has hit Mauritius?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, my colleague has talked to me on this matter and it is presently under investigation. At this stage, this is the only official figures and official facts that I have.

Mr Bérenger: I listened to the hon. Minister carefully and he has said that importers are required to submit a certificate of conformity of the consignment to specifications of basmati rice as established by the country of origin. In Pakistan, in India, they have the standards and, according to our regulations, the importers are required to submit a certificate that it is in conformity with basmati rice in the country of origin. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether importers are submitting such certificates?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, it is the Ministry of Industry which is looking at this. The Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry is in charge at the retail level.

Mr Bérenger: I think the hon. Minister should address the issue with his colleague who said in the House that importers are required to submit a certificate of conformity and so on. Has he not taken the trouble to check whether importers are submitting such a certificate? Or, if they are being required to do so?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I humbly request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask the question to my colleague Minister.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Uteem: We heard the hon. Minister mentioning that the importation of rice has been liberalised. In view of this whole issue about basmati rice, is there any policy to increase the amount of basmati rice imported by the State Trading Corporation?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! I think this question should be addressed to the substantive Minister.

NTA HEAD OFFICE, CASSIS – LEASE AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/350) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the building housing the National Transport Authority Head Office at Cassis, he will state –

- (a) the terms of the lease agreement, indicating -
 - (i) the monthly rent;
 - (ii) the date of its termination, and
 - (iii) whether it is proposed to renew same, and
- (b) the number of parking lots available to members of the staffs and the public.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that it is renting a building of 2,890 m² for use as Head Office, since 16 January 2000. The present lease, which took effect as from 16 January 2010, is for a period of three years. The monthly rent, inclusive of VAT, for the first year is Rs576,955, the second year is Rs622,815 and the third year is Rs668,675.

As regards part (iii), no decision has yet been taken as to whether the lease agreement will be renewed or otherwise.

As far as part (b) is concerned, the number of parking lots available for the staff is 25, whereas no parking is provided for public use. Parking for the public is available on roadsides within walking distance from the office.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister tell us how many cases of larceny there has been since 2008?

The Deputy Speaker: This has nothing to do with the original question. The hon. Member should come with a specific question on that issue. Next question, hon. Seeruttun!

DEUX FRERES/BAMBOUS VIRIEUX - LANDSLIDE

(No. 1B/351) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether he is aware of the risk of landslide occurring in the range from Deux Frères to Bambous Virieux and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that Government proposes to take, indicating the time-frame.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is fully aware of the risk of landslide occurring in the range of Deux Frères to Bambous Virieux.

Since no local expertise is available, Government is seeking foreign technical help from Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA-Japan) and France to look into the

problem of landslides, landslide-prone areas and the setting up of a landslide monitoring unit at the MPI.

The time-frame for the study and intervention at the landslide-prone areas will depend totally on confirmation from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency of France to go ahead with the project since expertise in the field of geotechnology is not available at the level of my Ministry.

ST HUBERT - MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/352) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a multipurpose complex at St Hubert, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that currently there is a village hall at St Hubert whose construction dates back in the 1960s and is a derelict building. The village hall was being used by the inhabitants of both St Hubert and St Hilaire and was also accommodating a kindergarten.

In view of the risk the building was posing, the Grand Port/Savanne District Council had, in February 2009, decided to shift the service offered in a rented building at Doya Street, St Hilaire.

The Grand Port/Savanne District Council has approved the construction of a village hall at St Hubert and the project may be implemented in the financial year 2011, subject to availability of funds from the Local Infrastructure Fund. The existing derelict building, previously used as village hall, would be pulled down to accommodate the proposed new village hall.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish also to inform the House that with the implementation of the new Local Government legislation, a number of infrastructural works will be undertaken, including the construction of village halls and community centres for the use of the community.

SUGARCANE FIELDS - EAU BLEUE - PULVINARIA PESTS

(No. 1B/353) **Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he is aware of the alarming situation caused by the presence of Pulvinaria pests affecting the sugar cane plantations in the regions of Eau Bleue in the factory area of Riche en Eau and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that are being taken.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Farmers Service Corporation of the increased presence this year of Pulvinaria pests (*poux à poche blanche*) in sugarcane fields in the region of Eau Bleue.

This situation has been reported to the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute. On the recommendation of the Institute, the planters concerned have been advised to thrash the fields affected and send their canes to the milling factory without burning during the crop season. The planters have also been advised that where there is a minor incidence of this pest during intercrop season, they should thrash their fields but where more severe cases are noted, the canes have to be stubble shaved and left in the fields to prevent spread of the pest to adjacent fields.

I am also advised that the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute has effected since January 2010 several visits to cane fields affected in the South East region. The Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute has also recommended the release of coccinellid beetles (*poule bon dieu*) to destroy the pest. I understand that this has been done in the affected fields.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that the preventive method being used is a natural one despite that we are not having concrete solution to that problem. We know that the farmers have suffered a decrease in the price of sugar for the last few years and also, with the euro going down, the proceeds are really getting reduced year after year. Now with that problem, can the hon. Minister contemplate having some sort of compensation to those planters given that there is no real solution to that problem?

Mr Faugoo: I cannot give any commitment in the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but surely we will look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, PQ No. 1B/355! PQ No. 1B/354 has been withdrawn.

MEDICAL COUNCIL - DR. MRS S. R – REGISTRATION

(No. 1B/354) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the application by Dr. Mrs S. R. for registration as specialist, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE CLINICS - RADIOLOGICAL SERVICES - FEES

(No. 1B/355) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to radiological services, including Computed Axial Tomography (CT) scans and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) offered by private clinics to public hospitals, she will, for the years 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 to date, give a list of the private clinics, indicating the annual fees paid to each of them.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the list of private clinics which offered radiological services to public hospitals during period 2007 to date as well as the fees paid to each of them.

EU - FISH – EXPORT

(No. 1B/356) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the export of fish to the European Union, he will state if a Competent Authority has been appointed and, if so, state –

- (a) his name
- (b) the date of appointment, and
- (c) by whom he was appointed

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Competent Authority was set up under Section 2 of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act (Export of Fish and Fish Products Regulations 2006), subsequently amended in 2009, as the division of Veterinary Services (DVS) of the Ministry responsible for the subject of Agriculture. The Competent Authority is the body to which competence has been conferred for the organisation of official controls for certification of fish and fish products for the export market.

Mr Jean Yvon Thépaut was employed as Officer in Charge of the Competent Authority on contract basis with effect from 01 October 2008 by the then Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister is saying that he was appointed in 2008 on a contract basis. Can I know for how long the contract is?

Mr Von-Mally: For one year.

Mr Baloomoody: He was appointed in 2008, we are in 2010 now. Do we have a competent authority? Has his contract been renewed?

Mr Von-Mally: His contract has been continuously renewed.

Mr Bérenger: May we know whether this competent authority is being challenged by anybody and, if yes, the details?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is not being challenged. In fact, we have been asked by the European Union to have a completely autonomous competent authority and we are working in that direction.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Minister been aware that a Mauritian company has challenged the authority of that competent authority? In fact, a *mise en demeure* was sent to him in June 2010.

Mr Von-Mally: Challenged the competency of Mr Thépaut?

Mr Baloomoody: A Mauritian company in the export of fish has challenged the authority of that competent authority and he has caused a *mise en demeure* to be sent to that gentleman on 11 June 2010.

Mr Von-Mally: Everybody can challenge, but if it is before the Court, it is personal, but the competent authority is here and is working seriously.

The Deputy Speaker: We move to the next question.

BALACLAVA - STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. 1B/357) **Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State lands forming part of former War Department Land Batterie Dartois at Balaclava (Ville Vallio) in the District of

Pamplemousses, he will state if, since July 2005 to date, any plot of land thereat has been leased and, if so, give –

- (a) the name of the beneficiaries, and
- (b) in each case
 - (i) the extent of the land leased, and
 - (ii) terms and conditions and purpose of the lease.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer to PQ 1B/166, PQ 1B/265 and PQ 1B/311. All these questions refer to the same subject of lease of State land being part of former War Department Land Batterie d'Artois at Balaclava (Ville Vallio) in respect of which the hon. Member has himself made a statement to the police last year.

As the police enquiry is on, it would neither be in order nor proper to make any further statement on this matter at this stage.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I have been to the police is because I have got no answer from Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker: No, please, in the light of the answer to the question, I will allow subsidiaries, but the hon. Member must make sure that he is within the answer.

Mr Guimbeau: I would just like to inform the House the reason why I have been to the Police it is because I don't get any answer from the hon. Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: No, the hon. Member should ask his question. If there is no question we will move to the next question.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to table a document which has been on the net and which is a public document, just to inform the House and the public out there what is going on at Balaclava.

The Deputy Speaker: No, the hon. Member should ask questions. If there is no question, I will move to the next one. All right hon. Guimbeau, we will move to the next question.

LAND COMPULSORY ACQUISITION – NOVEMBER 2007-JULY 2010

(No. 1B/358) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to compulsory acquisition by

Government since November 2007 to-date, he will give the number of plots of land acquired, indicating, in each case -

- (a) the reasons therefor,
- (b) the names of the former owners,
- (c) the location and the extent of land,
- (d) the amount of compensation payable as per the assessment of the Government Valuer, and
- (e) the actual compensation paid, indicating the date of payment.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, information covering the period September 2005 to 15 September 2008 has already been placed in the Library of the National Assembly in response to the previous Parliamentary Question B/410 of 06 June 2008 from the hon. Member.

Details for the period 16 September 2008 to-date are being compiled, and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

Mr Guimbeau: Can we know, at least, the number of plots of land acquired?

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister has the information he can...

Dr. Kasenally: I am afraid, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have all the details because it is still being compiled and we have already placed part of the answer covering the period disaster and the rest is being compiled.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Guimbeau.

INTER-COLLEGE SPORTS COMPETITION

(No. 1B/359) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether Government proposes to re-introduce the Inter-college sports competition and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Games, formerly known as the National Inter College Games was reviewed in August 2008 by my Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association and National Sports Federations with a view to giving a boost to school sports. The question of re-introduction therefore does not arise.

Six (6) sports disciplines were involved in this first edition, in 2008 namely *Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Football, Table Tennis and Volleyball*.

In December 2008, i.e. three months after I assumed office, I had a meeting with the Union of Secondary School Managers, the MSSSA and other stakeholders to discuss the organisational aspects of the second edition and it was agreed that the MSSSA will take the lead to organise the National Games as from 2009 in close collaboration as usual with my Ministry. For this edition again, the same six (6) sports disciplines were involved.

As regards the 2010 edition, I wish to inform the hon. Member that preliminaries and finals at regional levels have already been completed in majority of the sport disciplines.

However, the MSSSA has informed my Ministry that the calendar of activities had to be reviewed due to several reasons, namely, time constraint, the large number of students involved for the Athletic competitions, policy of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources not to organise major activities in the 3rd term due to School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Exams and the holding of the last general election. Consequently, the finals of the athletic competition will not be held exceptionally this year.

But, the MSSSA will during the beginning of the 3rd term organise the finals for football, volleyball, table tennis, badminton and basketball at national level.

In the context of the 4th edition in 2011, a joint Technical Committee will be set up involving MSSSA, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Education and Human Resources and Sports Federations to monitor the preparation and timely, implementation of the calendar of activities.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, did the Minister say that for 2010 there will be no inter-college games?

Mr Ritoo: As I stated in my answer, exceptionally the finals of the athletics competition will not be held this year due to time constraint because we had the general election and it is also the policy of the Ministry of Education not to hold athletic competition during third term.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister give some precision who take parts in those games? Is it all the colleges?

The Deputy Speaker: This has been answered, I understand. It is regional.

Mr Ritoo: It is organised by the MSSSA in collaboration with the Ministry for all the colleges.

Mrs Radegonde: Can we know from the hon. Minister when the regional competitions were held?

Mr Ritoo: The MSSSA organised the regional competitions and also at national level.

Mrs Radegonde: The question what I'm asking is the dates on which the regional sports were held?

Mr Ritoo: They were held at the beginning of the first term.

Mrs Radegonde: Does the hon. Minister mean that between the beginning of the first term and the end of the second term no date was available for the holding of the National Athletic Competition?

Mr Ritoo: As I stated in my answer, there was general election and also because a large number of students were participating in the athletics games, so it was not possible to continue with this activity. We had to withhold everything for one month during the electoral campaign.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think that the student were being held up in the electoral campaign.

The Deputy Speaker: This question has been answered. We know the reason. Hon. Guimbeau last question!

Mr Guimbeau: In reply to PQ No. B/144...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Guimbeau: In reply to PQ No. B/144 in April 2008, there were two committees which were set up, a technical committee comprising of officials of his ministry and Board of Education and there was an implementation committee, comprising of all stakeholders including sports federation. Can the hon. Minister table the report of both committees?

Mr Ritoo: There is no problem to table the reports.

AJMC-COLAS –INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS - CONTRACT

(No. 1B/363) Mr A.Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to local infrastructure projects, including construction of roads and expansion of the road network under the Stimulus Package Scheme, he will state the number of contracts awarded to AJMC – Colas firm, indicating, in each case -

- (a) the date of the award, and
- (b) the value of the contract.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am laying a copy of the list of contracts that have been awarded to AJMC-Colas firm on the Table of the Library.

Mr Bérenger: Concerning the question, which I put earlier on, the Central Tender Board by its new name relies on technical reports, appraisals and so on from the Ministry or bodies concerned. Can we know the number of tenders with AJMC – Colas won, whether in all those cases the RDA recommended Colas?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information that I have, out of 26 contracts, AJMC – Colas firm obtained 14 of them and 14 contracts including in two cases they were in joint-venture, and all these projects have been procured through open advertised bidding strictly in accordance with Public Procurement Act of 2006 for all the projects except one. One was internal, and others bids were received and evaluated and the award was approved by Central Procurement Board. But, at the same time, I would like to inform the hon. Member that RDA has nothing to do as far as the allocation of contracts was concerned. But, time and again, officers of RDA, that is engineers, are requested to come to CPB's office and to take in the evaluation process. But CPB is fully free independent; they don't even depend on the recommendation made by RDA. Now, gone are the days in the past, RDA used to make recommendations but now CPB of its own picks and chooses engineers, even from outside, undertakes all types of evaluations. That is the reason I am mentioning that all these works were done entirely, independently by CPB.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister give us the value *in toto* of these 14 contracts?

Mr Bachoo: Well, one thing I can say that in all the 14 cases AJMC – Colas was the lowest, but I have not computed the figures. I am going to lay a copy in the Table of the Library.

Mr Lesgongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister the duration period of those 14 contracts awarded?

Mr Bachoo: It all depends. It starts with one contract, which is above Rs2 billion. For example, Terre Rouge/Verdun will take almost two years and others can be of months only. It all depends on the quantum of works that have been given to that contractor.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

TOURISM AUTHORITY - CHAIRMAN – CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN CAR

(No. 1B/364) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Chairman of the Board of the Tourism Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the expenses incurred in connection with his utilization of a chauffeur-driven car for the financial year 2007-2008.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, during the period 2007-2008, in accordance with current practice, a car was put at the disposal of the Chairman of the Tourism Authority together with a driver attached to that car, whenever he had to attend official meetings, committees and site visits.

The vehicle was given on loan to the Tourism Authority by the MPTA from 10 April 2006, up to 13 January 2010 in connection with the activities carried out by the Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that, for the same period, which relates to the question, that is the year 2007 and 2008, a total amount of Rs110,770.11 has been incurred in respect of expenses for fuel charges, insurance and repairs and servicing of the car.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that I have taken cognizance of the comments made by the Audit Department in its report for financial year 2007-2008 on the Tourism Authority and I have been made to understand that the Authority has given the explanations mentioned above – the explanations I am giving in fact now - to the Audit Department.

I also wish to point out that the above-mentioned Chairman is no more in office since 04 May this year.

I have been made to understand that the authority has given the explanations mentioned above and which I am giving in fact now. These explanations have been given to

the Audit Department. I also wish to point out that the above-mentioned Chairman is no more in office since 04 May this year.

Mr Ramano: Le ministre peut-il confirmer que le Chairman n'est pas *eligible to a chauffeur-driven car*?

Mr Bodha: The Chairman, being not an Executive Chairman, was not entitled to a chauffeur-driven car, but as per practice, often Chairmen are given a car to attend official meetings, committees and site visits.

FRENCH ENTERPRISES – BPO & CALL CENTRES

(No. 1B/365) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to French owned companies registered in Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof operating as call centres and in the Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) sector, and
- (b) measures taken by Government in the light of the announcement made by the French Government in regard to the delocalisation of business activities of French Enterprises (BPO).

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Board of Investment (BOI) that, currently, there are 19 call centres and 45 Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) operators which are French-owned companies.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am made to understand by the BOI that the announcement made by the French Government would impact mostly on North African countries such as Morocco and Tunisia since employment in French-owned Call Centres in these countries range between 30,000 to 60,000.

The BOI has, nevertheless, put in place a strategy to diversify the export of services to other markets namely to Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Canada for French-speaking operators.

The BOI is monitoring closely the matter and it will take such steps as may be required once additional information is obtained on the precise objectives and targets of the announcement. It is expected that the issue will be discussed in France in September 2010, when Parliament will resume its work.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, le nom de l'île Maurice a été cité en plusieurs occasions dans différents journaux et il y a le Secrétaire d'État à l'emploi, M. Laurent Wauquiez, qui a expressément mentionné le nom de l'île Maurice. Le ministre peut-il faire des commentaires à ce sujet ?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Sir, once again I would like to reiterate what I have said. From the Ministry of Labour in France, we were given to understand that this concerns only north of Africa, that is, Tunisia and Morocco and more precision will be brought to our attention when the French Parliament will resume in September 2010.

Mr Bérenger: I don't know why on earth he went to the French Labour Ministry. The statement was made by *le Secrétaire d'État à l'Emploi* – my colleague has just referred to – I am quoting: *prépare des mesures anti-délocalisation* in general not targeting Tunisia or Morocco. Those two names are mentioned because they are next door and they have the largest number of *centres d'appels* and so on, but Mauritius was also mentioned, so why did we go to the Ministry of Labour of France of all places?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: We have tried to look for all the information where we can gather it and I would like to inform the hon. Member that necessary steps have been taken in the unlikely event that it delocalises from Mauritius also.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister aware that, among the measures mentioned by the French Minister – *pas du travail mais de l'emploi* – there is a *surtaxe sur les sociétés françaises ayant délocalisé une surtaxe* which would hit us directly, also *de l'aide financière directe pour empêcher les firmes françaises de se délocaliser*. Therefore, can I know from the Minister whether this has been taken up with the French authorities either here or in Paris and with the European Union because it is very possible that if there is a *surtaxe*, it is struck down by the European Commission?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that a tax surplus is originating from abroad and terminating in France. This measure, however, can be against European Union directives and can also cause prejudice to telecommunication companies terminating calls in France.

LE MORNE HERITAGE SITE – SIGN POSTS

(No. 1B/368) Mrs M. J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Le Morne Heritage Site, he

will state if consideration will be given for the putting up of conspicuous sign posts at different spots in the region to indicate its exact location.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for flagging this issue. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Ms Stéphanie Anquetil, the former Chairperson of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund, had already drawn my attention to the dearth of sign posts indicating the World Heritage Site. I have already issued directives to correct this shortcoming.

In the meantime, two informative panels have been installed at the main northern and southern entrance points to the World Heritage Property. Unfortunately, one of them has been stolen.

A third sign board has been installed at the International Slave Route Monument at Le Morne.

RODRIGUES – HEALTH DIRECTOR – MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

(No. 1B/369) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the health sector in Rodrigues, she will state –

- (a) whether the Health Director participates in management meetings at her Ministry and, if so, the frequency of his attendance thereat and, if not, why not, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the setting up of a Community Health Unit and a Medical Social Unit and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Health Director does not participate in the management meetings held at my Ministry.

However, there are regular meetings in Mauritius between senior officials of my Ministry and the Departmental Head as well as the Health Director of Rodrigues. The last meeting was held on 09 June 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Health Director of Rodrigues that the services related to vaccination, school health, home visits and counselling on health matters are being provided by the Preventive Unit in the absence of a Community Health Unit. I am further informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that further consideration is being given for the setting up of a Community Health Unit.

Consideration is also being given to set up a Medical Social Unit with the recruitment of a Medical Social Worker by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and all the necessary technical support will be provided by my Ministry.