

Debate No. 12 of 18.10.2005**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****SALE BY LEVY - COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - CASES**

(No. I B/343) 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 following the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy, he will say if cases have been referred to the Police and the ICAC, and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed that following the Commission of Inquiry on the Sale by Levy, five cases were referred to the Police and four to the ICAC for investigation.

I am also informed that inquiries in respect of the five cases referred to the Police have been completed and the case files have been forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

As regards the cases referred to ICAC, investigation is underway in two cases, one case has been set aside by the Commission due to insufficient evidence and one case has been referred to the Police as the transactions which were the subject matter of the investigation has taken place prior to the coming into effect of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002.

"L'ESCADRON DE LA MORT" - REWARD

(No. I B/344) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if the person who gave information to the Police on "*l'escadron de la mort*" and which led to its dismantling has received the promised reward of Rs500,000.

Reply: On 12 December 2000, Police issued a Communiqué informing the public that six suspects were wanted by Police for inquiry in the Gorah Issac triple-murder case and that a reward of Rs 500,000/- would

be offered to any person/s giving information which would lead to the arrest of any one of them.

Subsequently, acting on information received, Police carried out a series of operations.

Thereafter, rewards amounting to Rs 3 million were paid to the informers.

POLICE PATROL

(No. I B/345) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether members of the Police Force are evenly distributed amongst the various Police stations and whether Police patrol is effected in an organised manner and at regular intervals both during the day and at night.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for policing purposes, Mauritius has been divided into seven Divisions. Each Division is under the charge of an Assistant Commissioner of Police styled Divisional Commander. Each Division has a number of police stations, which are categorised as A, B, C and D classes. Moreover, in certain Divisions there are Police posts such as at hospitals, Botanical garden, Government House, etc.

The classification of a Police station is determined by -

- (a) its geographical area;
- (b) number of inhabitants in the region;
- (c) business & commercial activities;
- (d) tourist activities;
- (e) number of cases and incidents reported, and
- (f) number of sentries to be provided to residence of VIPs. (Quatre Bornes Police Station and Beau Bassin Police Station have the larger number of sentries).

Whenever a Police Station is under strength, reinforcement is provided to maintain operational effectiveness.

Each Station Area is divided into various beats and each beat is covered by either foot or mobile patrols as per a well-established patrol chart.

The following units/squads also provide patrol and vigilance in support of policing arrangements already obtaining within a Division -

- (a) The Emergency Response Service provides 36 mobile patrols islandwide on a 24-hour basis, i.e. about 5 to 6 patrols per Division;
- (b) Divisional Support Unit;
- (c) Police du Tourisme;
- (d) Local and Central CID;
- (e) ADSU;
- (f) Bike Patrol;
- (g) Special patrol Team (set up by the Divisional Commanders);
- (h) NCG (including afloat and Beach Bike Patrol) along coastal areas, and
- (i) Police de L'Environnement.

RODRIGUES - MBC - DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNISATION

(No. I B/347) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if there is any short, medium and long term plan for the development and modernisation of the MBC in Rodrigues, indicating the policies in regard to the training of personnel, uplifting of the TV and Radio stations and broadcasting.

Reply: I am informed by the Director-General of the MBC that a comprehensive plan for the development and modernisation of the MBC services in Rodrigues is currently being prepared.

In this regard, the Director-General of the MBC along with the technicians of the MBC and representatives of MultiCarrier (Mauritius) Limited will be visiting Rodrigues shortly with a view to assessing the audiovisual needs of the Island in the light of new and emerging technologies in the sector.

J The ultimate objective is to provide a qualitative MBC service in Rodrigues through continuous professional training and development of the personnel and the upgrading of the Radio and Television stations.

LEGRAND BRANCH ROAD, GRAND BOIS – PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICE

(No. I B/363) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if his Ministry has received a request dated 21 January 2005 for the extension of the public transport service to Legrand Branch Road at Grand Bois and, if so, will he state if any decision has been taken thereon.

Reply: I am informed that no request dated 21 January 2005 for the extension of the public transport service to Le Grand Branch Road at Grand Bois had been received at my Ministry.

However, on 01 July 2005, the National Transport Authority (NTA) received a letter dated 29 June 2005 from one Mr Bertram Matadin, requesting for the extension of the public transport service to Le Grand Branch Road so as to cater for the needs of the NHDC housing estate situated at the end of Le Grand Branch Road, about 800 m from the main road.

OLD AGE PENSIONERS - EXCURSIONS – TRANSPORT FACILITIES

(No. I B/367) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if it is proposed to provide free transport to associations of old age pensioners for the organisation of excursions for the benefit of their members.

Reply: As the House is aware, this Government is providing free transport to the old age pensioners without any restriction. They can travel on any day at any time as often as they wish and anywhere. This measure aims at improving their overall quality of life, in terms of more visits to relatives, better access to health facilities and other entertainment opportunities like going to the seaside or to commercial complex.

Surveys carried out by the National Transport Authority (NTA) have revealed that there is a significant surge in the number of old age pensioners

travelling everyday which implies that our senior citizens are taking full advantage of the free transport scheme. Indeed, I would say that the Government has met its intended objective of free transport for this category of commuters.

On the other hand, excursions are organised tours targeted, usually, at large groups of old persons and they involve bulk payment to a bus operator in respect of a special trip whereby the itinerary is often outside the normal route network operated by the bus operator. Such special services are either provided by stage carriage buses or contract buses.

Therefore, as excursions are special transport arrangements with pre-determined itineraries involving a mutually agreed lump sum payment to the bus operator by the organiser, it does not fall within the ambit of the free travel scheme which is based on bus fares.

However, free transport facilities are provided by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizen's Welfare & Reform Institutions during seaside activities organised once yearly at four public beaches namely Flic-en-Flac, Riambel, Belle Mare and Mon Choisy. For the current year, some 26,000 senior citizens were conveyed in 527 buses hired by that Ministry at a cost of Rs1,315,500.

Following that request, a survey was carried out on 16 August 2005 by the Inspectorate section of the NTA. The survey revealed the following -

- (i) The NHDC housing estate consists of 34 housing units with a population of about 150 inhabitants who are mostly manual workers;
- (ii) The car ownership in the housing estate is very low;
- (iii) The width of Le Grand Branch Road is 3.5m which renders even car traffic very difficult;
- (iv) 26 taxi cars based at Grand Bois and from nearby localities operate as "*taxi-trains*" in the locality to and from La Flora or Bois Cheri, and
- (v) the inhabitants of the NHDC housing estate can avail themselves of the following bus services of the NTC at regular intervals by walking to the main road -

Route 34	Curepipe - Bois Cheri
Route 79	Rose Belle - Bois Cheri
Route 168	Curepipe - Grand Bassin
Route 246	Port Louis - Bois Cheri (4 trips)

The narrowness of Le Grand Branch Road makes it difficult to operate a bus service for the inhabitants of the NHDC housing estate. The situation will be monitored by the NTA.

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MEDICAL & PARA-MEDICAL STAFF - SHORTAGE

(No. IB/368) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will state if there is a shortage of medical and para-medical staff and, if so, will he state what measures will be taken for the filling of the vacancies to ensure that there is no lack of personnel specially in the light of Government decision for all Area Health Centres to be opened after normal working hours.

Reply: There is, presently, a temporary shortage of medical and para-medical staff on the establishment of my Ministry.

I am informed that this is an inevitable feature, which has existed in the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for quite a number of years, in view of the high rate of turnover among officers in these grades, especially among the para-medical staff.

However, the temporary shortage has not adversely affected the smooth running of the services. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that, at all times, the services are properly manned. The measures taken are: recruitment of doctors on contract, payment of overtime, bank session, re-employment of retired nursing officers, amongst others.

As regards the filling of the vacancies, procedures have already been initiated.

I am informed that a batch of 75 pre-registration House Officers are completing their training in October/November 2005. They will be recruited against the existing vacancies.

However, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is having recourse to payment of overtime to provide services beyond normal working hours in the Area Health Centres.

PHARMACY COUNCIL – SETTING UP

(No. I B/369) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether it is proposed to establish a Pharmacy Council and, if so, when.

Reply: Yes, my Ministry proposes to establish a Pharmacy Council with the main objective of providing the necessary framework to, *inter alia*, register pharmacist, maintain discipline in the pharmacy profession and regulate the practice of pharmacy in Mauritius.

In this connection, a Pharmacy Council Bill is being prepared and extensive consultations will be held with all the stakeholders.

RODRIGUES – MPCB STUDY ACCESS SCHEME

(No. I B/376) **Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications whether he will state the measures it is proposed to take so that students in Rodrigues may benefit from the Student Loan facilities offered by the Mauritius Post and Co-operative Bank (MPCB).

Reply (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development): The Mauritius Post and Co-operative Bank Ltd (MPCB) has a scheme called MPCB Study Access, targeted at students, including Rodriguans following courses in Mauritius and abroad.

MPCB does not have a branch in Rodrigues to handle loan applications from Rodriguan students. The bank has, for the time being, a special agreement with Mauritius Post Ltd, for the post offices in Rodrigues to handle deposits and withdrawals only.

The bank is considering the possibility of opening a full-fledged branch in Rodrigues, which would facilitate loan applications by Rodriguan students.

RODRIGUES - MICRO CREDIT LOAN GUARANTEE FUND

(No. I B/377) **Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications

whether he will state if he is aware that the Mauritius Post and Co-operative Bank operates a Loan Guarantee Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs and, if so, what measures it is proposed to take to enable women entrepreneurs in Rodrigues to benefit therefrom.

Reply (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development): I am informed that Mauritius Post and Co-operative Bank (MPCB) does not operate a Loan Guarantee Scheme for women entrepreneurs. The bank has a special loan scheme for small and medium enterprises including for women entrepreneurs.

However, a Micro Credit Guarantee Fund, for the benefit of entrepreneurs both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, is operated by the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM).

This guarantee fund acts as collateral for 100% loan capital sanctioned under the Micro Credit Financing Scheme for the entrepreneurs having monthly family income of less than Rs8,000. Eligible Rodriguan women entrepreneurs can take advantage of the Micro Credit Loan Guarantee Fund.

VALETTA FOOTBALL GROUND - FOOTBRIDGE

(No. I A/4) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if it is proposed to construct a footbridge leading to the football ground at Valetta and, if so, when and, if not why not.

Reply: I am advised that the Valetta football ground belongs to the Mon Désert Alma S.E and the land for the proposed footbridge belongs partly to private owners and partly to the Sugar Estate.

In view of the limitation of funds, I invite the hon. Member to prioritise the projects in his constituency. Alternatively the footbridge can be considered in the next financial year subject to authorisation of the land owners.

CIRCONSTANCE - CANAL FOOTBRIDGE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. I A/5) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if

it is proposed to clean up the canal at Circonstance and construct a footbridge thereat.

Reply: I am informed that the canal referred to in the question is, in fact, the river found at Badal Bridge, Circonstance and that appropriate action has been taken by the Moka/Flacq District Council to clean the river bed and banks.

With regard to the footbridge, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that it would cost around Rs500,000 and the Council is not in a position to construct same at this stage, due to unavailability of funds.

I have therefore approached my colleague, the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit, with a view to exploring the possibility of funding this project which will be beneficial to the inhabitants of Circonstance.

CAMP THOREL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - FOOTBALL GROUND - LEVELLING WORKS

(No. I A/6) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will consider the advisability of having the football ground at Camp Thorel Government School levelled.

Reply: A contract was awarded on 14 May 2004 by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) to the Development Works Corporation (DWC) for the fencing and uplift of the football ground at Camp Thorel Government School for the contract sum of Rs3,497,610.15. The project was completed in September 2005.

The tender documents for levelling works, including cut and fill, are being prepared and works are expected to start next year.

RIPAILLES - COMMUNITY CENTRE

(No. I A/7) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if it is proposed to construct a community centre at Ripailles and, if not, why not.

Reply: A community centre is presently being constructed at Nouvelle Découverte. It will also serve Ripailles which is some two kms away.

The construction of a village hall, instead of a community centre, at Ripailles will be considered subject to availability of funds.