

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**CHAT GAON, PLAINE MAGNIEN - INHABITANTS -
RELOCATION**

(No. B/1027) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if the inhabitants of the region of Chat Gaon, Plaine Magnien, near the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport, will be relocated and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the reasons thereof, and
- (b) when.

Reply: I am advised that Chat Gaon village is located within the noise restriction zone of the airport. As such, part of the village closest to the runway is an area where no new residential development is permitted. In the remaining part, only extension and infill development within the existing built-up areas are allowed.

The inhabitants of Chat Gaon will accordingly have to be relocated. My Ministry is actively liaising with the authorities concerned in order to proceed with the exercise of relocation.

**PANDIT JUGDISH SHARMA RADHAY GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL - INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS**

(No. B/1057) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the problems of the Congomah Government School, following the landslide at the Congomah Village and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Pandit Juggish Sharma Radhay Government School at Congomah.

I am aware that the school is presently suffering from several problems with regard to its infrastructure. Following my visit to the school last December and that effected by the hon. Member on 05 July 2006 with the PTA, Officers of my Ministry and the National Development Unit, the following main problems were identified -

- roof leakage in the school building;
- the unsatisfactory condition of the school yard;
- the lack of classrooms;
- the need for painting of the classrooms.

With regard to the leakage issue, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) was requested by my Ministry on 07 March 2006 to initiate action to resolve that issue.

In this connection, the MPI has, with the help of my Ministry, just completed a survey of the roof of the building. It will carry out the necessary re-roofing works in the November/December 2006 school vacation as requested by the PTA during the visit I mentioned earlier by the Hon Member, in order not to unduly disturb the school activities

Concerning the tarring of the schoolyard, the NDU was requested by my Ministry on 12 July 2006 to attend to the issue.

As for the additional classrooms, I am informed that, because of financial constraints this financial year, this will be considered anew during the next financial year. For the time being however, the MPI has been requested by my Ministry to convert an available open space on the first floor into a classroom while the re-roofing works will be effected during the November/December vacation.

As concerns the painting of the classrooms, paint will be provided in the course of this week by my Ministry, and, in the context of community involvement promoted by my Ministry, the PTA has been requested to arrange for the provision of labour, for the works to be carried out during the present school holidays.

RODRIGUES - FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/1058) Mr J. Von-Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the payment of a bad weather allowance for the month of June 2006 to fishermen in Rodrigues, he will state -

- (a) the number of days for which they were paid, and
- (b) if all the registered fishermen were paid accordingly and, if not, why not, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1030)

RODRIGUES - RATION RICE & FLOUR - PRICE

(No.B/1059) Mr J. Von-Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he is aware that the price of ration rice and of flour are higher in Rodrigues than in mainland Mauritius and, if so, will he ascertain the reason thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that prior to 03 July 2006, prices of ration rice and flour were the same in Mauritius and Rodrigues. This was so because the element of subsidy on these two products took care of other charges, including freight, for the transport of rice and flour to Rodrigues. The costs incurred - including freight, loading cost in Mauritius and unloading costs in Rodrigues - for financial year 2005-2006 was around Rs8.3 m. and would be around Rs10 m. for year 2006-2007.

With the reorientation of the policy on subsidy, the prices of ration rice and flour have increased both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues with effect from 03 July 2006. In fact, prices of ration rice and flour have been fixed, respectively, at Rs6.05 and Rs6.10 per 1/2 kg in Rodrigues, compared to Rs5.40 and Rs5.30 in Mauritius. The non-subsidised costs - that is freight, loading and unloading charges - explains the difference in prices.

COLLEGE TECHNIQUE ST GABRIEL, STE CROIX - STUDENTS - FREE TRANSPORT

(No. B/1060) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he has received any request from the *Collège Technique St Gabriel* of Ste Croix for the issue of passes for free transport to its students and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Reply: The answer is yes. In my previous replies to various PQs related to the issue, I have already provided information with respect to the criteria according to which education institutions benefit from Free Public Transport. The existing criteria do not apply to institutions like College Technique St. Gabriel.

I am informed that College Technique St. Gabriel of St. Croix has, in a letter dated 18 November 2005, requested for the issue of bus pass to students enrolled with that institution.

The request was transmitted to the National Transport Authority, which is still having working sessions with stakeholders. Besides, a Consultant from International Development Partners Ltd. has been appointed to review the whole Free Transport Scheme and make recommendations. The Terms of Reference of the Consultancy will also look into the eligibility of other educational institutions such as MQA registered ones, to benefit from the Free Transport Scheme or otherwise the report of the Consultant is expected by the end of August 2006.

I would also wish to refer the hon. Member to my replies to PQs B/312 and B/536 of 12 April and 16 May 2006 respectively and also to the Press Communiqué issued by the National Transport Authority on 19 October 2005 which has already been tabled.

PETITE RIVIERE - SOCIAL CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1061) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National

Development Unit whether he will state where matters stand in regard to the construction of a social centre at Petite Rivière.

Reply: I am advised that the construction of the social hall at Petite Rivière was completed on 22 May 2006 and the Black River District Council will take over the building shortly.

ILO CONFERENCE – CONVENTION ON FISHING SECTOR

(No. B/1062) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will use his good offices, to obtain information as to the reasons why the proposed Convention on Work in the Fishing Sector was not approved during the 93rd International Labour Organisation Conference in 2005.

Reply: I have been informed by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment that a resolution was adopted at the 92nd Session in June 2004 of the International Labour Conference to place on the agenda of the 93rd Session (June 2005) an item entitled “Work in the Fishing Sector”, for a second discussion, with a view to adopting a comprehensive standard, that is, a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation.

When the texts of the proposed Convention and Recommendation were submitted to record votes, in accordance with article 19 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, only the Recommendation was adopted.

The result of the vote on the Convention was: 288 in favour, 8 against, with 139 abstentions. As the required two-thirds majority was 290 (435 votes ast), the Convention was not adopted.

The result of the vote on the Recommendation was: 292 in favour, 8 against with 135 abstentions. The Recommendation was thus adopted.

In view of the above outcome, the Conference adopted a motion requesting the Governing Body to place on the agenda of its 96th Session to be held in June 2007, an item concerning “Work in the Fishing Sector”

based on the report of the Committee on the Fishing Sector of the 93rd Session.

In this regard, the International Labour Office has prepared a questionnaire that focuses on those provisions of the proposed Convention on which no consensus could be reached at the 93rd Session.

Governments of member States have been asked to submit the duly filled Questionnaire by 01 September 2006 at latest after consultations with social partners.

In this regard, I have been advised that the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment has already initiated written consultations with all stakeholders and will submit Government's reply to the ILO in due course.

SURCOUF AVENUE, QUATRE BORNES - TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. B/1063) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether in view of the traffic congestion occurring in the region of Surcouf Avenue in Quatre Bornes, he will consider the advisability of having the avenue converted into a one way road.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit is carrying out a survey of the whole region in the vicinity of the Surcouf Avenue and will come up with proposals with a view to addressing the traffic congestion occurring there.

STC – RATION RICE – IMPORTATION

(No. B/1064) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, following the recent abolition of the subsidy on rice, he will state if the State Trading Corporation will no longer be in a monopolistic situation in regard to the importation of ration rice with 25% of *brisures*.

Reply: The State Trading Corporation (STC) has a contractual obligation with the supplier of ration rice, that is, 25% broken, for the period 01 June 2006 to 31 May 2007.

Any other policy, as suggested by the hon. Member, regarding this issue would be considered at a later stage.

APPASAMY, MR T. - WARRANT OF ARREST

(No. B/1065) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether in regard to Mr T. Appasamy, he will state -

- (a) the date on which the warrant of arrest was served on him;
- (b) the date and time he lodged a case to contest the legality of the warrant and before which court, and
- (c) where matters stand

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I have been informed by the ICAC that the warrant of arrest has not yet been executed.

With regard to part (b), I have been informed by ICAC that it understands that an action to challenge the legality of the warrant has been lodged by Mr Appasamy but ICAC is still awaiting an official correspondence relating to all the details of the matter from the Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Office, which have been contacted by ICAC.

With regard to part (c), ICAC is not in a position to provide further information in view of the provisions of section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002 relating to confidentiality and the very general nature of that part of the question.

PAS GEOMETRIQUES - LAND LEASES - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1066) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to

land leases on *Pas Géométriques* along the coastal region during the past ten years, he will table a list of all the beneficiaries, indicating -

- (a) the location of the sites;
- (b) the purposes of the land leases;
- (c) the duration and the conditions for the renewal of the leases, and
- (d) the annual rentals.

Reply: The information requested is being compiled and a copy thereof will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly with all the particulars asked for.

OIL (COOKING) - PRICE INCREASE

(No. B/1067) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether in regard to cooking oil, he will state -

- (a) the percentage rise in its selling price, and
- (b) the reasons therefor.

Reply: The percentage increase is in the range of 4.49% to 6.2%.

I am informed that the suppliers have attributed this increase in the retail price to -

- (i) increase in prices of imported raw oil;
- (ii) increase in the cost of refining;
- (iii) increase in the cost of packaging, and
- (iv) fluctuation of USD.

The reasons put forward by the importers are being investigated into by the Ministry.

LEGAL SYSTEM - MEDIATION METHOD

(No. B/1068) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights whether he will state if he will consider the advisability of introducing mediation in our legal system.

Reply: Mediation is an inherent part of our legal system.

Mediation is a method already widely used in Mauritius to settle industrial, labour, civil and family disputes.

With regard to industrial disputes, the Industrial Relations Commission provides a conciliation service for the assistance of employees, employers and trade unions.

Likewise, a worker who complains of having been unjustifiably dismissed can resort to the services of a Labour Officer with a view to satisfactorily settling the matter. The Industrial Court Magistrate also will try beforehand to settle a dispute amicably in Chambers before it goes to trial.

A District Court Magistrate, sitting in Chambers as *Juge de Paix*, is called upon to act as a mediator in a wide range of civil and family matters ranging from marital disputes to disputes between neighbours. A Judge will attempt beforehand in Chambers to reconcile spouses involved in a divorce competition.

It is proposed to extend the mediation method in other areas of the legal system and in that context I have asked the Law Reform Commission to look into same.

Furthermore, I wish to inform the House that Government is coming forward with a new piece of legislation, namely the International Commercial Arbitration Bill which will be the alternative Dispute Resolution. We propose to adopt the UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) model with necessary modifications with a view to giving arbitration an international dimension. This will encourage quick and cost effective resolution of commercial disputes.

ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE - HAJJ ORGANISERS

(No. B/1069) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to if Hajj organisers who had, in the past, been interdicted, have obtained clearance from the Centre to take pilgrims to the last Hajj at the beginning of this year.

Reply: I am informed by the Islamic Cultural Centre that no Hajj operators, who were interdicted in the past, have received clearance from the Islamic Cultural Centre to take pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for Hajj 2006. However, I am tabling the list of organisers who have been interdicted.

NGOs TRUST FUND - BOARD – MACOSS REPRESENTATIVE

(No. B/1070) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether she will state if her Ministry was involved in the choice of the representative of the MACOSS to sit on the Board of the Non-Governmental Organisations Trust Fund and, if so, will she give the reasons therefor.

Reply: My Ministry was not involved in the choice of the representative of the MACOSS to sit on the Board of the Non-Governmental Organisations Trust Fund.

SMES (REGISTERED) - LIST

(No. A/4) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether he will table a list of all the registered SMEs, indicating their respective trade, number of employees and addresses.

Reply: The information is being placed in the Library.