

DEBATE NO 19 OF 06.12.2005**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****BEFRIENDERS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

(No. I B/567) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in view of the increasing number of suicides, he will consider the advisability of increasing the financial assistance to “Befrienders” in order to allow them to extend their services.

Reply (Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions): An amount of Rs75,000 was granted by the NGO Trust Fund, to “Befrienders” for each of financial year 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. In addition, an amount of Rs60,000 was granted during financial year 2003-2004 for the financing of a micro project.

For the present Financial Year, “Befrienders” has not yet submitted its request for financial assistance. However, in view of the increase in the rate of suicide recently, the possibility of an increase in financial assistance with respect to “Befrienders” will be looked into.

SIT LAND HOLDINGS COMPANY LIMITED AND SIT PROPERTIES LIMITED – LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. I B/617) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the SIT Land Holdings Company Limited and SIT Properties Limited, information as to whether the services of legal advisers have recently been retained and, if so, will he give their names, indicating on which terms.

Reply: I am advised that the information cannot be communicated, as SIT Land Holdings Ltd and SIT Property Development Ltd are companies registered under the Companies Act 2001.

At a meeting held on 11 June 2003, Board members of SIT Land Holdings & Property Development Ltd unanimously decided that information will be provided only to shareholders to which the said companies were accountable.

I am advised that a General Assembly meeting of shareholders is scheduled on 17 December 2005 at Octave Wiehe Auditorium where any interested party may seek any information pertaining to the two companies.

BUS OPERATOR RECOVERY ACCOUNT - BENEFICIARIES

(No. I B/618) Mr C. Leopold (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Bus Operator Recovery Account, he will state –

- (a) the number of bus companies/owners who are presently benefiting therefrom, and
- (b) whether individual bus owners are entitled to benefit therefrom and, if not, why not.

Reply: As far as part (a) is concerned, five bus companies, namely the National Transport Corporation, the United Bus Service Ltd, the Triolet Bus Service Ltd, the Rose Hill Transport Ltd and the Mauritian Bus Transport Ltd are at present benefiting from the Bus Companies' Recovery Account.

As far as part (b) is concerned, Government has already agreed to broaden the scope of the BCRA, so that individual bus operators also can benefit under the scheme.

CAMP LEVIEUX - SQUATTERS - CYCLONIC PERIODS - SHELTERS

(No. I B/619) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state the number of squatters who were occupying the NHDC

Housing Complex and who are now living in shelters on the football ground at Camp Levieux, indicating what measures will be taken for their security during cyclonic periods.

Reply: I am informed that there are at present 10 families who are living in shelters on the football ground at Camp Levieux. I am further informed that out of these 10 families, only five of them registered themselves with the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable groups when the exercise for registration of squatters of NHDC Housing Units was undertaken from 14 to 18 July 2005. Following the survey conducted by the Trust Fund, all the five families were found eligible for a building site lease and have each been allocated a plot of land at Bambous.

I have already had the opportunity, in reply to a PNQ on 25 October 2005 and to PQ No. I B/559 on the same issue, as well as in a Statement I made in the House on 22 November 2005, to indicate the proposed precautionary measures aimed at containing risks of pollution and other facilities to be extended to these families to enable them to construct their houses on the plots of land allocated to them at Bambous. All possible measures are being taken to facilitate the speedy construction of the housing units at Bambous by the beneficiaries.

In regard to the last part of the question, I am informed that the Trust Fund also is itself carrying out a campaign, with the assistance of NGOs, with a view to sensitizing the families living in the shelters on precautionary, protective and safety measures that should be taken for their security and safety in case of cyclones.

I can assure the hon. Member that all necessary measures will be taken for the security of those living in shelters on the football ground at Camp Levieux, in the same manner as measures to be taken for security of all citizens of this country, especially those living in 'la case la paille' and other poorly protected structures.

As the House is aware, the Central Cyclone Committee, as is customary, sensitizes the population at large on all security and safety measures to be observed and taken during the cyclonic season, which include, *inter alia* -

- The public is made aware of the nature of cyclones, the need for precautionary measures before the cyclone season, the cyclone warning system and preventive action, which should be taken during the storm.
- The public is reminded of cyclone dangers before the start of the cyclone seasons, which covers the period between 01 November and 15 May.
- Radio talks and television broadcasts, prepared by the Meteorological Services with the technical assistance of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, make the people conscious of the need to be prepared for cyclones at all times.
- Each of the Local Cyclone Committees, chaired by Mayors and Chairmen of District Councils, looks into the list of refugee centres and lays down specific responsibilities of each member of the committee before, during and after cyclones.

As the House is also aware, measures to cover pre-cyclonic, during cyclonic, and post-cyclonic conditions are taken by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions.

WARRANTS OF ARRESTS - NUMBER

(No. I B/620) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of warrants of arrests issued more than six months ago by the District and the Intermediate Courts and which have not yet been executed.

Reply: I am tabling the statistical information obtained from the Master and Registrar and Judge in bankruptcy for the benefit of the House.

CULTURAL CENTRES - GOVERNMENT POLICY

(No. I B/621) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state Government policy in regard to the cultural centres.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/ 573)

**LE MORNE - INTEGRATED RESORTS SCHEME PROJECT -
PROMOTERS, TOTAL AREA, ETC.**

(No. I B/622) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Integrated Resorts Scheme Project at Le Morne, he will state -

- (a) the name of the promoters;
- (b) the total area involved, and
- (c) what measures have been taken to preserve the historical, cultural and ecological aspects of the site.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/ 581)

SOUILLAC HOSPITAL - CONSTRUCTION, COST, ETC.

(No. I B/623) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the construction of the Souillac Hospital, he will state -

- (a) the cost thereof;
- (b) if all the services have been commissioned;
- (c) if it is fully operational, and
- (d) if there is any litigation pending.

Reply: The reply is as follows -

- (a) The New Souillac Hospital was fathered and elaborated under the first primeministership of hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. The initial cost was estimated at Rs158,284,013.30. This project whose final cost is still being

worked out will exceed Rs210 m. The project cost has inflated because of a 12 percent increase in the contract for civil works due to changes in layouts and specifications and a 200 percent increase in the contract sum for mechanical and electrical works due to underestimation of these components by the initial consultants.

- (b) Not all the services have been commissioned. The following are yet to be commissioned:
- two general wards
 - two major operation theatres
 - one minor operation theatre
 - labour ward/one neonatal unit/one nursery
- (c) The hospital is not fully operational in view of the non-commissioning of the wards and operation theatres, which I have just mentioned. Despite these uncompleted works, the hospital was officially inaugurated on 18 May 2005. Moreover, one bed lift, the lift in the pharmacy and the central air-conditioning are still out of order, the sewerage system is not functioning properly, the sole generator for the compound has not been provided yet and an incinerator is still being awaited.
- (d) The contractor submitted an initial claim of Rs24,944,544 in June 2002, which was subsequently revised to Rs56,750,780.90 in a statement of claim filed by the contractor on 03 September 2004.

An arbitrator was appointed by a Judge of the Supreme Court on 19 April 2004. The whole matter is now being handled at the level of the State Law Office.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT – IMPORTED GOODS – VALUATION METHODS

(No. I B/624) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will consider the

advisability of amending the relevant provisions of the law providing for the methods by which goods are valued by the Customs Department.

Reply: The methods of valuation for imported goods liable to duty are outlined in Section 18 of the Customs Act 1988, as amended in 2000. These methods of valuation have been aligned to and are compliant with the Valuation Agreement of the World Trade Organisation to which Mauritius is a signatory member.

I am informed that the Customs Department has already put in place a valuation price database, which is being used to detect any risk of undervaluation. The database has been established through price lists collected through various ways, including participation in trade fairs and on-site enquiries from a range of shops and suppliers overseas. Furthermore, the Customs Department is carrying out more post clearance audits on importers premises to detect any undervaluation at import.

In order to further deter undervaluation, my Ministry is considering proposals from the Customs Department to include in our legislation provisions to acquire goods, which have been grossly undervalued, as is the case in New Zealand.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - FREIGHT FORWARDING CENTRES

(No. I B/625) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state the number of Freight Forwarding Centres operating at the SSR International Airport.

Reply: There is at present one such centre, the Plaisance Air Transport Services (PATs), based on private land close to the SSR International Airport and I understand from the Comptroller of Customs that 24 Brokers and Clearing & Forwarding Agents are operating therefrom.

Servisair also operates such a centre for some airlines from within the airport compound.

Airports of Mauritius Ltd. is envisaging to put up its own freight-forwarding centre in the near future.

FISH & MEAT – IMPORTATION – PERMITS

(No. I B/626) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the obtention of a licence for the importation of fish and meat, he will state the number of permits that are required and the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed that fish (chilled and frozen) and salted fish being controlled goods are subject to an import permit in accordance with the First Schedule to the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 1999 falling under the aegis of my Ministry.

An application for import permit for fish submitted by the importer electronically together with appropriate approval from the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries (Fisheries Division) is approved by the Import Division of my Ministry within 24 hours. Upon arrival of the consignment, an importer should submit a copy of the invoice together with the Bill of Lading to the Import Division of my Ministry in order to obtain the authorisation to clear the consignment at the Customs Department.

I am further informed that in order to be able to import fish and fish products, the importer should possess an import authorization issued by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries (Fisheries Division) upon submission of three licences/certificates namely –

- (i) a Foodhandler Certificate issued by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to ensure food safety and hygienic handling of fish;
- (ii) the Trade Licence is issued by the local authority (District Council/Municipality) to ensure that the importer is allowed to trade by the local Government, and
- (iii) a Fishmonger Licence is issued to an individual or company under Section 24(2) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act

1998 in order to authorize the sale of fish and fish products imported or produced locally.

I would like to thank the hon. Member for raising this issue. In fact, I have requested the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry to refer the case of imported fish to the Committee on Bottleneck and Red Tape chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism & External Communications to see whether procedures could be streamlined.

As regards licence for the importation of meat, my Ministry does not issue same. However, I am informed that it is the Division of the Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries that issues the necessary authorisation.

RAPID SECURITY SERVICES - CONTRACTS

(No. I B/627) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if contracts for security services in his Ministry were awarded to Rapid Security Services on 07 September 2005 and were subsequently cancelled and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: Contracts for security services were awarded to Rapid Security Services on 07 September 2005. The contracts were subsequently cancelled after consultation with the Attorney General's Office because of unwarranted intervention in the evaluation exercise.

LE MORNE - SALIBA REPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. I B/628) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Saliba Report in relation to the Classification of Le Morne as a National Heritage Site, in particular the setting up of buffer zone, he will state where matters stand.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/579)

**SUGAR PLANTERS MECHANICAL POOL
CORPORATION/MAURITIUS SUGAR TERMINAL
CORPORATION/FARMERS SERVICE CORPORATION/
MAURITIUS SUGAR AUTHORITY - RECRUITMENT**

(No. I B/629) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether any exercise has been carried out since 03 July 2005 for recruitment in the minor grades by -

- (i) the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation;
- (ii) the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation;
- (iii) the Farmers Service Corporation, and
- (iv) the Mauritius Sugar Authority, and

if so,

- (a) whether the posts were advertised and selection exercises carried out, and
- (b) table a list of persons recruited and their addresses.

Reply: There have been no appointments at the Mauritius Sugar Authority and the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation.

Two persons have been appointed as Labourer on a casual month to month basis at the Farmers Service Corporation and 1 as General Worker, 2 as Terminal Attendant at the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation on a month to month casual basis.

The selection was made from a list of persons who had applied to these organisations. A list of the persons recruited is being tabled.

HOSPITALS - MALARIA CASES

(No. I B/630) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to malaria cases, he will state the number registered in each of the

hospitals for the past six weeks, indicating if an increase has been noted and, if so, the reasons thereof.

Reply: Two cases of malaria were reported in only one of our hospitals, namely Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, during the last six weeks. Both cases were imported ones involving two expatriates who were suffering from malaria of the benign type.

It is noted that during the past three years, a total of 39, 40 and 48 malaria cases respectively, were detected. From January 2005 to date, 35 cases have been notified so far. The trend over the last 3 years can be considered as normal.

SUGAR (PRICE) – REDUCTION – ACOMPANYING MEASURES

(No. I B/631) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state if the proposals for the accompanying measures following the reduction in the price of sugar have been submitted by Government to the European Union within the prescribed delay and, if not, why not.

Reply: Parliamentary Questions I B/631 and I B/632 will be replied together.

The proposals for the accompanying measures will be submitted to Mr Louis Michel, who is expected to visit Mauritius this week.

The ACP had proposed a lobbying mission as from 14 November. However, in view of the FAO Council Meeting, it was decided that the lobbying be carried out during the Council Meeting. Thus, as the substantive Minister has extensively explained in his previous statements and reply to PNQ, he met Ministers of Agriculture of France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, India and the American Secretary of State for Agriculture, among others while he was in Rome.

**SUGAR (PRICE) – REDUCTION –
EUROPEAN MINISTERS - LOBBY**

(No. I B/632) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state, if on or about 14 November 2005, he was in Brussels to lobby the European Ministers in relation to the reduction in the price of sugar and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ No. I B/631)

**MONTREAL COMMUNITY CENTRE –
MANAGING COMMITTEE**

(No. A/12) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Montreal Community Centre, she will state –

- (a) when the last Managing Committee was dissolved, and
- (b) whether a new Managing Committee has been constituted and, if not, why not.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the last Managing Committee of the Montreal Community Centre was dissolved after the last general elections.

As regards part (b), a new Managing Committee has been appointed since 16 November 2005.