

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

WOMAN (DIVORCED) – APPLICATION FOR PASSPORT

(No. B/873) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware that when applying for the issue of a passport, a divorced woman is required to submit the birth certificate of her ex-spouse and, if so, will he state if this practice will be done away with, as a matter of priority.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although I am informed officially that a divorced woman who applies for a passport does not have to submit the copy of the birth certificate of her former spouse, reports reaching me tend to confirm the contrary.

If this is the case, it is a blatant case of discrimination against women and is totally unacceptable. I have, therefore, given strict instructions to put an end to such practice with immediate effect.

ALCOHOL PRODUCTS – BILLBOARDS ADVERTISEMENT – SCHOOLS VICINITY

(No. B/874) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether Government will consider the advisability of banning the advertising of alcoholic products on billboards in the vicinity of schools.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at present there is no legislation dealing specifically with the contents of advertisements in general, the more so of alcoholic products on billboards in the vicinity of schools.

On 26 June last, in my address in the context of the 19th International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at NATReSA, I personally

expressed my concern regarding the potential risk and damage that the promotion of alcohol and tobacco may have on our youth.

Instructions have already been given for all the 247 advertisements of all alcoholic drinks that are on billboards to be removed as from 07 July 2006.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - REPAIRS & SERVICING

(No. B/875) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to repairs and servicing of Government vehicles for the period July 2004 to June 2005 and July 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the amount;
 - (i) spent by the Police Garage, and
 - (ii) paid to private garages, and
- (b) the number of vehicles concerned in both cases.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being tabled.

PAEDOPHILIA VIA INTERNET`

(No. B/876) 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 if there exists any system of protection for the purpose of ensuring that children using the internet do not become victims of paedophiles and, if not, the measures, if any, proposed to be taken to set up a system of protection.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is concerned with the increasing threat of paedophilia via the internet. With the rapid development of technology, it has become very important to protect children from indecency, obscenity, pornography and paedophilia on the net.

Whilst the existing legislation do not cover specifically a situation whereby a child is lured on the Internet by paedophiles for immoral purposes, I wish to inform the House that our laws, namely -

- (a) the Child Protection Act, makes it an offence for the making or distribution of indecent photographs of children, and

(b) the Information and Communications Technologies Act 2001, makes it an offence the transmission or reception of a message which is grossly offensive, or of an indecent or obscene character.

I wish to inform the House that, insofar as the investigation of computer related offences is concerned, including the investigation of child exploitation on the Internet, the existing Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act 2003 gives the Police the power to apply to the Judge in Chambers for an order for the expeditious preservation of data that has been stored or processed by means of a computer system or any other information and communication technologies. Such data is subject to disclosure for the purposes of investigations and prosecution of offences.

However, the problem of paedophilia is a more complex one. One, online paedophiles use a variety of ways to reach children on the Internet and are constantly changing their approach. Moreover, children today have access to internet not only at home but also at other places such as schools, post offices and *cybercafés*. Online paedophiles usually make use of the internet chat rooms to “groom” children, that is, influencing them into accepting to meet them. A further difficulty is caused by the volatility of electronic data, which may be altered, moved or deleted very quickly, within a fraction of a second.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to develop a set of more powerful measures to provide an adequate protection to our children using the Internet. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive policy on child protection on the internet in Mauritius. First, the setting up of an appropriate legislative framework for child safety online is a priority. A new Child Online Protection Act which would address, *inter alia*, in a more vigorous way the problems posed by the internet to children is being finalised by the Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

Secondly, the issue of child protection online will also be addressed under the Information Security component of the National Information and Communications Technology Strategic Plan which is under preparation by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

Thirdly, awareness programmes will be conducted in schools to guide children who surf on the internet. Parents also will be asked to be more vigilant in their exercise to prevent children from having access to unwanted images and sites.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister kindly inform the House how many times the Police has applied to the Judge in Chambers to obtain the appropriate Order to be able to track paedophiles from the internet?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of how many times they have applied, but I must say that there must have been complaints for them to apply.

COURTS – DRUG CASES

(No. B/877) 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 he is aware of the increase in the number of drug cases pending before the District and Intermediate Courts and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether it is proposed to set up a Drugs Court or a Drugs Division in each court.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 740 drug cases are yet to be disposed of before the Courts - 240 before the Intermediate Court and 500 before the District Court.

Lord Mackay in his report on the review of the structure and operation of the Judicial System and the Legal professions in Mauritius has advised that it would not be wise to set up a completely separate Drugs Court.

However, that report provides for having a separate list in the Intermediate Court to which drug cases are assigned and that Magistrates to deal with these specific cases be designated for that purpose by the Presiding Magistrate of the Intermediate Court.

Additionally, the report also recommends that these Magistrates should be assigned for a considerable period for the purpose of familiarizing themselves with the basic problems of drugs jurisdiction. In this way, a special priority would be assigned to drug cases, which would facilitate a more timely flow of justice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of reforms undertaken in the legal profession and the Judiciary in general, the aspect of how expediently the cases pending before the Courts can be settled without the creation of

additional Court, will be addressed again by Lord Mackay, who has indicated his intention to assist Mauritius in the implementation of his Report.

The Attorney General's Office is closely monitoring the reform process and will ensure that it takes place expeditiously and under the best possible conditions.

Mr Guimbeau: Is the hon. Prime Minister contemplating to set up a fast track procedure for those who wish to plead guilty?

The Prime Minister: When they look at the Mackay Report, perhaps this is an issue that can be taken on board.

Mr Bérenger: Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has given the figures for drug offences generally. Does he have a rough idea of what percentage of those cases relate to drug traffickers as compared to drug users?

The Prime Minister: Sir, I do not have the figure which differentiates the two, but I can let the House have the figure. I am told that most of the cases are drug related.

Mr Bérenger: Sir, being given the huge number of cases pending, Government, some time back, announced that it was reviewing sentencing policy, especially in relation to drug offences, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: Sir, there has been the argument, including from the former Commissioner of Prisons, that long sentences create a problem in prison. That is why we said that we would look into the whole matter, but at the moment, the review is to increase the penalty.

POLICE CONSTABLES – UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - GRADUATION COURSES

(No. B/878) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to Police constables having followed graduation courses in Police studies at the University of Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) if any specific assignments have been entrusted to these officers.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the BSc (Hons) degree in Police studies was launched in September 1999 by my first Government as part of an integral programme for the reform and training of the Police cadre. Even the former Prime Minister congratulated us for this initiative.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since September 1999, 136 Police Officers from the rank of Police Constable to Assistant Superintendent of Police, have successfully followed the course of BSc (Hons) degree in Police studies.

The course was designed to enable Police Officers to acquire professional knowledge and ability to develop, influence and drive organizational innovation and change in response to the needs of a modern, democratic, pluralistic and multi-ethnic society.

However after 2000, following the completion of their graduation programme, many of these Police Officers, if not most, were assigned the same duties that they were performing before.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police authorities are exploring new avenues for job enrichment and job specialisation for the officers who have successfully followed the course with a view to providing them with more meaningful and challenging assignments, opportunities for advancement as well as increased responsibilities. Attention will be focused in areas such as Disaster Management, Risk Management, Forensic Science and Anti-Terrorism. The advent of such a programme constitutes a landmark in the professional development of the Mauritius Police Force and the career development path of the officers.

Mr Guinness: Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, out of the 136, how many were Constables and how many out of these officers have been promoted up to now?

The Prime Minister: This is what I said. They did the degrees, but there was no change in their status. In fact, I told the Commissioner of Police that he should ensure that those who obtain degrees should get higher responsibilities, then the promotion that go with it.

Mr Bérenger: Will the hon. Prime Minister say what explanations did the Commissioner of Police offer?

The Prime Minister: None whatsoever.

Mr Bundhoo: Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister why was this specific course on Police studies chosen and whether we are contemplating or introducing a postgraduate degree course and undergraduate course?

The Prime Minister: As I said the course was designed to allow Police officers to acquire more professional knowledge to be able to perform higher duties and to face the various difficulties in certain areas,

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry and the NGOs badly need data of scientific and research value. May I appeal to the Prime Minister to constitute a Unit so that data are collected scientifically for research purposes? These might be helpful to the various Ministries, Women's Rights, for example, for children, the other Ministries and the NGOs as well.

The Deputy Speaker: How does this relate to the question?

Mr Lauthan: These people have been trained in terms

The Deputy Speaker: I am just asking the question.

Mr Lauthan: These Police Officers have followed courses at the University, but they could review the whole things, so that we can collect data of scientific and research value to be helpful to the Ministries and NGOs as well.

The Prime Minister: To the reply to the former Prime Minister who has just asked me about the explanations given by the Commissioner of Police. Not everyone has not been given any different duties, but most have not. I should say that. I have said at the beginning that most of them have not been given any extra duty, a great majority of them, even more than most.

(Interruptions)

From what I understand, the hon. Member is asking that some of the officers should be asked to collect data, but we want to confine them to higher visible duties. I can ask the Commissioner of Police to look into that.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether actually Police constables are following the courses or whether it has stopped? If so, will he say whether applications will be called for such courses in the near future?

The Prime Minister: There are strict criteria as to who can apply and the procedure is completely independent. So, if the candidates satisfy the criteria, they will be allowed.

WOMEN PRISONERS – MINORS – PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/879) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to minors aged between three and five years old living with their mothers in prisons, he will state if they will continue to benefit from the facilities put at their disposal jointly by the prisons authorities, the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, the Lions Club of Curepipe and the *Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Pré-primaire* (local branch) to allow these children to attend pre-primary schools.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that arrangements already exist with the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill for children aged between three and five years living with their mothers in the Women Prison at Beau Bassin, to attend the Municipal Pre-Primary Schools.

There are at present two children aged three and four years who were living with their mothers in the prison. The first one is attending the Municipal Pre-Primary School at Mont Roches. The other one came to stay with his mother on 02 June 2006, following the death of his father. The Prisons Authorities have made arrangements with the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and the child will be admitted in a Municipal Pre-Primary School shortly.

The Acting Commissioner of Prisons and the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill have confirmed that there will be no change in the existing arrangements for admission of these children to the Municipal Pre-Primary Schools.

I am further informed by the Lions Club of Curepipe, a service club, and the *Organisation Mondiale pour L'Education Pré-primaire* (OMEP), an NGO, that they are no longer involved in the project since the last two years.

SAVRIACOOTY, MRS M.L. - ALLEGED CASE OF GANG RAPE

(No. B/880) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) 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 if a case was reported to the Police to the effect, that on or about 27 June 2006, one Mrs M. L. Savriacooty was allegedly victim of a gang rape in the vicinity of Fuel and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 27 June 2006 at 17.10 hrs, ADSU Officers, who were on mobile patrol along Royal Road, FUEL, found Mrs Marie Linley Savriacooty, lying unconscious on the road with several injuries over her body. They immediately conveyed her to Flacq Hospital where she was examined by a Senior Medical Officer. At that particular time, as she appeared to be confused, no statement could be recorded from her.

She was examined by the Chief Police Medical Officer at 19.30 hrs, in the presence of a gynaecologist. She bore several superficial minor grazes on her forehead, right cheek, anterior chest and right side back. Superficial lacerations were also noted near her intimate part which was plugged by a cane stalk with protruding roots and peeling straw.

On the same night, the victim underwent a surgical operation, where cut remains of a cane stalk was removed from an intimate part of her body and were handed over to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that around 17.45 hrs on the same day, that is, 27 June 2006, Mr Louis Claudius Savriacooty went to Rose Hill Police Station and informed that his wife was untraceable. He accompanied Police Officers to look for his wife in Rose Hill, but she was not found. On the same day, at 20.50 hrs, at the same Police Station, he reported his wife to be missing.

The spot where the victim was found was secured and on the following day, a thorough search was carried out on the spot and the surroundings. In a standing sugarcane field, some 115 metres away from the main road, a number of items were found.

All the exhibits were handed over to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

On 29 June 2006, at 12.45 hrs, she confirmed the verbal statement given to the Police, in the presence of her counsel. She was discharged from Flacq Hospital and she was subsequently admitted to a private clinic where sentry had been provided for her security at the said medical institution.

The investigation is presently being carried out by Flacq CID and Rose Belle CID. A certain Mr S. M. has been arrested on 29 June 2006 at 19.40 hrs by Rose Belle CID and handed over to Flacq CID for investigation. After questioning, he was detained at Moka Detention Centre on a charge of 'sequestration and attempt upon chastity'.

As soon as I have been informed of this case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have given precise instructions to the Commissioner of Police to deal with this matter with due diligence and professional rigour, and to keep me personally informed of any development.

The Police inquiry is still ongoing.

The Deputy Speaker: Next item! I have to inform the House that Parliamentary Question Nos B/886, B/887, B/895 and B/896 have been withdrawn.

QUATRE BORNES SSS – STUDENTS

(No. B/881) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students of the State Secondary School, Quatre Bornes who have been temporarily placed in various other secondary institutions, he will consider the advisability of integrating these students in the schools they are presently attending.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of accommodating students of Quatre Bornes SSS dates back to January 2005

and this is indeed another very unfortunate situation that my Ministry has inherited from the previous Government. The facts are as follows -

In January 2005, the previous Government decided to admit students in Form I in a school which did not exist - referred to as *Ecole Fantome* or Virtual School - and in respect of which even land had not yet been identified and acquired. The other cases are Goodlands SSS and MGSS Nouvelle France.

The students admitted to Form I and pre-vocational in January 2005 were accommodated in Sodnac SSS. These students are now in Form II and are still at Sodnac SSS

In January 2006, as per legitimate expectations of parents, another batch of students were admitted to Form I. They are temporarily accommodated at Belle Rose SSS.

The situation, at present, is that students of Forms I and II of Quatre Bornes SSS are now located in two colleges, Sodnac SSS and Belle Rose SSS respectively.

Various attempts at identifying and acquiring land in the vicinity of Quatre Bornes for the construction of the Quatre Bornes SSS have not materialised so far because of unavailability of land and legal problems related to acquisition. An attempt to use the existing site of ex-Stratford College for the construction of the Quatre Bornes SSS has also not materialised so far because of legal impediments. Efforts are continuing to identify a suitable plot of land for the school.

My Ministry has been in constant contact with the PTA of Quatre Bornes SSS to find a satisfactory solution, in the circumstances. Indeed meetings with the PTA were held under my chairmanship on 21 October 2005, 24 April 2006 and 15 May 2006. Furthermore, hon. David as Minister in charge of Education, held meetings with the PTA on 01 and 02 June 2006. As a result of the two latter meetings, site visits were effected on 06 June 2006 by the PTA and officers of my Ministry at Dr. Maurice Curé and Gaëtan Raynal State Colleges as well as Queen Elizabeth College with a view to identifying vacant classrooms. Unfortunately, a sufficient number of classrooms is not available in those schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully agree that, for the sake of stability and the convenience of the students, we cannot continue to accommodate them temporarily in other schools and that we should allow them to develop *un*

sens d'appartenance to a single school. Further in the context of widening access, it is planned to admit another batch of students to Form I for Quatre Bornes SSS in January 2007.

The proposal for those students to be integrated in the schools where they are at present, that is, Sodnac SSS is not possible as the School will admit its own Form I students in January 2007 and there is no spare capacity for additional students. Further, another problem is likely to crop up with parents of students of Sodnac SSS who may resist the integration of students of Quatre Bornes while depriving the school from having another batch of Form I students and enable its process of natural growth and development.

The situation of the Quatre Bornes SSS Form I students housed at Belle Rose SSS and who will be in Form II in January 2007 should also be considered.

The situation is urgent; and my Ministry has explored all possibilities and considers that the best solution that will help to mitigate the problem, in the short term, would be that all the students of Forms I and II of Quatre Bornes SSS as well as the new Form I intake for 2007 be accommodated at Belle Rose SSS. In fact, space exists for accommodating all those students there as from January 2007. This proposal was communicated to the PTA by way of an official letter sent to the president of the PTA on 30 May 2006 and no official reply has been obtained yet.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to us, the proposal to accommodate all Quatre Bornes SSS students in Belle Rose SSS would be the best course of action in the immediate future.

Miss Deerpalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware that the parents are not at all satisfied with this temporary situation? Moreover the parents are not at all satisfied with the way they have been treated by the officials of the Ministry all through, given the hardship that they have been through and the fact that they have actually been – sorry to say – lied to with the so-called virtual SSS...

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Member, 'lying' is not parliamentary.

Miss Deerpalsing : Basically, they have not been honestly treated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and, in fact, all through the meetings that the officials of the Ministry had had with the parents, they have not been well treated either and they are not satisfied with the solution.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made her point.

Miss Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister to actually have better public relations with the Parents/Teachers Association.

The Deputy Speaker : They have been taken for a ride.

Mr Gokhool : I think the hon. Member may be mixing what happened previously with what is happening when I took over as Minister. There is a difference. I have given all the details, how we are looking very carefully at the problem. I am, myself, very sympathetic with the PTA and the students. In fact, I have had meetings with them and we are trying to look for a solution in the immediate future. The proposal for building a school is not abandoned, but we are short of time. So, we have to deal with the problem for January 2007 and continue exploring the possibility of acquiring the land and building a school for the pupils. This is the idea that we are exploring.

Miss Deerpalsing : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all I am asking from the Minister is that, instead of just sending a letter coldly to the Parents/Teachers Association, call them for a meeting, talk to them in person. That is all I am asking from the Minister.

Mr Gokhool: I could not more agree with the hon. Member when hon. David was replacing me, he met the PTA. I have met the PTA on several occasions and I propose to meet them again. The problem is being taken care of.

TAGORE LANE, LE HOCHET, TERRE ROUGE - POLLUTION PROBLEM

(No. B/882) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that there is a pollution problem at the Tagore Lane, near the Shree Gowreenath Mandir at Le Hochet, Terre Rouge and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, as a matter of priority.

Mr Bachoo : Sir, I have been informed that complaints regarding stagnant water giving rise to odour nuisances in a canal at Tagore Lane near temple Le Hochet, Terre Rouge were received at my Ministry on 16 June 2006.

Site visits were subsequently effected by officers of my Ministry and other stakeholders and actions are being initiated as follows –

- (a) as some inhabitants were found discharging waste water into the canal, the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life will serve sanitary notices to these people to provide absorption pits. Larviciding in the canal and in the region of the Tagore Lane, Le Hochet, Terre Rouge will also be carried out by that Ministry, and
- (b) the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council has been requested to carry out a thorough cleaning of the canal to allow free flow of water.

My Ministry will monitor the situation with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life and the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Minister to take action, as a caring Government, as soon as possible as there is household liquid waste on the road. It has been neglected for years. When children go to school in the morning, by the time they arrive, their shoes get wet, so they have to carry two pairs of shoes. For years, that has been going on....

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put her question.

Mrs Juggoo : May I request the hon. Minister to see to it that action be taken immediately?

Mr Bachoo : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already sent letters to the different stakeholders and I'll follow it personally.

SAINTE CÉCILE ROAD, RICHE TERRE – ACCESS ROAD

(No. B/883) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he has received complaints from the inhabitants of Sainte Cécile Road at Riche Terre regarding the lack of access from there to the main road for the last 40 years and, if so, will he state if there is any project for the construction of an access road thereat.

The Minister of Environment and National Development Unit
(Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am advised that neither the Road Development Authority nor the National Development Unit has received any complaint from the inhabitants of Sainte Cécile Road, Riche Terre, regarding the lack of an access road to the main road. As such the RDA and NDU have no project for the construction of the access road.

However, I shall request the NDU to carry out a survey following which a decision will be taken.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that this problem has been there for years? Many letters had been written. There is a distance of one kilometre from where the inhabitants live to the main road to access to the bus stops, especially school children going to school in the morning.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do not find any correspondence in our file, but I have already taken the decision, namely, that the NDU officers will visit the site and we will come up with certain decisions.

STE CROIX – FOOTBALL GROUNDS

(No. B/884) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if, on or about 11 May 2006, he had a meeting with members of the *Komité Vizilans*, Ste Croix and, if so, will he state if, following that meeting, any decision has been taken in regard to the use, for training purposes by the football teams of the region, of the football grounds of the –

(a) Bien Heureux Père Laval Stadium at Nicolay Road, and

(b) GSS North and Ste Croix Government School, after school hours.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will, with your permission reply to PQ Nos. B/884 and B/885 together as they are inter-related.

In fact, I attended the meeting on 11 May, as Minister of Youth and Sports at the invitation of *Komit  Vizilans* of Ste Croix and to which the hon. Member was also invited. It is unfortunate that he did not stay till the end if not he would have been aware of the grievances of the inhabitants of this region.

Members of the *Komit  Vizilans* imparted to me their grievances and made several requests among others regarding the lack of sports infrastructure.

On 22 May 2006 a copy of their grievances was personally forwarded by me to hon. Mrs B. Juggoo, representative of the Constituency for her consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to information available at my Ministry, another group known as *Comit  le Quartier Le Cornu* has also submitted a similar request.

I wish to inform the House that since May 2000 the need to provide sports and recreational facilities in this region had been identified by hon. J.F. Chaumi re who was then Junior Minister. A project comprising a football ground and a youth centre at Cit  La Cure had been proposed. A plot of land had even been identified.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports made a site visit in July 2000 and recommended that a sport complex comprising of handball/basket ball/volleyball grounds and a youth centre be set up subject to a proper drainage system put in place as the site is flooded during heavy rainfalls.

This project was subject to the land being vested in the Ministry and the Ministry of Housing and Lands was accordingly requested to do the needful. However, it is four years later i.e. in July 2004 that the Ministry of Housing and Lands informed the Ministry of Youth and Sports that the land had already been vested in the Ministry of Environment and NDU for a different project.

However, I am prepared to liaise with my colleagues, the Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit and the Minister of Housing and Lands, to provide the inhabitants with proper facilities.

As regards arrangements for use of school infrastructure, my Ministry and the Ministry of Education will, this month, sign a protocol agreement to that effect.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the GSS North football ground has been commissioned and vested in the Ministry concerned and, if yes, when will that football ground be put at the disposal of the inhabitants of that area?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: My Ministry will sign a protocol in a few days' time.

STE CROIX – SPORTS COMPLEX & JOGGING TRACK

(No. B/885) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if, on or about 11 May 2006, he had a meeting with members of the *Komité Vizilans*, Ste Croix and, if so, will he state if, following that meeting, any decision has been reached in regard to the setting up of a sports complex and a jogging track in the region of Ste Croix and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/884)

NATIONAL WOMEN COUNCIL – GENERAL WORKERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/886) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the general workers recruited at the National Women Council since July 2006 to date, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain a list therefrom and give a list thereof, together with their respective addresses.

(Withdrawn)

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL – GENERAL WORKERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/887) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the general workers recruited at the Women Entrepreneur Council since July 2006 to date, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain a list therefrom and give a list thereof, together with their respective addresses.

(Withdrawn)

SOUILLAC VILLAGE - LE BATELAGE – RENTS

(No. B/888) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if his Ministry is letting two unfurnished lots at Le Batelage in Souillac Village and, if so, if any arrears in rent are due to the Ministry.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has let two unfurnished commercial spaces, namely, lots A and B at Le Batelage, at Souillac Tourist Village.

I have been informed that in respect to lot A, of an extent of 302 m² leased to one Mr R. Rajkoomar, for a monthly rental of Rs15,100, there is as at to date no arrear of rental.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, lot B comprises two commercial spaces of 40 m² each on the ground and first floors of the building. The lease agreement was signed with one Mr Seerputh Raggoo, on 14 December 2000 for a period of five years, at a monthly rent of Rs5,000. The tenant paid the rental for the month of December 2000 and made a deposit of Rs30,000, representing six months rental, on 09 January 2001. However, the tenant failed to pay the subsequent rentals due.

On 23 February 2001, the tenant was requested to pay the arrears due. Subsequently, four reminders had been sent to the tenant. The last reminder dated 16 October 2002.

On 29 August 2002, and on the advice of the State Law Office, a *mise-en-demeure* was served on the tenant. However, the SLO informed this

Ministry that no service could be effected because the tenant was not in the country.

On 25 October 2005, the SLO served a second *mise-en-demeure* on the tenant. Thereafter, on 05 January 2006 my Ministry was informed by the SLO, that the tenant was arguing that he had never occupied the spaces allocated to him.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the lease has expired on 30 November 2005, my Ministry sought the advice of the SLO on 28 December 2005 on the proposed launch of fresh tenders in respect of lot B and at the same time requested the SLO to initiate further legal action to recoup the rent due. We are waiting for a reply.

TOURISM FUND – HOTEL PROMOTERS – CONTRIBUTIONS

(No. B/889) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if all the liabilities and sums owed by hotel promoters to the Tourism Fund have been paid and, if not, the actions that are being taken to recover same.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that all promoters have paid their contributions to the Tourism Fund, except Salt Lake Resorts Ltd, promoter of Voile D’Or.

Out of the Rs25 m., representing the normal contribution payable by Salt Lake Resorts Ltd to the Tourism Fund, the promoter has been authorised to deduct expenses, amounting to Rs1,120,000, incurred in connection with the reinstallation of the irrigation system for the relocation of five vegetable growers at Bel Ombre. To date the company has paid only Rs12,500,000 out of the amount owed to the Fund. Despite several reminders, the company still owes Rs11,380,000 to the Tourism Fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the actions taken to recover the amount outstanding are as follows –

- (i) on 12 December 2003, a letter was sent to the company to pay its contribution. Subsequently, 10 reminders have been sent to the company requesting it to honour its obligation. The last reminder was sent on 06 September 2005;

- (ii) since the lease agreement was signed between the Ministry of Housing and Lands and Salt Lake Resorts Ltd, and as payment of the contribution is one of the conditions of the lease agreement, my Ministry has on 06 September 2005 requested the Ministry of Housing and Lands to initiate necessary legal action to recoup the outstanding balance;
- (iii) as proposed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Tourism Fund, on 27 December 2005 also sought the advice of the State Law Office;
- (iv) on 02 March 2006, as requested by the SLO, documents, comprising copy of Letter of Reservation, Letter of Intent, etc. were forwarded to the SLO to facilitate tendering of legal advice, and
- (v) on 13 April 2006, a letter has been sent to the legal representative of Salt Lake Resorts Ltd to ensure that the outstanding balance of Rs11,380,000 is paid to the Tourism Fund and on 29 June 2006 a reminder was sent, to his effect, to the legal representative.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, in order to ensure that such similar situation does not recur in the future, all promoters of hotel projects on State land are required to pay their contributions in full on the day and upon signature of their lease agreements.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister the number of hotel projects that were launched in the region of Bel Ombre?

Mr X. L. Duval: There are a number of hotel projects. But, as I mentioned, the contributions payable to the Fund are upon signature of the lease agreement.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the hon. Minister, therefore, confirm whether two hotel projects belonging to the same group agreed to pay only one off contribution of Rs25 m.?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: Is that the proper way of doing things or will he try to remedy this?

Mr. X. L. Duval: I do not know the date on which this was done. But it was agreed by the then Minister.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to hotel promoters in regards to Tourism Fund, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether Anahita Group has made any contribution and, if so, how much. How does he intend to use this money?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information on Anahita Group. But I know it is not a debtor to the Fund.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if any contribution from this Group will be used for the creation of a tourism village in this part of the island.

Mr X. L. Duval: The tourism village will be financed by the Empowerment Fund. As far as Anahita is concerned, if it has a lease, then upon the signature of that lease with Government, it will pay the amount due. If it is on private land, it will not pay.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last question. May I know the status of the free advances of Rs100 m. that were paid by the Ministry of Finance to the Tourism Fund?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member comes with a specific question, I will provide the answer.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY - MEDICAL /GENERAL PRACTITIONERS – EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/890) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to medical practitioners and general practitioners employed by her Ministry, she will state if all the criteria set down for their employment have been adhered to.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker Sir, there are two categories of Medical Practitioners employed by my Ministry, namely -

- (a) Medical Practitioner (Generalist)

(b) Medical Practitioner (Specialist)

I am informed that for the employment of Generalists, all the criteria set down have been adhered to.

The criteria for employment of Generalists are -

- (a) Medical Practitioners in the private sector
- (b) Fully registered under the Medical Council Act
- (c) Not above 70 years of age

The criteria for employment of Specialists are -

Private and Public Medical Practitioners
Fully registered under the Medical Council Act
Hold a Specialist qualification in one of the following fields –

- (a) Orthopaedic Surgery
- (b) Ophtalmology
- (c) Psychiatry
- (d) Dermatology
- (e) E.N.T.
- (f) General Medecine
- (e) General Surgery
- (f) Gynaecology
- (g) Oncology – related to cancer

They must not be above 70 years of age .

As regards the employment of Specialists, in view of the dearth of Medical Specialists in the field of General Medicine, and in order not to penalise beneficiaries, the Ministry had no alternative than to continue the employment of four (4) such Specialists, although they are above 70. Approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and has raised no objection to the continued employment of these four specialists.

Action has already been taken also to issue fresh advertisement for the recruitment of Medical Specialists. Once we obtain the required number and specialisation as per age criteria, the employment of those who are above 70 will be terminated.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether for the Medical Practitioners, the criteria set up by the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs, stating that the age limit should be 65, were respected?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that we requested the approval of the Ministry because there was a lack of Specialists and the approval was given. As far as Medical Practitioners are concerned, authorisation was sought from the Ministry of Civil Service and there was no objection.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know whether these doctors are being employed on a determined period or on an undetermined period?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these doctors are presently appointed on a sessional basis and their employment terminates, of course, once they reach the age of 70, but I did explain the problem that has arisen as for the age criteria and we went according to the authorisation of the Ministry for Civil Service Affairs.

Mr Dowarkasing: Is the hon. Minister aware that some of these Medical Practitioners draw salaries on sessional basis which are far more than the salary of Medical Practitioners actually being employed by the Ministry of Health?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are aware of such problems arising, but there has been, of course, equal distribution of sessions and domiciliary visits as far as possible. But, it should be pointed out that most of these doctors are involved in private practice during the day and are available only in the afternoon. We are also recruiting additional general practitioners in the near future. As regards the fees, the following should be highlighted.

Firstly, these general practitioners in Government hospitals are eligible to a contribution of 25 percent of their salaries for pension purpose and such is not the case for those employed by my Ministry. They are not eligible for any paid leave, they are not eligible to overtime payment as their counterparts in the Ministry of Health; they are not eligible for duty-free concession for the purchase of a car or commuted travelling allowance; they are not eligible for the annual allowance of Rs10,000 for the purchase of medical books, and they are not eligible for any passage benefits. The fee paid for a session of three hours is only Rs450. For visits at domicile, it's

Rs340. The fee paid for specialists is only Rs730 for Medical Tribunal and Rs620 for Medical Boards.

SCHOOLS (PRIMARY) – CHILDREN - LUNCH

(No. B/891) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if any survey has been carried out at the level of primary schools to determine the number of children who come to school without lunch and, if so, when, indicating the measures, if any, taken to ensure that these children do not stay hungry at school.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the information available at my Ministry, I wish to inform the hon. Member that there has been no survey carried out at the level of primary schools to determine the number of children who come to school without lunch.

It has been the policy of my Ministry to provide all children in the mainstream primary schools with a loaf of bread daily, while children of the 30 ZEP schools are provided with a lunch comprising a *pain fourré*, a cake or a fruit, and a juice.

However, in line with the general policy of the Government to rethink our priorities in social protection and to re-orient our policy of subsidies such that the most needy are provided with adequate support, my Ministry has re-structured the School Feeding Programme to ensure that public funds are used optimally, while simultaneously ensuring that needy children are not penalised.

To arrive at a concerted strategy for ensuring that the most needy students are provided with a loaf of bread daily, I had chaired a meeting on Thursday 29 June, in the presence of hon. Bappoo, Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions, key stakeholders such as the representatives of *Bureau de l'Education Catholique* (BEC), the Hindu Education Authority (HEA) and the Government Teachers' Union (GTU), *inter alia*, and various options were discussed.

During that meeting, the GTU had proposed that a consent form be given to arents for the latter to state whether they would desire to have their children continue benefiting from bread at school or not. All members present felt that this was a viable option.

In the light of discussions held, my Ministry is now in the process of consulting another key stakeholder, the Parent-Teachers' Association (PTAs) in order to secure their views and recommendations on the best means of identifying the most needy students.

Pending the finalisation of the strategy for identifying the most needy students, my Ministry is continuing with the policy of providing a loaf of bread at school to all children.

I wish to emphasize that it is the philosophy of the Government to provide assistance to the most vulnerable sections of the population, and to utilise public funding in a most equitable and just way. This is why the food programme for the ZEP schools is being maintained, while spending on the primary school feeding programme is being reoriented to ensure that public expenditures are reallocated in ways that bring greater benefits to those who need Government support the most.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to inform the House whether the survey will cover the whole island? When we talk of vulnerable groups, we think of vulnerable areas. Even in what we call the *posh* areas, we have very poor families. Can we have some clarifications?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the exercise we are carrying will concern all schools, excluding ZEP schools where the food programme is already maintained. All non-ZEP schools will be concerned.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I understand the Minister, the usage of the Form is not a final decision because he will be contacting the PTA?

Mr Gokhool: As I indicated, stakeholders have been consulted. At present, we are consulting the PTAs to get their views and suggestions.

QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL, CANDOS – CHILD S. G. - DEATH

(No. B/892) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the inquiry initiated by his Ministry, following the death of child S.G. which occurred on 14 May 2006 at the Queen Victoria Hospital, Candos, he will state the outcome thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ. No. B/676 on 30 May 2006, I informed the House that a departmental enquiry was carried out by the Medical Superintendent of Victoria Hospital following the death of child S.G. It was found that the death of the child was due to shock because of gastro intestine bleeding.

On 30 May 2006, itself, my Ministry referred the case to the Medical Council of Mauritius for an independent and in-depth enquiry. I am advised that the enquiry at the Council is still ongoing.

HOSPITALS & HEALTH CARE CENTRES – RODENT CONTROL PROGRAMME

(No. B/893) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Rats Extermination Programme, he will –

- (a) state the date it was last carried out at –
 - (i) ENT Hospital, Vacoas,
 - (ii) Queen Victoria Hospital, Candos,
 - (iii) Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, Port Louis,
 - (iv) SSR National Hospital, Pamplemousses,
 - (v) Flacq Hospital,
 - (vi) Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital,
 - (vii) Subramaniam Bharati Eye Hospital, Moka, and
- (b) give details of ongoing programmes, if any, in hospitals and health care centre.

Mr Faugoo : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Rodent Control Programme carried out by my Ministry. Therefore, with your permission, I am tabling the information relating to part (a) of the question.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Rodent Control Programme is an ongoing activity that is carried out at least once weekly in all the hospitals and area health centres, and at least once fortnightly in the community health centres.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, presently, at the ENT Hospital, patients can see rodents or rats running along the hospital?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware, but I'll take note of the information. I'll definitely look into the matter.

VIVISECTION – GOVERNMENT POLICY

(No. B/894) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state Government policy in regard to vivisection.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am circulating the reply. **(Appendix II).**

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NDU - GENERAL WORKER – POSTS – RECRUITMENT EXERCISE

(No. B/895) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the recent recruitment exercise for the post/s of general worker in his Ministry, he will state -

- (a) the number of vacancies in relation thereto, and
- (b) the criteria used for the selection of candidates for interview.

(Withdrawn)

BOARD OF CENSORS – MEMBERS -NUMBER, CRITERIA, ETC.

(No. B/896) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the persons sitting on the Board of Censors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the criteria used for their selection

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. - MR JIM VEERASAMY, LEGAL ADVISER

(No. B/897) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Air Mauritius Ltd. information as to if the services of one Mr Jim Veerasamy were retained as Legal Adviser of the company and, if yes, if a sum of about Rs4,888,000 (122,000 Euros) has been paid out to him as legal fees.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have, on several occasions, in reply to Parliamentary Questions on issues that concern the internal and day-to-day operations of Air Mauritius Ltd., informed my colleagues that I am not in a position to deal with such matters in this House.

I wish, therefore, to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ No. B/839 of last week, in particular to the last two paragraphs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish, however, to reassure the House that as a listed company, Air Mauritius Ltd. has the responsibility to adopt sound management practices based on the principles of good corporate governance. This includes, *inter alia*, the setting up of appropriate committees to ensure compliance to best practices.

NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE – BUS TERMINAL PROJECT

(No. B/898) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bus terminal project at Nouvelle Découverte, he will state –

- (a) the status thereof;
- (b) the estimated cost, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that due to budgetary constraints, the National Development Unit will not be in a position to implement the bus terminal project at Nouvelle Decouverte during the financial year 2006-2007.

AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS LTD. – WORLD CUP 2006 – POOL BETTING

(No. B/899) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the issue of a football betting licence to Automatic Systems Limited for the World Cup 2006, he will state the conditions attached thereto.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Gaming Control Board has issued a licence to Automatic Systems Ltd. to operate pool betting on football matches of the World Cup Football Competition. At present, there is no provision in the Law for fixed odd betting.

In addition to the licensing and administrative provisions governing the issue of any betting licence under the Gaming Act, the Board has imposed the following conditions –

- (a) for each match, bets are to be accepted up to a date and time fixed by the Gaming Board, and
- (b) any unclaimed prizes will have to be paid to the National Solidarity Fund.

A pool promoter is required to pay a gaming tax of 10% on the gross stakes and an annual licence fee of Rs3,000.

I am informed that the public could place bets on 24 June 2006 only when the licensee carried out a trial run.

Mr Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he is aware that the Automatic Systems Ltd. has to have a special software and hardware for the organisation of football betting and this system has been brought to Mauritius since the beginning of April? Does he have any information about this?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information I have regarding this matter is that the company applied for this permit only for pool betting and they used it only for a trial. It is not available anymore. We will have to come to the House to change the law as it exists in order to provide for foreign sports betting.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE - MILLING RIGHTS

(No. B/900) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether in regard to the Rose Belle Sugar Estate, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the reasons as to why no payment for milling rights were effected to the Estate since the closure of the factory and the transfer of its rights to other factories.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been provided the following information by the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board (RBSEB).

Rose Belle Sugar Milling Co Ltd (RBSM) and Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board signed the Memorandum of Agreement for the closure of the Rose Belle Sugar Factory on 15 October 2001 and the factory ceased to operate on 31 December 2001.

The then Chairman and Acting General Manager signed on behalf of Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board and Rose Belle Sugar Milling. The other parties to the agreement were a consortium comprising Britannia-Highlands Milling Co. Ltd., Mon Trésor Milling Co. Ltd., the Savannah Sugar Milling Co. Ltd. and Compagnie Sucrière de Riche en Eau Ltée.

There is no mention in the agreement that the consortium would have to pay any amount as milling rights to the Rose Belle Sugar Estate.

According to records available on Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board files, on 22 September 2001, milling rights of Rose Belle Milling Company were estimated at Rs9.5 m. yearly by the then Chairman and Acting General Manager.

Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board has informed that it has no record of any claim made by Rose Belle Sugar Milling to the consortium of factories receiving the sugar cane of Rose Belle Sugar Estate for the payment of milling rights.

The issue of non payment of milling rights was taken up by Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board at its meeting of 10 November 2005 and the Board decided to request the consortium to pay the amounts for which it was eligible according to the formula prevalent at the time of closure of Rose Belle Sugar Milling. The consortium has replied that it cannot accede to the request as it does not form part of the Agreement signed on 15 October 2001. In this connection, a Committee chaired by the Acting Chairman of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board has been set up to have a formal meeting regarding milling rights. The matter will be taken, of course, with the Sugar Authority and legal advice will be sought thereafter.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the issue of payment for milling rights has arisen in any other case where a sugar mill has closed down?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although it is not prescribed in the law, but it is normally paid to the mill which ceases its activities and

transfers its rights to another factory. For example, in the case of Bel Ombre, St. Felix has to pay for the milling rights.

CASINOS - COURT CASES

(No. B/901) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to -

- (a) the total amount of bad debts accumulated by the casinos during the last five years;
- (b) the number of cases referred to court;
- (c) the number of cases still pending, and
- (d) the amount of money recovered through the services of attorney.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (**Mr R. Sithanen**): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that there are no bad debts as such in the Casino business. However, the Gaming Control Board Regulations provide for cheques cashing facilities. Cheques issued by customers which have not been honoured by the bank, have accumulated to Rs3,732,000 during the past five years.

As regards part (b), there are twenty-two (22) cases that have been referred to court, of which eight (8) cases amounting to Rs810,000 for which judgement has been obtained and execution is in process.

Regarding part (c), thirteen (13) cases are still pending. Three (3) cases totalling Rs2.8 m. are pending before the supreme court and ten (10) cases totalling Rs122,000 are pending before court.

As regards part (d), recovery through the services of attorneys for cases settled in court in respect of returned cheques during the past five years, I am given to understand, amounts to Rs175,000.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance what professional fees have been paid to the Attorney during those last five years during which he recuperated only Rs175,000?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me again qualify my answer. This is the information I have been provided with, that the Attorney does not charge any fee to the casino. However, he claims 10% of the amount owed by the clients from the latter, over and above the settlement. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me assure the House that we would like to put order in the casino concerning this matter.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any improvement in the amount owed by gamers whose cheques bounced?

Mr Sithanen: I don't have the specific information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can seek the information and inform the House. But the information I have is for the last five years. So, I would look into the specific question asked by hon. Bérenger.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last supplementary question to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Does he sincerely believe that according to the figures that he gave us, it means that the Attorney charged Rs17,500 to the casino as professional fees for the last five years?

Mr Sithanen: This is the amount that has been collected.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. Member asking for the opinion of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very often the problem with the Minister answering the question is that the hon. Member who asks a question has more information than the Minister himself. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand perfectly where the hon. Member is coming, but I take a commitment that we are looking into it and we'll see to it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that what is due to the casino is paid.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when somebody gives a cheque which is not honoured, there is a criminal case as well. Why is the case not reported to the Police for them to do the work?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not a lawyer, but the information I have here is that...

(Interruptions)

I have already replied to this. There are cases which are before the Supreme Court. I mentioned that there are three cases totalling Rs2.8 m. which are pending before the Supreme Court and there are 10 cases that are pending before other Courts.

The Deputy Speaker: And I sincerely doubt whether the hon. Deputy Prime Minister himself can bring them to Court. This is not within his purview.

L'ESPERANCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. B/902) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the football ground at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, he will state when will it be fully operational.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Development Unit which is responsible for the implementation of the project that works for the construction of the football ground have been completed and that a handing over exercise between the contractor and the Moka/Flacq District Council in the presence of the NDU has been scheduled for Friday 07 July 2006.

ST PIERRE - MARKET - LIGHTING FACILITIES

(No. B/903) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the market of St Pierre, he will state if lighting facilities will be provided on the first floor.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the first floor of the St Pierre market is already provided with lighting facilities and is operational. However,

following representations received from stall holders of the haberdashery section, the Council has decided to install some additional lighting points on the first floor including the middle row. This work will start on Wednesday 05 July 2006.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to my information, there are no lighting facilities on the first floor of St. Pierre market fair. My friends, hon. Jugnauth and hon. Dr. Ramloll, can confirm it. But then I should like to ask the hon. Minister if the same facilities could be extended to Quartier Militaire market fair.

Dr. David: I don't have the information for Quartier Militaire, but from the information I have from the District Council is that there are lighting facilities, there will be additional ones on the first floor...

The Deputy Speaker: Is the question pertaining to Quartier Militaire or St Pierre? Hon. Navarre-Marie, next question!

ALBION - WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN DISTRESS - SHELTER

(No. B/904) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether in regard to the management of the shelter for women and children in distress at Albion, she will state the date of expiration of the present management contract.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract for the shelter at Albion expires on 31 August 2006.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what she proposes to do for the management of the shelter afterwards?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot renew the contract, because we are moving the inmates to a new place. Tenders will be launched by the 15th of this month.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Is it proposed to launch fresh tenders for the management of the new shelter?

Mrs Seebun: We are proposing to launch fresh tenders.

PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS - NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

(No. B/905) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Apprenticeship Scheme, he will state the measures he proposes to take to vulgarise the scheme amongst youngsters attending the pre-vocational schools.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Apprenticeship Scheme is operational since 1996 and is managed by the Industrial & Vocational Training Board.

The objective of the scheme is to enable young persons aged at least 16, and having a minimum of three years secondary schooling or pre-vocational schooling with the National Trade Certificate (NTC) foundation, to learn a trade. Some 43 trades are designated for the scheme.

The apprentice learns the practical component of the trade on the job at the employer's workplace, under the supervision of a skilled employee for at least four days per week and follows theoretical courses in an IVTB training centre for one day per week. The duration of the apprenticeship is for one or two years, depending on the trade.

A total of 2,300 youngsters have completed the pre-vocational course in 2005 and, out of this figure, 1,847 joined the NTC foundation course at the IVTB. It is only when the students complete the one-year NTC foundation that they are eligible to apply for recruitment as an apprentice under the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The IVTB already sensitises pre-vocational students joining the NTC foundation on the different trades available for apprenticeship. My Ministry proposes to adopt the following measures to bring the scheme closer to youngsters -

- (i) An intensive campaign, with the help of the MEF, will be carried out to ensure that all pre-vocational students are aware of the NTC Foundation programme.

- (ii) An orientation programme will be conducted for the students, to expose them to possibilities for further upgrading of their skills through the Apprenticeship Scheme.
- (iii) Arrangements will be made for students to visit industries and IVTB training centres, to enable them to get acquainted to the world of work and also to observe apprentices in their learning environment. At this level, employers will be encouraged to talk to the students, with emphasis on the trades available in industry and the benefits in joining the NAS.
- (iv) Talks will also be organised for the parents of students, so that they understand the functioning of the scheme.
- (v) The pre-vocational curriculum will be reviewed, to create an early awareness of the apprenticeship mode of training among students.
- (vi) A comprehensive informative brochure will be published.
- (vii) The services of MCA and MBC TV will be enlisted in the sensitisation campaign.

FAMILY COURT – SETTING UP

(No. B/906) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a Family Court, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Valayden: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made in relation to PQ B/721 on 13 June 2006, where mention was made that Government has assigned to a consultant, in the person of Mrs Patten, the task of looking into the reform of the family justice system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that the consultant intends to submit the legislation, namely the Family Court Bill, to set up the Family Court, by the end of July 2006. This legislation will be followed by the Family Law Bill, which will be ready by the end of December 2006. After receiving the approval of Cabinet, I shall have the Family Court Bill circulated to all stakeholders.

**TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF
VULNERABLE GROUPS – COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS,
MICRO CREDIT SCHEME BENEFICIARIES, ETC**

(No. B/907) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups since July 2005 to date, information as to –

- (a) the number of community based projects initiated and implemented, indicating the value of the projects and the regions covered, and
- (b) the number of beneficiaries under the Micro Credit Scheme, indicating the amounts disbursed and the line of activities.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, since July 2005 to date, the Trust Fund has initiated 30 community-based projects for a total project value of Rs12.2 m. in Triolet, Roche Terre, Pointe aux Piments, Goodlands, Petite Rivière, Long Mountain, Pamplémousses, Rivière du Rempart, Port Louis, Cité Richelieu, Ste Croix, Vallée des Prêtres, Arsenal, Cité La Cure, Poste de Flacq, St Julien Village, Montagne Blanche, Trou d'Eau Douce, Curepipe, Vacoas, Roche Brunes, Barkly, Case Noyale, Chemin Grenier, Bois Chéri, Camp Diable, L'Escalier, Cluny, Ferney, Rivière des Creoles, Plaine Magnien and Rose Belle.

The implementation of community-based projects are carried out in phases depending on the nature and the rate of execution of the projects by the NGOs responsible for these projects.

Consequently, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of the 30 projects initiated by the Trust Fund, an amount of Rs4.5 m. has been disbursed in respect of 25 projects as per phases reached. The first disbursement of funds for the five remaining projects, for a total project value of Rs1,6 m., which had been approved in March 2006 would be made upon finalisation of the project implementation schedules. These are being prepared by the Trust Fund staff, the NGOs concerned and the beneficiaries, as per standard practice.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that there are 77 beneficiaries of loans under the Micro-Credit Scheme and a sum of Rs2.2 m. has been disbursed from July 2005 to date by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd. The line of activities includes manufacturing and handicraft, shoe making, audio and video recording, food processing, animal rearing, cultivation, hairdressing and beauty parlour, and other services sectors with an element of value added.

I wish to inform the House that, for the period July 2005 to June 2006, the Trust Fund has already made disbursements up to the tune of Rs69.6 m. and outstanding commitments amounted to Rs41.6 m. Mr Deputy Speaker, in spite of a shortfall of Rs36.2 m., caused mainly by heavy commitments taken during the period June 2004 to July 2005, where a total of Rs77.1 m. was committed for community-based projects and loans alone, my Ministry had to ensure that the Trust Fund continues its work to help the vulnerable groups.

CAMPEMENT SITE LEASE - POLICY

(No. B/908) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the *campement* sites leases which Government intends to recover, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof which have been identified;
- (b) the locations thereof, and
- (c) the names of the lessees.

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs B/908 and B/918, which relate to the same subject matter.

It is relevant to inform the House of the measures I have taken to implement the new *campement* site lease policy, as announced in the Budget Speech 2006-2007.

My Ministry is in the process of clearing with the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development and the State Law Office the contents of a letter to be addressed to the *campement* site lessees, as announced.

Once cleared, the letter will not, however, be issued to all *campement* site lessees. The *campement* site lessees whose leased land is assessed by my Ministry as being potentially suitable for hotel projects, beach extension, and creation of new beaches, will not be issued with this letter. My Ministry is, in fact, actively working out the zones where prime *Pas Géométriques*

land could be best utilised in the public and national interest for such projects as those I have just mentioned, and will draw up a list of those lessees who will accordingly not be required to exercise any of the two options mentioned in the Budget Speech 2006-2007. Government will resume possession of these leased land on expiry of their lease agreement or earlier in case a Government approved project is ready for implementation on their leased land, for which purpose they will be given reasonable advance and due notice.

On finalisation of that list, which is expected to be completed by end of July 2006, I shall place a copy thereof in the Library of the National Assembly with all the particulars asked for.

Regarding the letters to be issued to all *campement* site lessees, they are expected to be issued to them thereafter, inviting them to exercise their option.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, suite aux mesures budgétaires, dans une déclaration à la presse, le ministre a déclaré: 'Qu'on ne vienne pas nous faire croire que ces mesures sont difficiles'. Je voudrais savoir du ministre ce qu'il entend par 'difficiles'.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member cannot take an excerpt from newspapers and ask the Minister to expatiate upon.

Mr Guimbeau: Mais, M. le président, tout le monde ne s'appelle pas Tim Taylor, qui a dit que les mesures étaient justifiées. Pour beaucoup de gens, c'est leur seule résidence et il y a des retraités, toutes communautés confondues. J'aimerais savoir du ministre quelles sont les mesures qu'il compte prendre et s'il pourrait considérer ces cas on *a case to case basis*. Le ministre peut-il clarifier la situation?

Mr Dulull: M. le président, les mesures viennent d'être annoncées. Mon ministère est en train de travailler là-dessus et on veillera à ce que personne ne soit injustement pénalisé.

HIV SERO - NATIONAL POPULATION-BASED SURVEYS

(No. B/909) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if any national population-based HIV Sero Surveys has been or is being carried out by his Ministry with a view to being used as a technical support

tool for the planning or designing of HIV-AIDS intervention and, if not why not.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, HIV/AIDS in Mauritius is considered as a concentrated epidemic that is, the prevalence rate is less than 0.5% in the population and more than 5% in groups with high risk behaviours. A national population-based survey would require a very large sample size to give statistically reliable results. It is neither feasible nor cost-effective to undertake such an exercise. Furthermore, there is legal impediment in carrying out such a survey as testing for HIV can only be effected through consent.

Consequently, no such survey has been carried out in Mauritius. However in 1987, when the HIV screening test was introduced in Mauritius a selective sero survey was carried out among groups of individuals namely

—

- (i) blood donors;
- (ii) pregnant women;
- (iii) all health personnel including doctors, nurses and hospital attendants;
- (iv) TB and cancer patients;
- (v) patients suffering from sexually transmitted infection (STI);
- (vi) Air crews and sailors, and
- (vii) Injection Drug Users (IDUs), alcoholics under rehabilitation and prison inmates.

The above survey did not reveal any positive cases of HIV. However, surveys of the above groups are an ongoing process. Concurrently, there has been a strict monitoring of the HIV infection in the population through mandatory screening of all blood donors. This sentinel surveillance was reinforced in 1999 among pregnant women through counselling and voluntary testing in line with the current practice worldwide.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned pregnant women. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the HIV test on pregnant women is being routinely offered or routinely imposed?

Mr Faugoo: All pregnant women are tested, but it is on a voluntary basis, they have to consent to it. All pregnant women, who attend the health centres or hospitals, are tested, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if it is on a voluntary basis, is there a consent form for each pregnant woman to fill in before the test is being done? Is there any consent form?

Mr Faugoo: I don't know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if there is a consent form, but what I know is that consent is given in all cases of tests done, be it pregnant women or be it when there is routine testing on any outreached area, it has to be with consent.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is being routinely imposed will become at the end of the day mandatory, that is why I am scared. Can the hon. Minister ensure that what is routinely "imposed" does not become mandatory?

Mr Faugoo: So much the better if it becomes mandatory, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because we want to protect children. In my speech on the Budget, I had said that all pregnant women, who are routinely checked, are asked to do the test. Out of 65 pregnant women tested positive, 10 such women refused to undergo the treatment for HIV; and out of those 10, three children -since 1999 when the programme was first time brought in the hospitals - were born with HIV/AIDS, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, we are again looking at this aspect in the Bill on which we are working now and then we will come to the House for legislation in this regard.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can enlighten the House regarding blood donors? Can we know how things are being carried out? Whether the tests are being carried on for the blood donors with consent?

Mr Faugoo: All blood which are collected are tested for HIV and there is no question of voluntariness. Whoever gives blood, this blood is compulsorily sent to the laboratory for testing. The blood is given voluntarily, that is something else...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is asking for the testing. They are all tested, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Not only that, before the blood is taken, of course, with consent, there is a form which they fill in and those people who fall in the high risk groups, they are discarded, their blood is not taken. Blood is taken

only from safe patients; and there is a survey, because blood donors come from all backgrounds, all areas...

The Deputy Speaker: I think you have made this point quite clear. The blood donation is voluntary, but the testing is compulsory.

Mrs Labelle: Consent is not being required for the testing for blood donors?

Mr Faugoo: Once the blood is received, we don't know whose blood it is, but the blood is tested.

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - INCINERATOR

(No. B/910) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware that the incinerator situated in the backyard of the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital is a source of noise and air pollution affecting the neighbours thereof and, if so, the remedial measures he proposes to take.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this question.

I am informed that an incinerator Make AT1 Muller, Model HP 500, was installed and commissioned at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital on 02 October 2003 by Edison Services Ltd. The incinerator is operated by two hospital attendants during weekdays and Saturdays from 0800 hrs to 1600 hrs. An average of 100 bags of 10 kg of clinical wastes are being incinerated everyday.

I am also informed that since 2003 several complaints have been received from residents in the vicinity of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital regarding noise and smoke emanating from the incinerator. In the light of the complaints received, several remedial measures have been taken. A noise survey that was carried out by the Environmental Health Engineering Unit of my Ministry on 13 April 2006 and a last one that was carried out on 03 July 2006, that is, yesterday, following the question asked by the Member, has revealed that the noise level recorded on the premises of the nearest inhabitants was within the permissible limit prescribed under the Environment Protection Act. At hospital level, all measures are being taken to ensure that no nuisance is caused to the neighbours, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Issack: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is considered as the permissible limit is not, in fact, so, because there are some people over there who are sick, there is also an old lady there. Is there any possibility for the incinerator to be transferred elsewhere?

Mr Faugoo: This has to be considered in the light of all the circumstances prevailing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to gas emission, may I ask the hon. Minister, what are the norms in practice? The hon. Minister has mentioned the permissible limit about noise.

Mr Faugoo: I do not have the details in my file, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If a substantive question is put to me, I will come back with the information.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Issack.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – GYMNASIUM – AVAILABILITY TO PUBLIC

(No. B/911) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if he will consider placing at the disposal of the public the gymnasium of the State Secondary Schools during the afternoon with a view to enabling them practice sports activities.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the affirmative.

As I said in reply to PQ B/736 at our sitting of 13 June 2006, it is the policy of the Government to open up, as far as possible, the sports facilities available in our schools to the public. In this respect, my Ministry will soon sign up a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Youth and Sports for sports infrastructure in ten secondary schools to be put at the disposal of sports associations as well as the members of the public on a pilot basis. As we go along, more and more secondary schools will be included in the project.

Independently of this joint initiative of my Ministry and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, sports facilities in some State secondary schools are already being put at the disposal of the public on an *ad-hoc* basis either through the Mauritius Sports Council or in an informal manner through the school administration.

As soon as the pilot project takes off and gathers momentum, consideration will be given to the possibility of placing sports facilities in all schools at the disposal of the public, on a demand basis.

Mr Issack: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister of Education see to it that in future a gymnasium is constructed in some State Secondary Schools, which do not have one?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is certainly a matter to be considered, but I'll have to turn to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who can help address that issue.

MONTAGNE BLANCHE FOOTBALL GROUND - UPGRADING

(No. B/912) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware that the Montagne Blanche football ground is in a derelict state and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the football ground at Montagne Blanche which falls under the responsibility of Moka/Flacq District Council is in a deplorable state and needs to be upgraded. The upgrading works consisting of the construction of drains, levelling, turfing and fencing are estimated to cost around Rs5 m.

I am informed that the District Council is not financially in a position to carry out the upgrading works. The NDU cannot also undertake these works at this stage because funds provided in the Capital Budget for this financial year are earmarked to meet the cost of ongoing projects. Nevertheless the NDU has decided to upgrade the Bel Air football ground.

PETIT PAQUET, MONTAGNE BLANCHE - SPORTS COMPLEX

(No. B/913) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment & National

Development Unit whether, in regard to Petit Paquet, Montagne Blanche, he will state if his Ministry is in possession of a plot of land or proposes to acquire a plot of land for the construction of a football ground thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, I am advised that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has recently acquired a plot of land of an extent of 4 Arpents at Petit Paquet, Montagne Blanche under the 800 Arpents scheme for the construction of a sports complex and will vest the land shortly in the relevant Ministry.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding PQ Nos. B/912 and B/913, the fact that Montagne Blanche is a major village with no football ground and even the land earmarked at Petit Paquet is not operational, can the Minister consider it as an urgency to do something for the football ground at Montagne Blanche?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, on completion of the work at Bel Air, we can look into the possibility of upgrading Montagne Blanche.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when work scheduled for Bel Air will start and when is it expected to finish?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the tender documents are being prepared and we have to launch tender. As you know the DWC is no longer alive, so we have now to go to the Central Tender Board and that can take some time, at least, two months and then the work will start.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry. You seem to live on another planet. It is related to Montagne Blanche, not Bel Air.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether the land which has been acquired was under the 800 arpents scheme which was already earmarked?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, it was under the 800 arpents scheme.

REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRE - STAFF

(No. B/914) **Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she is aware that there are acute staffing problems prevailing at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Rehabilitation Youth Centre consists of two separate units for male and female inmates. Previously the centre was under the direct authority of the Prisons Department and was staffed by officers of that department.

Since September 2002, the Prisons Department was placed under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office whereas the Rehabilitation Unit remained under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security. In April 2003, a recruitment exercise was carried out for the male section of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre and there is presently a workforce of 48 officers, which is sufficient enough for the manning of that unit. However, for unknown reasons, no similar exercise was carried out for the female section resulting therefore in a reduced workforce of 19 officers still on secondment from the Prisons Department. This situation has caused lots of problems to the management of that centre.

The House may wish to note that the average number of inmates at the male section does not normally exceed 20 resulting therefore in an inmate officer ratio of 5:3 for the day shift and 20:3 for the night shift. On the other hand, the average number of inmates at the girl section is 30 which gives an inmate/officer ratio of 6:1 for the day shift and 15:1 for the night shift. In view of the fact that less serious and more serious offenders are placed together in the same institution in the female section further complicates the system. The situation is different at the male section, as cases of serious offences are placed in the CYC which is the Correctional Youth Centre, which falls under the administration of the Prisons Department.

As regards the recruitment exercise for the female section, necessary actions are presently being taken for the recruitment of Rehabilitation Youth Officers for the female section. The scheme of service is being processed for their prescription at the level of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Administrative Reforms. On completion of this exercise the new post will

be created through an advance on Civil Contingencies Fund and the posts will be subsequently advertised by the Public Service Commission.

Mrs Juggoo: Sir, can the Minister inform the House how many rehabilitation officers will be recruited for the female section?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am being informed that there are a number of posts which have been created for different grades at the level of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre for girls. There is one post for the Female Assistant Superintendent, two Chief Female Officers, five Principal Female Officers, 12 Senior Female Officers and 26 Female Rehabilitation Officers for the centre for girls.

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY/NGO TRUST FUND/NATReSA
– MISSION TO RODRIGUES**

(No. B/915) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, following a joint mission of officers of her Ministry with members of the NGO Trust Fund and of the NATReSA to Rodrigues in November 2005, she will state if funds have been drawn from the NGO Trust Fund to –

- (a) cover the expenses for the consumption of whisky, and
- (b) purchase mobile phone cards.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), the reply is “yes”.

Drinks and snacks among which whisky was an item amounting to only Rs4,500 were served at a “Get-Together” which was held at “*La Résidence*” in Rodrigues where stakeholders from Rodrigues comprising some 100 guests were invited.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the confusion being created in the press around this mission as a responsible Minister, I am arranging to table a comprehensive and detailed reply on the whole issue.

However, I would like to highlight the following -

Indeed, I led a 15 member delegation to Rodrigues comprising officers of my Ministry, the Social Welfare Division, Senior Citizens Council, representatives of MACOSS, NATReSA and NGO Trust Fund.

It is relevant to note that the principle of sharing the costs involved in the mission was agreed by all the stakeholders participating in the mission well before it proceeded to Rodrigues.

On the return of the mission from Rodrigues, the principle of costs sharing was respected and the expenses were apportioned among the stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, as regards part (b) bills regarding mobile phone cards were purchased by my Ministry and not at the cost of the NGO Trust Fund. This was meant, of course, to facilitate communication between members of the delegation and various stakeholders in Rodrigues.

Mr Lauthan: Sir, the Ministry has, in fact, asked the NGO Trust Fund to foot the bill for whisky.

Mrs Bappoo: As I said, Sir, in principle it was agreed that all stakeholders to the mission will be having a cost sharing to the expenses and NGO Trust Fund was one. They agreed in their own committee in January that they are going to foot the bill which partly represent the cost of the get-together.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Sir, may I ask the Minister whether she considers it to be proper for an institution like the NATReSA to go to Rodrigues and to serve alcohol when the role of the institution is meant to work against abuse of alcohol and other illicit substances?

Mrs Bappoo: Sir, I do not want to be demagogic on the whole issue. NATReSA is being invited in so many get-togethers. NATReSA participates in so many get-togethers where alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are served. And this does not prevent NATReSA from sticking to its principle of combating alcohol.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the stakeholders agreeing to share the cost of the mission is one thing, but after the mission, asking the NGO Trust Fund or the NATReSA to foot the bill for whisky is a contradiction. In a communiqué from the Ministry, mention is made of a sum of Rs4,500 for whisky and in the breakdown sent to MACOSS mention is made for the sum of Rs10,449 which is a big sum.

Mrs Bappoo: The hon. Member should read the press cutting correctly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The information being given says 'etcetera'. 'Etcetera' means all drinks either alcoholic or not for the get-together. What was produced in that press cutting was not only whisky, never was it. I can table the details on the expenses of whisky. It was a meagre sum of Rs4,500 and this was for the whisky being ordered, among others.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please ! I said Order.

Mr Lauthan : The other items on the breakdown – I can lay same on the Table – speak of lunch, dinner and soft drinks amounting to Rs27,000. It includes soft drinks apart from whisky.

Mrs Bappoo: Are we now going to make some mathematics, Mr Speaker, Sir? The delegation comprised of fifteen members. All the fifteen members everyday sat together for the meals. We were not there to eat only bread, butter and cheese. Everyone sat together. There were officers from NATReSA, NGO Trust Fund, Ministries, Senior Citizens Council.

SUGAR – RETAIL PRICE

(No. B/916) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the selling price of sugar on the local market, he will state if he has received any representations from sugar producers to increase the retail price thereof and, if so, will he state the stand of Government in relation thereto.

The Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate (MSS), the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (MCA), the Mauritius Cooperative Agricultural Federation Ltd., the Cane Growers Association and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA), in a joint letter, wrote to me on 10 March 2006, requesting to review the price of sugar on the local market. According to these stakeholders, due to the

application of price control on sugar by Government, the stakeholders of the sugar industry are made to pay heavy subsidies on the sale of sugar in the domestic market.

Price fixing by my Ministry actually follows policy decision on the issue by the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries. I understand that the request of the sugar producers is being viewed in a broad perspective, especially in view of the 36% price cut announced by the European Union (EU).

I am also informed by my colleague, the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries, that Mauritius has devised a Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006/2015 which has been submitted to the EU.

My colleague is also discussing the issue of cess and proposed cess reduction with the MSPA. In fact, the package I have just mentioned and on which the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries is working, that is, the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006/2015 will, *inter alia*, look into the price of sugar on the local market.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I would like to know simply whether the price of sugar will increase, yes or no? That is all.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have answered the question, the hon. Member has to listen.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not heard the answer. Can the hon. Minister repeat whether the price of sugar will increase, yes or no ?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have answered the question. I'll read it again. As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me first explain. Price fixing depends on policy decision by the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries. The hon. Member has to understand the mechanism first.

(Interruptions)

My colleague has devised a Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan and subsequent to that, we will take whatever decision that we have to take.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister what is the percentage increase which has been requested by the sugar producers?

Dr. Jeetah: I have the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a letter written to me actually. I cannot give it as a percentage, but I have been informed that the price of sugar – the landed cost - is about Rs16,000 per tonne....

(Interruptions)

They ask questions and they don't want to listen.

The Deputy Speaker: The specific question was whether....

Dr. Jeetah :I can give the hon. Member the magnitude and he can make his own calculations.....

(Interruptions)

this equates to an ex-warehouse cost of no less than Rs8. per half kilo.

SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECT – LOCALITIES

(No. B/917) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing project as announced in the Budget Speech 2006-2007, he will state the localities where land will be developed for the project

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Budget Speech 2006-2007, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has announced the creation of an Empowerment Programme with a project value of Rs5 billion. For the financial year 2006-2007, a sum of Rs750 m has been earmarked for this programme. The Empowerment Programme will include *inter alia* acquisition of land for the social housing project.

Out of the 2000 to 3000 arpents of land that would be acquired, a portion of land and funds for housing shall be determined by the Implementation Team to be set up by Government.

My Ministry has already started working on the mechanism to be set up for the acquisition of land. These residential lands shall eventually be parcelled out into serviced lots of 50 to 60 toises, which would be sold out to eligible households at affordable prices.

Negotiations for the acquisition of the lands will be based on the ongoing needs assessment statistics established by the NHDC Ltd. As at now, the data available indicates that the highest demand for social housing is in the periphery of Port Louis, the centre of the island and, in general, is confined along the Port Louis to Mahebourg corridor.

Mr Guinness : Can I know from the Minister, by when his committee will finish the work in identifying the land and by when can we come back with another question to know where the land will be situated ?

Mr Dulull : The measure has been announced. We have already set up the committee. They are working as per an established programme. As and when the programme will be implemented, we will inform the public accordingly.

Mr Lesjongard : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: What is the problem of hon. Minister Jeetah? He should let the hon. Member put his question.

Mr Lesjongard : Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the land that has already been leased to the NHDC is going to be used ?

Mr Dulull : The land that has been leased to the NHDC will be used on and above for social housing projects, site and services.

Mr Ganoo : Can the hon. Minister confirm....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please?

Mr Ganoo : Can the hon. Minister confirm whether, besides the Empowerment Fund, no other funds have been budgeted for social housing ?

Mr Dulull : It is not a question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, besides the Empowerment Fund. The Empowerment Fund will be to the tune of Rs750 m

Mr Ganoo : The hon. Minister must know that, in the Capital Budget, funds have been provided for the Ministry of Housing. I am asking him, therefore, whether these funds, which have been provided in the Capital Budget for the Ministry of Housing, are also being devoted to social housing or are funds only in the Budget allotted to the Empowerment Programme?

Mr Dulull : Both will, that part of the Capital Budget and the one of the Empowerment Fund.

Mr Mohamed : I have heard the hon. Minister talk about the corridor Port Louis-Mahebourg where this land is situated. Will there be land situated within the Constituency of Rivière des Anguilles/Souillac ?

Mr Dulull : Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have planned to have social housing constructed at Rivière des Anguilles also.

Mr Mohamed: Is the Minister aware that there is land adjacent to Rivière des Anguilles normally called '*chemin rail*', which belongs to the State? Would the hon. Minister undertake to have his officers look into this specific plot of land that does not necessarily have to be acquired, but is adjacent to Rivière des Anguilles that can be used for social housing, and, if yes, when can he undertake to give us the results?

Mr Dulull: If land is available for social housing, my Ministry will look into it and will make sure that each region where the demand is high gets a fair share of social housing.

CAMPEMENT SITES LEASES – NON-RENEWAL

(No. B/918) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to *campement* sites leases, he will state those which have been earmarked for the non-renewal thereof for the purpose of enlarging or creating public beaches or for development purposes.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/908)

HOUSING UNITS PROJECTS – JULY 2005 – JULY 2006

(No. B/919) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state the number of new housing units projects that have been implemented since July 2005 to date and the number of housing units for which construction have already started.

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/919 and B/923 together.

Since I assumed office as Minister of Housing and Lands in July 2005, I made it one of my priorities to complete all ongoing projects for social housing units notwithstanding problems like illegal occupation of NHDC houses and cavities at New Grove.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the NHDC, is presently assessing the tenders for the construction of some 533 low cost housing units on a Design and Build basis spread on 6 sites – Chebel, Bambous, Henrietta, Rivière des Anguilles, Ville Noire and Rose Belle. The award of these tenders is expected soon and the allocation of these units will be effected as soon as the construction and infrastructure works have been completed.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has referred to projects that were started under the previous Government. The question is direct: new social housing projects since July 2005. Has any new project started?

Mr Dulull: We have launched tenders for a new social housing project which comprises 550 housing units.

The Deputy Speaker: Members know what my answer will be regarding questions replied by Ministers.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister give a breakdown on the number of houses on the various sites he has already mentioned?

Mr Dulull: The answer is as follows - Chebel: 54 units, Ville Noire: 70 units, Rivière des Anguilles: 91 units, Henrietta: 156 units, Bambous: 78 units, and Rose Belle: 84 units.

Mr Lesjongard: Is the number that the Minister has given to the House based on a survey or information regarding the requirements in those regions?

Mr Dulull: The number was reached after a study made by the NHDC and we are going to implement the project based on this data.

Mr Mohamed: May I ask the hon. Minister to table the findings of the survey that has been carried out?

Mr Dulull: We need to have the list from the NHDC. There is a long list of demand for social housing. I will table it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister mention 54 houses at Chebel. After the first batch of 106 houses were built, it was decided at that time to build another batch 54 houses. Will he confirm that these 54 houses are those which were identified in 2004 after a survey?

Mr Dulull: The 54 housing units are based on the data from the NHDC.

Mr Lesjongard: I am asking this question because the NHDC has land already available at these places: Balisson, Calebasses, Chebel, D'Épinay, Glen Park, Henrietta, Montagne Longue, Plaine Magnien, Rivière des Anguilles, Ville Noire, Bambous. How did the Ministry come to pick up only those five places mentioned by the Minister?

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, housing construction requires means and time. You cannot overnight build the whole lot. We are aware of these sites. As and when required we will launch tender to build houses on those sites also.

FAMILY & UNEMPLOYMENT HARDSHIP ALLOWANCES - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/920) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state the number of persons who benefit from family allowances and unemployment hardship allowances, indicating the amount disbursed for the last financial year in each case and the criteria laid down to be eligible for the grant of such allowances.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the number of persons benefiting from family allowance for the financial year 2005/2006 is nil and the criteria for eligibility of same are –

- (i) every claimant has to put up a claim on an approved form at the regional Social Security Office;
- (ii) the applicant should have a family of at least three children under the age of 15 years;
- (iii) the yearly income of the household should not exceed Rs10,000;
- (iv) he should live in Mauritius, and
- (v) no child's allowance or basic orphan's pension is being paid under the National Pensions Act in respect of the child for whom an allowance is claimed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the number of persons benefiting from Unemployment Hardship Relief is 140 and the amount disbursed for the financial year 2005/2006 is Rs1,194,839.00. The criteria for eligibility of the Unemployment Hardship Relief are –

- (i) every claimant has to put up a claim on an approved form at the regional Social Security Office;
- (ii) the beneficiary should be under the age of 60 years;
- (iii) he should be unemployed and actively looking for work;
- (iv) the claimant has a wife or a child or is a disabled person;

- (v) the beneficiary should satisfy the prescribed conditions relating to residence – a Mauritian citizen must have resided in Mauritius for a continuous period of not less than 12 months immediately before the date on which he claims hardship relief and a non-citizen must have resided in Mauritius for a continuous period of not less than 5 years immediately before the date on which he claims hardship relief.
- (vi) the beneficiary's resources are insufficient to meet his requirements. Therefore, an assessment is carried out by the officers of the Ministry to look into the needs and income of the beneficiary;
- (vii) the beneficiary has to report once every month, that is, the 2nd Thursday, for sign-on at the regional Social Security Office to declare that he is still unemployed or any change in his situation, and
- (viii) every claimant shall register for employment at the Employment Registration Bureau.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she has the figure for financial year 2005-06 of requests for unemployment hardship allowance which were turned down?

Mrs Bappoo: I do not have the figures, but I can certainly look for it. 140 did have the relief.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the family allowances, would the hon. Minister consider the possibility of revising the criteria so as to make it possible for poor families to be able to benefit from the allowance? As the criteria stand now, we know that it is very hard to have someone qualified to benefit from it. Will the hon. Minister consider the possibility of revising the scheme?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the criteria are very well established and well defined, I do not find any reason why they should be reviewed.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she knows since when the figure of Rs10,000 per year has been there?

Mrs Bappoo: I do not have it at hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I need to check it.

MUNICIPAL AND VILLAGE COUNCILLORS – ALLOWANCE

(No. B/921) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if Government is envisaging the payment of an allowance to Municipal and Village Councillors.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to questions B/921 and B/930 together, as they relate to the same issue.

As the House may be aware, in the political manifesto of this Government, a pledge was made for the introduction of a system of allowance to elected Councillors in urban and rural areas. Immediately after assuming office, I had requested that action be initiated in this respect and my Ministry approached the Pay Research Bureau. The latter has already submitted its report. Given the tight economic conditions, it has been decided to stay action on this proposal. However, we remain committed to our promise.

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME – SMALL PLANTERS

(No. B/922) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the priority areas funded by the Empowerment Programme, he will state if the small planters affected by the sugar reform will benefit therefrom and, if yes, the projects which would qualify for same.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has clearly stated that the single over-riding purpose of this year's budget is to create jobs, promote employment and return to growth by securing the transition from a preference dependent to a globally competitive economy.

As stated in the Budget Speech, the programme will facilitate the transition from sugar and promote such employment and entrepreneurship from the smallest trader or artisan or mechanic or planter or fishermen to the small start-ups in trade or manufacturing or agro industry or services.

Out of the seven critical activities to be undertaken by the Empowerment Programme, there are five from which the small planters may benefit on the same conditions as other citizens of Mauritius, namely -

- (1) land for small entrepreneurs
- (2) a welfare programme emphasizing training and reskilling
- (3) special programmes for unemployed women
- (4) tourist villages
- (5) support for development of new entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Government is taking up the challenge to ensure that these persons do not fall into the poverty trap. The Empowerment Programme will have a special focus on women. We have seen how difficult it has been for women who lose their jobs to get new ones, whether in the textile industry or the sugar industry.

The agribusiness forum which we organised in April 2006 has identified a number of promising avenues for small businesses, and we are confident that the reskilling and training programmes, as well as access to funds under the Empowerment Programme will encourage former sugar employees or planters to move into agricultural production or agribusiness, and set up other SMEs for which they may have an inclination.

Although the majority of workers exiting from the employment in the sugar industry may not have academic qualifications, they do have skills acquired on the job, which can allow them to become self-employed or set up micro-enterprises, from artisan, mechanic, planter to small start-ups in manufacturing or agro industry and services.

As far as small planter sector is concerned, the *pro-poor* dimension has been highlighted in the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006-2015. In fact, the main thrust of the Plan for the small planters concentrates on field operations with the objective of reducing costs for the planters and improving cost competitiveness of the sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you are aware under the employment programme, a Task Force with the joint participation of the private and public sector would be set up. Planters may also be interested in developing several projects like especially outsourcing in the tourism sector and the EPZ.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can give the assurance that my Ministry will give its total support to the implementation team that will be appointed to concretise the objectives of the Empowerment Programme.

HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/923) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the construction of 534 low cost housing units, he will state where same will be constructed.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/919)

LE MORNE TRUST FUND - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/924) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to Le Morne Trust Fund, he will state the activities scheduled for the financial year 2006-2007

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund proposes to carry out amongst others the following activities during the financial year 2006-2007 –

- (a) creation of a web site and finalisation of a logo;
- (b) putting up of a stele at Le Morne in the context of The UNESCO Slave Route Project;
- (c) design and manufacture of a maquette of Le Morne;
- (d) preparation and finalisation of the Management Plan of Le Morne;
- (e) conservation works aimed at protecting and preserving the natural fauna of the mountain;
- (f) talks, exhibitions and seminars;
- (g) research project to set up a database on “Marronage” in Mauritius;
- (h) review of contents of slavery and “Marronage” in secondary school textbooks, and
- (i) publication of pamphlets to be distributed to educational institutions

Moreover, the Trust Fund will also organise activities in the context of the marking of the abolition of slavery.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the file of the Le Morne Project to be included in the UNESCO Heritage sites, has been submitted to UNESCO and, if not, whether it will be submitted in 2006/2007?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Master Plan has been submitted to UNESCO on 13 January. There are some classifications and we have to prepare the Management Plan by 30 September 2006.

IRS PROJECTS – INVESTMENT CERTIFICATES

(No. B/925) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the IRS Projects, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof which
 - (i) have been approved, and
 - (ii) are being implemented and the investment earmarked, and
- (b) if there is a social component in each project, indicating the value thereof in each case.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Board of Investment has up to now issued four Investment Certificates under the Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS). These are in respect of the following projects -

- (i) Tamarina Golf Estate project at Médine (on 2 March 2005);
- (ii) Anahita IRS project at Beau Champ (on 17 October 2005);
- (iii) La Reserve Leisure Resorts project at Flic en Flac (on 07 December 2005), and
- (iv) Pristine Villas Ltd project at Bel Ombre (on 26 June 2006).

Total investment earmarked amounts to Rs32 billion, as follows -

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| (i) Tamarina Golf Estate Co. Ltd | Rs2.0 billion |
| (ii) Anahita IRS project | Rs12.3 billion |

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| (iii) La Reserve Leisure Resorts | Rs16.5 billion |
| (iv) Pristine Villas Ltd | Rs1.2 billion |

I am informed that implementation of the first two, namely Tamarina Golf Estate Co. Ltd and Anahita IRS project, has reached a very advanced stage and direct marketing to would-be clients has started. In fact, latest information at the BOI shows that a total number of 150 residences have already been pre-sold, 80 by Tamarina project and 70 by Anahita. The other two are still at project finalisation stage.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the Investment Certificates issued in respect of the last three projects do contain a social obligation provision. Thus, promoters will be required to make a social contribution under the planning obligation mechanism provided for by the Planning and Development Act 2004. It is indicative of our commitment to ensure that benefits arising from IRS projects trickle down to the local community, that those three IRS projects were approved under this Government. Indeed, the one project that does not contain such a social obligation is the one that was approved before July 2005.

As I indicated in my Budget Speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, new IRS Regulations are being made to enhance the attractiveness of the scheme, make it more investor-friendly, plug certain loopholes and also define the social obligations of promoters. The basis and formula for determining the value of the social obligation is almost ready but cannot be prescribed in the IRS Regulations because the enabling section of the Planning and Development Act 2004, that is section 35, has yet to be proclaimed. We expect to be able to make the new IRS Regulations soon after the enactment of the Finance Bill.

I must however add that the necessity of integrating the local community into the project so that they become *partie prenante* of the proposed development has been well understood by the promoters themselves. In fact, various initiatives in this direction have already been taken by the promoters themselves even if the new Regulations have not been made yet.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister announced in his budget certain proposals concerning the IRS concept. Can he tell us how these proposals which he announced in his budget will change the IRS concept, if at all?

Mr Sithanen: There is the social component that we have announced, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have also, in fact, included in the budget a change where before it was restrictive in what could be sold - I think if my understanding is correct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was restricted to villas only - whereas now, we have broadened the scope to include apartments also. We are also looking at the possibilities of ensuring that those who don't have huge acres of land, could also participate in the IRS Scheme.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether once the related sections of the Planning and Development Act are proclaimed the social components of future IRS projects will be made public and whether the public will be allowed to consult those social components?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am in favour of simplicity. But, I must honestly confess that in this particular case, it is not easy to have a single and simple criteria for social obligation. The reason for this - I am sure, hon. Lesjongard, who was Minister before would appreciate - is because there are cases where what they require from Government is significant and others not. It can be in terms of State land, in terms of land swap, it can be in terms of change in zoning, etc.

My personal feeling, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - and we have discussed with those who know - is that it will have to be on a case by case basis. Let me mention for the information of the House that with regard to Anahita, which is the first project that was approved by this Government, notwithstanding the fact that we have not embedded in the law the regulations for social obligations, some initiatives have been made by Anahita after discussions with the Board of Investment. I am sure the House is aware that there is an Anahita Fisherman Solidarity Fund. Each of the 220 registered fishermen concerned would be entitled to a particular amount of money. Of course, everybody would like to get more. But, at least, we are starting somewhere.

Second, the promoters have agreed to set up a full-fledged Multi Disciplinary Training Centre in the region to meet the manpower requirements of the project in terms of hotel and residence, and also the leisure hospitality industry.

Third, the project makes provision for the promotion of entrepreneurship among the local community and encourages them to

participate with subcontractors in the provision of various services, such as transport, landscaping, gardening and cleaning. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is where the Empowerment Programme deals with what is happening there; because, one of the problems that we face with outsourcing is the quality of the service and the quality of the product. One of the objectives of the Empowerment Programme is to train people so that they can improve the quality of the services and the delivery of the products so that they can participate in these outsourcing activities.

Fourth, the promoters have reaffirmed the will to give priority to the neighbourhood in terms of hiring people. They have also promised to upgrade public infrastructure in nearby villages, especially pertaining to road safety, street lighting and cleanliness.

The point that I am trying to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that it will depend, on the *quiproquo*, what they are requesting from Government and what Government can impose as social conditions for these projects to go ahead.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I put this question because the Planning and Development Legislation makes provision for the local community to be consulted at different stages of a project. It is important that, in some way, the local community be involved in the process. But then, Government can declare a project either State-significant or non-State significant?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I say it again. It will have to go on a case-by-case basis on what they request; because, at times, they ask for rezoning, *Pas Géométriques*, land swap, construction or deviation of roads, etc. It will have to depend on basically the specifics of each and every case.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he has the date on which the Anahita Project was filed with the Board of Investment?

Mr Sithanen: I don't have the exact date, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But, let me state one thing - I was just telling that to my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism. The fact that a project has been announced previously, and has not been done, and we do it, this does not mean that we are copying. There is a big difference, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being a promise and delivery. There is also permanence...

(Interruptions)

Many promises have been made and, yet, it is this Government that is delivering. At times, I hear people say that it is bad and, at other times, they say that we are copying 'X', 'Y' or 'Z'.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to clarify one point, whether the new National Residential Property Tax will apply to the residential components of IRS projects, and whether the *Campement* Sites changes that have been announced, will apply where *Pas Géométriques* are concerned?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is being finalised, but my understanding is that it will apply to the IRS project.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who was speaking with so much conviction and passion about the IRS project. Doesn't he think, seriously, that when other Members of Government still talk about apartheid when referring to IRS, this can jeopardise the projects and dissuade other promoters from investing?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the context is important. We have reviewed, and we are reviewing, the scope and the extent of the IRS project so that it is more socially acceptable. And, I have given reasons why this has to be done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is in the interest of everybody that the local community is engaged in developments that will take place in its region.

Mr Bérenger: I think the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance replied to half of my double barrel question. I think he confirmed that the new Property Tax would apply. But I also ask whether the *Campements* Sites changes would apply where *Pas Géométriques* are concerned.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't give a definitive answer to that, but my understanding is that it would not. In the case of the National Residential Property Tax, it will apply to the IRS project; but insofar as the other point, I think it is 'no', but I'll have to confirm it. And, as I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these details will be contained in the Finance Bill.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance how many projects are there in the pipelines, and whether he knows where those projects are located?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Member would surely know, there are different stages of *maturité de projet*. I have mentioned the four projects where an Investment Certificate has been given. I am given to understand that there are three projects that are at the stage of Letter of Intent and there are other projects that are still at a lower stage - I think they call it preliminary stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

One of the three projects is Les Salines IRS, Rs6.5 m.; Le Morne Brabant IRS, Rs5 m. and Belle Rivière Promotion Ltée, Rs2.1 m. The total is Rs13.6 m. These three projects are being issued with a Letter of Intent to enable the promoters to finalise the projects as well as the partnership and financing arrangements.

RICE AND FLOUR - SUBSIDY

(No. B/926) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, following Government decision to abolish subsidies on rice and flour, he will state if the prices of these commodities have been fixed.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

COOKING GAS (LPG) – SUPPLY

(No. B/927) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to cooking gas (LPG), he is aware that there is a shortage in the supply thereof in many regions of the island and, if so, will he state the measures he intends to take to guarantee a regular supply.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that an enquiry has been carried out around the island by the Consumer Protection Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection and it was found that cooking gas is available in all areas in sufficient quantities.

Further, the managers of Shell (Mtius) Ltd. and Total (Mtius) Ltd., distributors of Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) have stated that they have sufficient stock and normal delivery is being carried on a daily basis. They do not foresee any shortage. However, due to the winter season, an increase

in demand has been noted and this might explain any temporary depletion of stock at certain retail points. The distributors confirmed that they are putting in extra efforts to supply more cylinders to cater for the seasonal increase in demand.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the shortage could have been an artificial one in expectation of the subsequent price rise?

Dr. Jeetah: That could well have been, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from my records, Shell (Mtius) Ltd. has confirmed that sales in winter are higher than in summer. Its sales for April 2006 were 1,621,116 Kg and for May 2006, it was 1,762,164 kg.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that shortage of gas in Rodrigues is recurrent, can we know what is being done to solve this problem?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am well aware of the situation currently prevailing in Rodrigues. In fact, the other day we had a meeting with some representatives of Rodrigues.

I understand that from January to June 2006, around 34,000 cylinders have been sent to Rodrigues for an approximate number of households of 6,000. This gives a monthly average of about 5,600 cylinders. The number of cylinders in circulation should have been enough for Rodrigues, but due to a missed shipment, people have increased ownership of cylinders as a precautionary measure.

We had a meeting with the two suppliers, *i.e.*, Shell (Mtius) Ltd. and Total (Mtius) Ltd. who have agreed to increase the number of cylinders being sent to Rodrigues.

Additional cylinders sent by Shell (Mtius) Ltd. is 1,100 and this has already been taken care of. The next consignment is scheduled for end of July 2006. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to add that I have asked the two companies as well as the Shipping Co. to let us know about the demand and supply and we are following up the situation closely.

ARIS/MAURITIUS - SCHEDULED FLIGHTS - CANCELLATION

(No. B/928) Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of

Tourism, Leisure & External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if regular scheduled flights between Paris and Mauritius have been cancelled as a reason of the fall in the number of tourists arrival following the spread of the chikungunya disease.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question deals with the day-to-day operations of Air Mauritius Ltd. However, the information requested is also available at my Ministry and in line with Government policy I am, therefore, able to reply.

Scheduled flights between France and Mauritius are carried out by the designated carriers of both countries within the framework of the Bilateral Air Service Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in September 2005. In line with the capacity agreed upon for the last IATA winter season, Air Mauritius and Air France had agreed to join to operate 17 weekly frequencies in code share on the long haul route.

For the IATA summer season starting in April 2006, the airlines have agreed to operate 12 weekly flights. However, I am informed that as from March 2006, a decline was observed in flight bookings between Paris and Mauritius which was attributed mainly to the chikungunya phenomena. In these circumstances, both airlines agreed on specific flight cancellations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, out of the 212 flights initially scheduled for the period March to June 2006, Air Mauritius and Air France cancelled a total of ten (10), A340-300 and six (6) B747-400 roundtrips representing 7.5% of the total number of flights originally scheduled.

However, as a result of efforts deployed by Government and all stakeholders, the situation is gradually returning to normal and no cancellations are planned for the forthcoming month.

The Deputy Speaker: If hon. Members will just bear with me for one second, I have been given to understand that questions B/932 and B/933 have been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

DRUG ABUSE - SURVEY

(No. B/929) Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Social Security, National

Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state if a survey has recently been carried out on drugs abuse in the country and, if so, will he table a copy of the report thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the latest surveys on drugs abuse in the country relate to -

- (1) The Rapid Situation Assessment & Responses on Drug Use in Mauritius and Rodrigues, and
- (2) A Research on Factors Influencing Substance Abuse Among Youth (8 - 18 years) in Housing Estates of Mauritius.

Both these surveys were carried out in 2004.

The Rapid Situation Assessment was carried out by NATReSA with financial and technical assistance from the UNODC. It has served as the basis for the elaboration of the National Drug Control Master Plan 2004-2009. Whereas the Research on Factors Influencing Substance Abuse among Youth in Housing Estates was commissioned by the NATReSA. It was funded by the Mauritius Research Council and carried out by the Mauritius Institute of Health.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, arrangement is being made so that copies of both these reports be placed in the Library.

MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS - REMUNERATION

(No. B/930) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if Government intends to remunerate Municipal and District Councillors in the near future and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/921)

FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME - CONSULTANT - REPORT

(No. B/931) 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 in regard to the Free Transport Scheme, he will state if the report of the consultant is now available and, if so, will he table a copy thereof.

The Minister of Environment and National Development Unit
(Mr A. Bachoo): Sir, the Consultant has started the assignment on 26 June 2006 and the final report is expected in August.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether a tender exercise was carried out to recruit this consultant?

Mr Bachoo: This question was already answered by the substantive Minister, if I am not mistaken, a few weeks ago.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY - BANK ACCOUNTS - ACCESS

(No. B/932) Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will state if it is proposed to amend the Banking Act with a view to allowing the Mauritius Revenue Authority to have access to bank accounts of Mauritian citizens for taxation purposes.

(Withdrawn)

**FLYWELL TRAVEL AGENCY - HAJJ OPERATOR (2006) -
BUILDING CONTRACTS, TRANSPORT, ETC.**

(No. B/933) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the Flywell Travel Agency, a Hajj operator for the Hajj 2006, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre and table a copy of -

- (a) the letter issued by the Centre authorising a representative of the Agency to proceed to Saudi Arabia to sign building contracts;
- (b) the building contracts in Mecca and Madina;
- (c) the transport contract signed with the General Car Syndicate of Mecca, and
- (d) the official letter of the Ministry of Hajj of Saudi Arabia, authorising the Agency to act as Hajj operator.

(Withdrawn)

**BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION/CARERS ALLOWANCE - MODES
OF PAYMENT**

(No. B/934) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether in regard to the Basic Invalidity Pension and to the Carers Allowance in respect of persons who are permanently invalid, she will state the modalities of payment thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are two modes of payment, namely -

- (a) payment into the beneficiary's bank account, and
- (b) payment by pay clerk

Provision has been made for any beneficiary who is permanently invalid and bedridden and unable to call at pay sites, to be represented by a proxy appointed by the beneficiary. The latter has to present the pension card and the National Identity Card of the beneficiary and his own ID card to the pay clerk for payment.

D'ARTAGNAN LOUIS - CORPSE - REPATRIATION TO RODRIGUES

(No. B/935) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if recently the dead body of a Mauritian was sent to Rodrigues instead of that of one D'Artagnan Louis who was admitted in the Intensive Care Unit of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and who passed away on 18 June 2006.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that late D'Artagnan Louis was referred from Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Rodrigues on 03 June, 2006 and he was admitted at J. Nehru Hospital on the same day. He was subsequently transferred to Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital on 07 June at the request of his relatives who reside in Port Louis. He passed away on 18 June 2006 and the corpse was kept at the mortuary of that hospital until its transfer to Rodrigues.

I am informed that the Ministry of Rodrigues had arranged for the repatriation of the corpse to Rodrigues and for that purpose the services of a Mortuary Undertaker were enlisted.

Following a mistake of identity, the corpse of a female person residing in Mauritius instead of that of late Mr D'Artagnan Louis, was handed over to the Mortuary Undertaker.

The corpse of the person residing in Mauritius was sent to Rodrigues on 20 June 2006 after which it was repatriated to Mauritius on the same day. Subsequently, the corpse of D'Artagnan Louis was sent to Rodrigues by the first available flight scheduled on 21 June 2006.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is quite unfortunate that such a mishap has occurred causing much hardship to the relatives and parents of both deceased.

My Ministry will not, in any circumstance, condone such shortcomings. In this respect, disciplinary action is being taken against the officers concerned.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fact that there has been a mishap in the case, does the Minister intend to write a note of apology to the parents of Mr D'Artagnan Louis?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope this has been done. If it hasn't been done, it will be done this week.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.