

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been informed that PQs B/79 and B/87 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by Dr. the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping and hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications respectively. As usual, time permitting, these PQs will be answered at the end of Question Time, that is, after PQ No. B/170.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL/DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS
- MEETING - 02 FEBRUARY 2006**

(No. B/75) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain from the relevant authorities if the Director of Public Prosecutions was convened to a meeting by the hon. the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights in the latter's office.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Attorney General's Office that the Attorney-General convened a meeting on Thursday 02 February 2006 to discuss administrative reforms at the State Law Office which includes the implementation of the Mackay Report.

One aspect of the Mackay Report focuses on the computerisation of the Criminal Registry and the Morality Certificate Unit, which are matters that concern the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. That is why the Director of Public Prosecutions was present at the meeting.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the Prime Minister say whether that does not confirm the perception that the Judiciary is no longer independent and that there is *justice à multiples vitesses*?

The Prime Minister: As I said, it is a matter that concerns the Director of Public Prosecutions and he was invited to be at the meeting.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: If we read the Constitution well, it says at section 72(6) -

"In the exercise of the powers conferred upon him by this section, the Director of Public Prosecution shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority".

Would the Prime Minister comment on this?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member has read the Constitution well, but he was neither given any directions nor was he under any control. He was invited to the meeting because it concerns the DPP.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister is right in saying that it is the DPP who decided to be present. But can I ask the Prime Minister whether he does not agree with me that this is *sans précédent* and should be *sans répétition*? It is in the interest of one and all that the Attorney-General should not again convene the DPP, because in that case, the DPP must not only be independent, but be seen to be independent.

The Prime Minister: We will look into that matter. It is similar to cases where judges can assume different functions, but it does not mean that they are not independent. This was a matter specifically concerned the DPP. That is why he was invited.

Mr Bérenger: Would the Prime Minister agree with me that it will be worth discussing with the Attorney-General? Because there has been another *impair* concerning of a letter emanating from the Attorney-General's Office which wrongly informed the lawyer that the President of the Republic had directed so and so. The press read that as meaning that it was a decision of the President whereas the President was implementing a decision of the Commission of Mercy. A second polemic, if I may say so! Can I appeal to the Prime Minister ...

Mr Speaker: That does not arise from the question. The hon. Member is talking about the President of the Republic.

Mr Bérenger: I am talking about the Attorney-General.

The Prime Minister: I will look into the matter.

DNA TESTS - EQUIPMENT - COST

(No. B/76) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home

Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police information as to whether equipment for DNA tests have been purchased and, if so -

- (a) when;
- (b) the cost thereof, and
- (c) the number of tests effected locally to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Management of the Forensic Science Laboratory that an Automated 377 DNA sequencer was purchased in December 1997 at the cost of Rs5,907,272.36.

To date, 1,869 DNA tests have been performed on samples.

I should add that the supplier has informed that it will stop the production of ABI Prism 377 DNA sequencer as from June 2006. Also all new and renewed service contracts will not extend beyond 30 June 2005.

I am told that the FSL has made arrangements for the acquisition of a new and more sophisticated DNA equipment.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Prime Minister give the number of cases for which results of such tests have been produced in Court?

The Prime Minister: There is an impediment for these results to be produced in Court and this is something that the State Law Office is looking at. Perhaps we will need to amend the legislation.

PRISONS - DETAINEES - RELEASE - IMPERSONATION

(No. B/77) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) 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 Prisons information as to the circumstances in which prisoner J. C. M was released instead of prisoner J. D. M.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 14 March 2006, a remand detainee by the name of J. C. M. was brought to the Reception Office for discharge

formalities, instead of J. D. M. The two Prison Officers who were in charge of the release failed to notice the impersonation.

J. C. M. was identified as the wrong person only after he was taken out of prison. He then managed to escape.

The Prisons Officer and the Assistant Superintendent of Prisons who conducted the discharge exercise have been interdicted for gross negligence of duty on the basis of the preliminary findings of inquiry instituted by the Commissioner of Prisons.

A second inquiry is being conducted by the Police. The final reports are being awaited.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that detainee J. C. M. who was wrongly released has been captured on 25 March 2006 and brought back to prison.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister on what ground the wrong prisoner has been arrested anew?

The Prime Minister: It was because he had escaped. He was the wrong one who was allowed to be released by this negligence and that is why he was arrested anew.

MBC - MS N. S. B. - EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

(No. B/78) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) 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 MBC information as to whether one Ms N. S. B. is employed thereat on a contractual basis and, if so -

- (a) since when and the duration of the contract, indicating its terms and conditions with a breakdown of the salary and other allowances payable;
- (b) whether she has been paid any overtime and, if so, the amount thereof since she took up employment, and
- (c) whether it is proposed to renew her contract and, if so, why.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the person referred to in the question has been employed as Radio and TV Production Presentation Coordinator at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation since 01 March 2004 on a two year contract.

The terms and conditions of employment are being circulated.
(Appendix I)

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister, can I ask him whether when the contract was renewed her fringe benefits were increased compared to the previous contract and, if so, can he give details of the benefits and facilities extended to her?

The Prime Minister: I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, according to records, no overtime payment has been effected to the said employee. Her contract has been renewed on a month to month basis as it is felt that her services are still being required by the Corporation. I am not aware that her package has been changed as it was originally.

Mr Dayal: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House about the number of hours of work performed by Mrs N.S.B at the radio per day and how many days per week?

The Prime Minister: It is difficult for me to say how many hours she actually performs, and how many days. But perhaps, if the hon. Member has the information, he can let me know.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am given to understand that she performs two hours in the morning during the peak time and one hour in the afternoon from four to five during the peak time - three hours per day and five days per week. Will the Prime Minister agree with me that this sort of situation creates a disincentive and frustration to the employees of the MBC? Because a particular employee is being treated with princely salaries and benefits.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will have to look into the matter and come back to the hon. Member, because I am not aware of all this.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I should also like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that a report was sent to the

Management wherein it was recommended that she be employed simply as a presenter.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I am not aware of that report. As I said, she was given a contract on 01 March 2004 and my understanding is that she was employed as a Radio and TV Production Presentation Co-ordinator. The hon. Member is saying that her contract was not as it was. I can't say, I am aware of this. I will have to look into it.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Prime Minister inform the House whether she was employed to perform both on the radio and television? If so, can he inform the House why she was paid an extra allowance when she performed for television?

The Prime Minister: According to the contract she was employed as Radio and Television Production Presentation Co-ordinator. I don't see that she was paid extra, but maybe if the hon. Member has the information, he can let me know because on the contract it does not say that she is going to be paid extra for radio or television.

Mr Dayal: According to the information reaching me, Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever she performs for television she gets a special allowance. Can the Prime Minister look into the matter? This is clearly creating frustration.

The Prime Minister: I will certainly look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

SCHOOLS – PEAK HOURS – SERVICES OF POLICEMEN

(No. B/80) 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 will impress upon the Commissioner of Police the need to have Policemen posted outside all schools during peak traffic hours, especially immediately after school hours.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that arrangements already exist for one Police Officer to be posted daily outside all schools. In the morning, that is, from 0730 hours to 0900 hours, and in the afternoon from 1430 hours to 1600 hours. Such arrangements are also made at bus stands and drop-off points of school buses.

The primary aim of this deployment is to regulate traffic and help children crossing the road with a view to ensuring their safety and security.

Police Officers in charge of stations liaise with the Head Teachers of the various primary schools on a regular basis and provide any assistance needed to enhance safety and security at schools. Moreover, with a view to sensitising school children on safety and security issues, regular talks are delivered by the Road Safety Unit, the Crime Prevention Unit and the Family Protection Unit.

Having said that, I must say that I have been told that sometimes, there are practical difficulties to do so.

I have asked the Commissioner of Police to look at ways and means to ensure that such arrangements can be adhered to and road signs are put up, clearly indicating that there are schools in the vicinity.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister on the state of affairs, particularly, at Royal Road, Belle Rose where there is Regis Chaperon Secondary School and four other secondary schools also. Buses are parked on both sides of the road and an accident is waiting to happen. Several times, when I passed there, I have, personally, not seen any Policeman.

The Prime Minister: I will certainly take up the matter with the Commissioner of Police.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, pupils of most schools leave schools at five o'clock after tuition. The Police Officers are there at four o'clock. So, we have a problem at five o'clock when these pupils leave schools. Can the hon. Prime Minister see to it that arrangements are made for the safety of the pupils when they leave school at five?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have asked the Commissioner of Police, because there are practical difficulties concerning the number of Policemen in the Police station and all this. That is what they told me. They will have to look at alternative arrangements.

**BEAU BASSIN CENTRAL PRISONS – 2004 REPORT –
RECOMMENDATIONS**

(No. B/81) Mr Y.Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magien) 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 in 2004 a report on the conditions prevailing at the Beau Bassin Central Prisons was submitted to the then Prime Minister and, if so, will he state what remedial actions were subsequently taken, if any.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following a seminar conducted for the Mauritius Prisons Service from 07 to 13 March 2004, General Sir David Ramsbotham, Chief Inspector of Prisons in the United Kingdom and Mr Bashir Ebrahim-Khan, a Mauritian national living in the United Kingdom, submitted a report entitled ‘Developments in the conduct of Imprisonment’ to the then Prime Minister.

I have to inform the House that only some measures have been taken including the recruitment of the present Commissioner of Prisons. Most, if not all, of the recommendations have not been managed to be put into practice.

I am further advised by the Commissioner of Prisons that a copy of the report was not officially forwarded to the Prisons Service.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the report makes mention of 30% of the prisoners in Mauritius, 46% of them being women who are unconvicted, that is, they are on remand? Could the Prime Minister consider the possibility of tabling a copy of the report in the National Assembly for the benefit of all Members?

The Prime Minister: I have looked into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will have to re-look at it properly. Sometimes we have details about functioning of the prisons. I don’t know whether it would be in the public interest to table it. But, I will certainly re-examine it and see if it is possible.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Prime Minister also confirm whether the report makes mention of friction between hardened criminals and other people convicted for minor offences?

The Prime Minister: The report also mentions this. In fact, I have asked the Commissioner of Prisons and the Commissioner of Police to look

at ways of implementing that report as much as possible and as quickly as possible.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that there are sensitive points, but in the alternative can the Prime Minister make a summary of the report to be circulated among Parliamentarians?

Mr Speaker: Circulating the report without sensitive points!

The Prime Minister: I will look into that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

ELECTORAL SYSTEM - REFORM

(No. B/82) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if it is proposed to reform the present electoral system.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, a Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform was set up in 2001 under the chairmanship of Justice Albie Sachs, Member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

The Sachs Commission submitted its report to Government in January 2002. It carried out a thorough review of our electoral and voting system and made, what we consider, some very valid recommendations.

In the wake of this report, two Parliamentary Select Committees were set up, one under the Chairmanship of hon. Ivan Collendavelloo, and the other under the chairmanship of hon. Leung Shing, to examine further the recommendations contained therein and to propose appropriate legislative measures to give effect to the recommendations. However, there was no consensus between the parties in Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Labour Party has been consistent in its approach to these proposals. While in the Opposition, we deponed before the Sachs Commission and made a series of proposals not only with respect to the

voting system, but also with regard to other aspects of the electoral system. Our position has not changed.

However, there is a need to reach as broad a consensus as possible as it is a matter of national importance. I, therefore, propose, as I have said, to have wide range consultations with all stakeholders in due course to determine the best way forward.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 15 November 2005, when I proposed a Select Committee to be chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance to activate matters on that issue, the hon. Prime Minister will remember that he told me that this would take too much time, it will be too slow. The way forward at full speed is that he would chair a High Powered Committee to activate things. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why he has not to date, since 15 November, chaired at least one meeting of that High Powered Committee?

The Prime Minister: In fact, there are two things, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I said was that, I don't think there is need for another Select Committee. I think if we can reach a broad consensus with the Opposition, but I needed to let the dust settled...

(Interruptions)

But, in a way it's good, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was waiting for the dust to settle in the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question!

LA TOUR KOENIG COMMERCIAL CENTRE - POLICE PATROLS

(No. B/83) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) 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 societal problems prevailing in the vicinity of the commercial centre at La Tour Koenig and, if so, will he impress upon the Commissioner of Police the need for regular police patrols to be carried out thereat.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the commercial complex at la Tour Koenig as well as the licensed businesses around attract a lot of people. Some cases of anti-social behaviour such as disturbances and drug addiction in those places have been reported. The situation is, however, under control - I am told - as intensive policing is now provided in the vicinity of the commercial complex.

In fact, just before I left for France, I had a meeting with the Commissioner of Police precisely on this matter, because somebody on the Government side also brought my attention to it. Foot and mobile patrols are being carried out daily in the commercial area by Police Officers of La Tour Koenig. The Emergency Response Service, the Divisional Support Unit and the Local CID also perform regular patrols in the area as well as the Special Support Unit, which provides patrols as well.

Moreover, there is also a 'Neighbourhood Policing Scheme' for the region. Under this scheme, a committee comprising the local Police, representatives of local businesses, the '*forces vives*' of the region, NGO's and other stakeholders, meet regularly to discuss joint action to be taken to combat crime and anti-social behaviour in the region.

But let me assure the hon. Member that I recently asked the Commissioner of Police to relook at the matter because there have been reports of such anti-social behaviour.

CIVIL SERVICE & POLICE DEPARTMENT - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/84) Mrs M. Martin (Second 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 will state -

- (a) Government policy regarding recruitment in the civil service and the police department, and
- (b) If any new recruitment is envisaged.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling a statement on Government policy regarding recruitment in the Civil Service including the Police Department.

PERSONS - RELEASED ON BAIL

(No. B/85) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) 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 relevant authorities, information as to the number of prisoners arrested for crimes resulting in death of people and who have been released on bail since July 2005.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the number of persons arrested in connection with cases of crimes resulting in death instead of prisoners. I presume this is what the hon. Member means.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the figure for the period July 2005 to 15 March 2006 is 60. Following decisions reached in courts by Judges and Magistrates 22 persons have been released on bail.

I am further informed that such decisions have been prompted by the judgement delivered by the Privy Council in the Hurnam case, where the Council has stressed the seriousness of an offence per se is not a ground for detaining a person suspected for a crime.

Mr Naidu: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the increasing feeling of insecurity around those releases and the hardship the victims' families are going through, will the hon. Prime Minister consider reviewing the provisions for release on bail for those types of crime?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Government is looking at the advisability of amending the law on the issue of bail. We are looking at that at the moment.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, surely the hon. Prime Minister will agree that a very disturbing and confused situation has arisen as a result of at least two rulings by the Privy Council on that issue of granting of bail, people arrested on very serious charges. And locally the DPP, in his absolute discretion, has taken a number of decisions to free a certain number of assumed guilty persons on bail. It is a very confused situation and it disturbs people a lot. The Prime Minister himself has said that Government is

preparing new laws. Does that mean that we are going to revisit the responsibilities, the post of the DPP?

The Prime Minister: No, I was not looking at the reviewing of the DPPs role, but we are looking at strengthening the laws and making it clearer so that there is less confusion in what we want to do actually.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that nowadays the DPP is not objecting to the release on bail of people who are being arrested whether it be for drug offences or in murder cases?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, we have to look whether we need to amend the laws.

Mr Bérenger: Why not look also at that issue which we looked at in the recent past, on both sides, and then we turned our attention to other issues? Why not even look at the issue of the DPP? This is one of the few countries where the DPP is one person and where in his absolute discretion in the Constitution - I am not challenging the independence of the DPP. Can I ask the Prime Minister why does he leave the DPPs issue out of possible amendments with all due precautions taken or consultations carried out?

The Prime Minister: For a few reasons, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, there was a letter sent to the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Prime Minister, I do not know whether he remembers that members of the Judiciary themselves were not agreeable to that proposition. I think that we should look - and I think I mentioned it when I was in the Opposition then - at what is done in the UK where there is a lot of transparency, there is a code to explain on what basis to take some decision. I will take the point of hon. Bérenger.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we have...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Ganoo: Can the Prime Minister give us an idea when these new legislative proposals will come before the House? Because it is indeed a matter of urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir. We all know the latest case in point, the case of Mir. This is the straw that broke the camel's back. I am sure we all read about it in the papers and learned about the outcry as a result of what

happened in the Mir case. So, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us how fast will Government come with the proposals for the review of the law?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the Attorney-General Office is working in collaboration with the State Law Office to have a look at all these, because there are several laws that we are looking at, at the same time. But we will certainly have this as a priority.

DETAINEE J.P.I - COUNTER POSTMORTEN EXAMINATION

(No. B/86) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) 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 the death of the detainee J. P. I., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether any objection was raised by the Police or any other authority to the carrying out of a counter *postmortem* examination at the request of the family and, if so, the reasons thereof.

The Prime Minister: Sir, I am advised that neither the Police nor any other authority raised objection to the carrying out of a counter *postmortem* examination in that case. In fact, the counter autopsy was conducted on 22 March 2006.

NEW GROVE - INCIDENT 29.01.06 - INQUIRY

(No. B/88) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) 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 the incident which took place in New Grove on or about 29 January 2006, involving Mrs M. L. S. and as a result of which she made a formal declaration and statement to the Police, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether the lady was ill-treated and insulted by certain Police Officers in the course of the inquiry and, if so, will he state what measures will be taken to prevent such recurrence.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no complaint has been registered against Police

Officers for ill-treating or insulting Mrs M.L.S. in the course of the inquiry. That is what I am told.

Mrs Perrier: Mais, malgré cela, M. le président, est-ce-que le Premier ministre peut s'assurer que les policiers accueillent de façon civilisée et humaine les femmes victimes de violence qui viennent faire une déposition dans les postes de police?

The Prime Minister: The former Prime Minister has mentioned that in the past; we try to ensure that this is so. But I agree, especially when women come to the Police Station, have to be well treated. The idea is to have them looked up by Women Police Officers, but sometimes in practical terms this does not happen. But this is also our policy.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, this is a very serious case and a very delicate one. Last week, when I raised the issue, the hon. Prime Minister said that he would look into the issue of serious allegations of misbehaviour or bias, by the Police in that case. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has done so?

The Prime Minister: As you know the Prime Minister has to ask the Commissioner of Police to look into the matter. My first report is that they do not think there have been such cases, but they will look into the matter further and I have not had a further report. I think the Commissioner of Police is abroad actually.

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, j'avais soulevé en décembre de l'année dernière les conséquences d'une chanson qui s'appelle 'Conséquence' d'ailleurs sur l'état d'esprit de la population en ce qui concerne la violence envers les femmes et d'après les informations que j'ai c'est avec les paroles de cette chanson que cette pauvre victime a été boufonnée par les policiers dans le poste de police. Est-ce-que le Premier ministre pourrait s'assurer que de telle chanson ne soit plus sur les ondes, surtout sur les ondes nationales, c'est-à-dire, la MBC, qui est la radio de l'Etat?

The Prime Minister: I will have a look into that matter.

Mr Speaker: Time is over. Next item. May I inform the House that PQ No. B/138 has been withdrawn.

**ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE
- FIRST CITY BANK - FIXED DEPOSIT**

(No. B/91) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rose Belle Sugar Estate, information as to whether it has recently placed a sum of Rs50 m. on fixed deposit at the First City Bank.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information obtained from the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board, the sum of Rs50 m. has not recently been placed on fixed deposit at the First City Bank. This sum has been placed at the bank since 07 November 2002. The rate of interest was 10% per annum, interest payable monthly.

The fixed deposit was renewed with the same bank on 7 November 2003 at same interest rate and on 07 November 2004 at 6.75% per annum with interest payable at maturity. It was renewed on 13 December 2005 for one month at 7.10% per annum.

It has been renewed or placed again as from 22 February 2006 at the bank for a period of 37 months at an interest rate of 8.35% per annum, with interest payable monthly.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say whether there has been any sort of tender exercise with the banks to know which bank gives the highest rate of interest?

Dr. Boolell: There was a tender exercise; it was not a sort of tender exercise. A proper tender exercise was called for and First City Bank was the bank which offered the highest interest rate.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: So, can I take it that the hon. Minister is confirming that First City Bank gave the highest rate of interest at the first tender exercise which was carried out?

Dr. Boolell: No, there has been only one tender exercise. Of course, since Government guarantees loan, Government needs to have a '*droit de regard*'. First City Bank impressed upon Rose Belle Sugar Estate that it was offering the highest interest rate. Consequently, when the Ministry was informed, we liaised with the Ministry of Finance and it was agreed that the money should be left at First City Bank.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I take it then from the Minister that there have not been any consultations with any banks after the tender exercise was carried out?

Dr. Boolell: No. It was a tender exercise; it was carried out in all transparency, and in the light of the best interest offered by First City Bank, Government agreed that the money should be deposited at First City Bank.

ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE – HERBICIDES - PURCHASE

(No. B/92) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rose Belle Sugar Estate, information as to whether samples of herbicides purchased from Kripsen & Co. have been sent to the MSIRI and other laboratories for analysis regarding quality.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Rose Belle Sugar Estate that –

- (i) in December 2004, tenders were invited for the supply of herbicides for the year 2005, but the Board approved the award of contracts only in May 2005.
- (ii) between December 2004 and May 2005, the Board continued to procure herbicides from its former supplier, Kripsen Agro Chemical Ltd;
- (iii) in January 2005, it was observed that in one field, one herbicide Diuron seemed to show abnormal consistency and in another field, it was reported that the product Atrazine was producing excessive froth. In May 2005, a member of the Board raised some queries about the quality of the products.
- (iv) nevertheless, no action was taken by the management of the sugar estate to carry out an analysis since January 2005 or before allocating new contracts, which were awarded in May 2005 to six companies, namely IBL, Roger Fayd'herbe, Robert Le Maire, Matikola Chemical House, Fayco Ltd. and Kripsen Agro Chemical Co Ltd.

It was only on 18 October 2005 that the management of the sugar estate sent samples of four herbicide products purchased from Kripsen & Co. to MSIRI for analysis.

On 15 November 2005, another sample of three products was sent to MSIRI for analysis. Though the tests were carried out and the results have been obtained, the MSIRI has clearly indicated that it is not in a position to draw any pertinent conclusion as the sampling exercise was not undertaken by MSIRI or under its supervision and the samples were delivered to the MSIRI laboratory in unsealed containers. It is also noted that despite this observation of the MSIRI, the management of the Board has not deemed it appropriate, up to now, to arrange for the proper collection of samples in order to obtain reliable results.

Furthermore, there have been serious allegations made in the press, concerning the award of contracts made by the previous Board for the purchase of herbicides valued at about Rs10 m. In the light of these facts, the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board has decided to refer the matter for enquiry.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister kindly inform the House why were samples not sent to the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit for analysis?

Dr. Boolell: We had them sent to the MSIRI, which is accredited. And since it has all the facilities to conduct the enquiry, it is the most appropriate body to do the needful.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the Minister say whether any enquiry has been carried out as to why samples were not taken from sealed containers and in the presence of the supplier?

Dr. Boolell: In fact, I have highlighted that there had been many shortcomings and in the light of which the former management should have done the needful. But, since the information was released and made available to the present Board, appropriate measures are taken to see to it that there would be no similar occurrences. If ever there is any shortcoming, whoever is guilty of shortcoming or any failing, he or she will have to bear the appropriate consequences.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Has any action been taken against the person who took the samples from unsealed containers? Because according to our information that was done on purpose.

Dr. Boolell: Well, there is an enquiry. Let us wait for the outcome and the findings thereof. Since the findings can be disclosed, of course, we will make it available to the hon. lady without any problem. But, as I have stated, these are failings of the previous Board and we know what was going on then, the more we rake, the more mud is coming out.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next Question!

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES – CHIKUNGUNYA DISEASE - SURVEY

(No. B/93) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the chikungunya disease, he will state if any survey has been carried out to determine the number of students and teachers of schools and colleges who have been affected by the disease.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall respond to all PQs addressed to the Minister of Education.

As the House may be aware, Government is committed with the elimination of the chikungunya and to the prevention of the spread of the disease across the island. In this context, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health on the following measures which are being implemented since mid February at school levels –

- (i) fogging and spraying of insecticides after school hours;
- (ii) use of mosquitoes repellents in classrooms;
- (iii) sensitisation and prevention campaigns against chikungunya, especially during morning assemblies.
- (iv) cleaning of school premises and draining of water from roof tops, and

- (v) distribution of leaflets/brochures on ways and means to prevent the proliferation of mosquitoes.

All Heads of schools have been requested to submit to the Ministry –

- (i) weekly reports on the measures taken as per the guideline circulated to all schools for the prevention of the disease, and
- (ii) a daily report on any suspected cases of chikungunya among pupils and teachers in their respective schools and the action taken thereon.

Regular meetings are also held at zonal level with Heads of schools to ensure that the instructions given so far for the sensitisation and prevention campaigns against chikungunya are complied with.

Any survey to determine cases of chikungunya is carried out by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, but daily reports on suspected cases of chikungunya are submitted to the Ministry by Heads of schools.

The situation at the school levels is being closely monitored and is under control.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether we have any figures as to the number of pupils who have been affected by chikungunya and how this has evolved over the months?

Dr. David: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the survey is done by the Ministry of Health as there is no medical personnel at school level. All suspected cases are sent to hospitals.

H5N1 BIRD-FLU - SURVEY

(No. B/94) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to H5N1 Bird-Flu, he will state if -

- (a) any survey has been carried out to determine the number of -

- (i) poultry farms in the vicinity of the Terre-Rouge Estuary;
 - (ii) inhabitants and workers who are regularly in close contact with the poultries;
- (b) the inhabitants of the area have been advised to report to the relevant authorities any case of suspected death of chicken, and
- (c) if it is proposed to set up a fund to compensate the owners in case of urgent culling of the chicken.

The Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

Mr Speaker Sir, yes, a survey has been carried out by the Agricultural Research & Extension Unit in the vicinity of Terre Rouge Estuary to determine the number of poultry farms and number of workers involved.

Seven breeders are operating in the vicinity of the estuary and 20 workers are involved.

As regards the inhabitants living in the neighbourhood, AREU officers have met the *forces vives* and other inhabitants on 01 and 05 December last. The inhabitants have been advised to report any case of suspected death of domestic poultry, wild birds and migratory birds to the Veterinary Services.

As from January 2006, explanatory leaflets are being distributed to all poultry farmers through the Feed Sales Centres.

The issue of compensating breeders in case of urgent culling is a matter to be considered.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES - PRIVATE POLICE SECURITY SERVICE - SETTING UP

(No. B/95) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to whether the Council has recently adopted a

resolution for the creation of a private Police security service and, if so, whether other Municipal and District Councils will be encouraged to set up a similar service.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has not adopted any resolution regarding the setting up of a private Police security service. In this respect, the House will recall that in my reply to PQ IB/388, I had clearly indicated that Government does not consider it appropriate to set up a municipal police.

SPORT GALA NIGHT - SPEECH FROM MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS - REMARKS

(No. B/96) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will, for the benefit of the House, state if on Friday 03 February 2006 during a speech he delivered at the Sports Gala Night he described the representatives of sports federations as "*pigeons voyageurs*".

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I never described the representatives of Sports Federations as "*pigeons voyageurs*" in the speech I delivered at the Sports Gala Night on Friday 03 February 2006.

I mentioned these terms as general remarks to the effect that officials of sports federations should focus their efforts on the promotion and progress of their respective sports disciplines and achievements of good results and not think solely in terms of travelling abroad with delegations.

Sir, I would like to point out that all Sports Federations derive a grant from Government and as such the Ministry has a duty to ensure that funds provided are judiciously used for the purpose for which they are meant.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, if that was an official speech, can the hon. Minister lay a copy of the speech on the Table of the Assembly?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, I will.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that the representatives of the federations have to respect certain parameters. Has he already established those parameters?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, all federations must take their own responsibilities.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just want to know from the hon. Minister what does he intend to do as a Minister of Youth and Sports with regard to this problem?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that as Minister I mean business and I will...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know that my good friend, the hon. Minister, means business. But there is a general impression, over the years, that whenever there are missions and so on - without being against civil servants because we have worked with them - there is an attitude from civil servants to impose their names first and then of the people of the federations, not only federations, but NGOs also. Can I impress upon the Minister to see to it that whenever there is a mission concerning a particular federation, at least, the members of the federation be given priority instead of civil servants and top civil servants?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is not the case in my Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: I'll come with a statement through you, Sir, because there are lots of cases.

INDIAN OCEAN GAMES (2007) - MEETINGS, INCLUSION OF BADMINTON, ETC.

(No. B/97) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the 2007 Indian Ocean Games which will be held in the Republic of Madagascar, he will state -

- (a) if the meeting of the CIJ took place between 24 and 27 February 2006;
- (b) if the inclusion of badminton as the 16th game item was on the agenda of the CIJ meeting and the outcome of the meeting;

- (c) what is the official stand of Mauritius on the badminton issue, and
- (d) his stand on the initiative taken by the Secretary General of the African Badminton Federation in this respect.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the CIJ Meeting initially scheduled to take place from 24 to 26 February 2006 in Madagascar in connection with the 2007 Indian Ocean Islands Games has now been rescheduled for the 21 to 23 April 2006.

In view of the rescheduling of this meeting the issue at part (b) of this question does not arise. The agenda for the meeting has still not been circulated.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I would like to inform the House that Mauritius is in favour of badminton being included in the next Indian Ocean Islands Games to be held in Madagascar in 2007.

Accordingly, the following initiatives have been taken for the inclusion of badminton in the forthcoming Indian Ocean Games -

- (i) a request to the Mauritius National Olympic Committee to take appropriate measures to include on the agenda of the next CIJ Meeting the issue of inclusion of badminton in the games;
- (ii) intense lobby together with the Seychelles delegation in favour of badminton by the members of the Mauritian delegation who attended the last CIJ Meeting in Madagascar from 18 to 22 August 2005;
- (iii) my personal intervention with the Malagasy Ambassador on 07 September 2005;
- (iv) a personal letter sent on 15 September 2005, to my counterpart in Madagascar soliciting his good office for the inclusion of badminton;
- (v) an appeal to the Malagasy Head of Delegation in favour of badminton at the opening ceremony of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the "*Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Ocean Indien*" held in December 2005, and
- (vi) mutual arrangement with my counterpart the Minister of Youth and Sports of Seychelles, who is also the current Chairperson of the "*Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports del'Ocean Indien*", for a common stand and concerted efforts for the

inclusion of badminton for the Indian Ocean Islands Games in 2007, during a visit to Seychelles in January 2006.

Regarding the last part of the question, I have learned through the press the initiative of the Secretary General of the African Badminton Federation. However, I am in the presence of a letter dated 31 January 2006, from my Malagasy counterpart concerning the reported interference of the Secretary General of the African Badminton Federation into the internal affairs of CIJ and stating *inter alia*, I quote -

"Je vous informe que nous avons dû lui faire comprendre que son organisation n'a nullement le droit de faire cette démarche. Elle a par contre le devoir d'aider nos fédérations-membres à se développer notamment celle de Madagascar qui est en quasi-sommeil depuis 1990, ce qui n'a pas été fait.

Comme vous le savez, Monsieur le ministre "le CIJ a pour mission de réaliser les objectifs des JIOI. Il décide des disciplines sportives à porter au programme et des sports de démonstration" Art. 12 de la Charte.

J'ose espérer, Excellence, que c'est notre position commune et que toute démarche contraire risquerait de provoquer des perturbations dommageables à l'organisation des jeux."

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how successful he thinks his initiative together with Seychelles will be with respect to the introduction of badminton?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that all efforts on our part have already been done, but, as he knows himself, it is the Malagasy decision.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just mentioned that he has received a letter from his counterpart from Madagascar. May I request him to table a copy of the said letter, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I don't think so, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is a confidential letter. If the hon. Member wants to see it, I can show it to him, but he must understand my position.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether, after having received this letter, he reacted and tried to boycott the initiative of that representative to Madagascar?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not my style.

CEB – AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT - LOAN

(No. B/98) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the CEB, information as to whether it has contracted any loan/s from the *Agence Française de Développement* and, if so –

- (a) will he state the amount and the reasons thereof;
- (b) the rate of interest payable, and
- (c) whether there has been any overpayment and, if so, the number of loans in respect of which there has been overpayment, indicating in each case –
 - (i) the amount involved, and
 - (ii) the steps taken to recover the amount overpaid.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am arranging for a copy of the reply to PQ No. B/98 to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a General Manager at the CEB? Because we only hear the Chairman!

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. This does not arise from the question.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Chairman of the CEB publicly stated that an overpayment of Rs128m. has been made to the AFD?

Dr. Kasenally: The facts and figures are there. The hon. Member can dissect them, chew them, digest them, and then come up with all supplementary questions which I will be only too pleased to answer.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is due to this fact that there has been overpayment at the CEB that the Financial Manager has been suspended?

Dr. Kasenally: The case is *sub judice* and is being currently investigated. I think it would be inappropriate for me to pass judgement. But, in due time, when the committee would have made its final report, the House will be informed about it.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the Minister whether the Financial Manager has been suspended?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, the Financial Manager has been interdicted pending the inquiry.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister the charge that has been retained against him?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already said that the matter is *sub judice*. I will give a full report once it is dealt with.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister who audits the accounts of the CEB?

Dr. Kasenally: There are two types of audit. First, an audit is done in-house and then it is done by a firm. I will try to get the information from the Board and then give it to the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Dowarkasing.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether it is the Director of Audit who audits the accounts of the CEB?

Dr. Kasenally: I cannot confirm it at the moment, Mr Speaker, Sir.

CHC – DIRECTOR & DEPUTY DIRECTOR – APPOINTMENT, SALARY, ETC

(No. B/99) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House,

obtain from the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd the following information –

- (a) the names of the Director and the Deputy Director;
- (b) their respective date of appointment, and
- (c) the salary scale in each of the above mentioned post prior and post July 2005.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that following a salary review carried out in June 2002, the posts of General Manager and Deputy General Manager at the Cargo Handling Corporation were restyled Managing Director and Deputy Managing Director respectively.

Mr Archimède Lecordier is currently the Managing Director of the company and his Deputy is Mr Jacques Faustin.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Lecordier was initially appointed General Manager on 01 October 1996, and Mr Faustin was appointed Deputy General Manager on 01 January 2003.

Concerning part (c) of the question, I am further informed that the Salary Restructuring Committee of June 2002 recommended that the salaries of the Managing Director and the Deputy Managing Director should be negotiable. However, following consultations with the then Chairman of the Board and with the approval of the Executive Committee of the company, both the Managing Director and his Deputy agreed that their salaries should be aligned with their counterparts of the Mauritius Ports Authority.

Accordingly, a revised salary package of respectively Rs50,000 and Rs45,000 were proposed to the Managing Director and the Deputy Managing Director of the company.

The new salary proposals were duly approved by the CHCL Board on 26 August 2003 and became effective as from 01 July of the same year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the Human Resources Development Plan 2005 of the MPA, which became effective on 01 July 2005, the salaries of the Managing Director and the Deputy Managing Director of the CHCL have been adjusted to Rs75,000 and Rs67,000 a month respectively, in order to bring them at par with those of their counterparts at the MPA. The adjusted salaries were approved by the CHCL Board at its meeting held on 30 January 2006. This course of action is in line with the policy adopted by the then Government in 2003.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Board has also approved an entertainment allowance to the Director and the Deputy Director?

Mr X.L. Duval: I don't have that detail, but if the hon. Member asks a specific question, I will provide the information.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether salary revision takes place every five years at the Cargo Handling Corporation?

Mr X.L. Duval: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister why, in this case, it is meant only for the General Manager and Deputy General Manager and not for the employees?

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thought I was clear. Since the last Government decided that there should be alignment between the CHCL and the MPA, it was aligned in 2003. Alignment means alignment, and when the MPA salaries have been changed, it has been aligned again. There is no change in policy whatsoever.

CALCIUM AMMONIUM NITRATE, 17-8-24, 17-8-26 - PRICE

(No. B/100) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether Government proposes to control the prices of the fertilizers Calcium Ammonium Nitrate, 17-8-24, 17-8-26.

The Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I'll answer this question.

The prices of Calcium Ammonium Nitrate, 17-8-24 and 17-8-26 are not presently fixed. However, a study is being carried out to look into the possibility of shifting fertilizers from maximum price control to maximum mark-up control, so that any variety of fertilizers produced would fall under price control.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that there has been a substantial increase in the prices of fertilizers last month?

My second question is whether there is the possibility of a subsidy being granted to maintain the price at an affordable level.

Dr. Jeetah: I can answer part of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do understand that there are two producers, namely MCFI and Island Fertilizers. These two producers of fertilizers have shifted from complex fertilizers to blended fertilizers. These prices are not fixed. At the moment, we are liaising with AREU and the Ministry of Agro Industry to look into the types of fertilizers that are required by the users, that is, the planters, and from there we will decide on the actions to take.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if there is any shortage of ammonium sulphate fertilizer on the local market?

Dr. Jeetah: I don't have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The question is not relevant.

NEF – APPLICATIONS – JULY 2005-APRIL 2006

(No. B/101) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether in regard to the National Equity Fund, he will for the period July 2005 to date state the number of applications for funding -

- (a) received;
- (b) approved;
- (c) the total sum disbursed in each case together with the terms and conditions attached, and
- (d) the guarantees furnished by each recipient.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, for the period July 2005 to date, the National Equity Fund has received nine new investment proposals, including one under the Textile Sub Fund.

As regards part (b) of the question, one investment has been approved in the spinning sector.

Regarding part (c), total amount disbursed is Rs90 m. This figure includes a disbursement of Rs10 m. made for a project approved in May 2005. For the other investment amounting Rs80 m., the project was appraised and approved in principle as far back as May 2005. There were certain conditions precedent to disbursement. However, these conditions were further tightened before final approval and disbursement in February 2006. It may also be noted, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a number of other financial institutions, both local and overseas, are participating in the financing of this project.

As regards the terms and conditions as well as the guarantees furnished by each of investee companies, it may be noted that as per the Schedule of Conditions to Licensee of the Financial Services Commission, the NEF has to 'maintain proper procedures to ensure confidentiality of clients' information. Moreover, a confidentiality agreement is generally signed between the investee companies and the fund management company according to which the latter cannot disclose information relating to the clients. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that all appropriate conditions have been satisfied and usual guarantees secured.

I wish to point out that Government is aware of the slow progress made by the NEF. We are currently reviewing the organisational structure of the Fund with a view to improving its effectiveness.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any loans have been given for the purchase of any second-hand equipment? And if yes, can he please table a copy of the counter evaluation of the National Equity Fund before the loan was issued.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member had listened carefully to what I said that there are procedures that are adopted by the National Equity Fund prior to disbursement being made. This project was approved in May 2005. There were certain conditions that were attached to the provision of this facility by the NEF; and as I mentioned in the answer that I've just provided that these conditions have been tightened. I must also inform the House that there are other financial institutions, like the Development Bank of South Africa, Barclays and other local commercial banks that are also participating in that particular project.

NEW YORK - EMBASSY – OFFICER

(No. B/102) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation whether he will state if any officer posted at our Embassy in New York has been recalled following the visit of Dr. the Honourable Prime Minister to Washington in February 2006 and, if so, the reasons thereof.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is in the negative.

ST FELIX SUGAR FACTORY - APPLICATION FOR CLOSURE

(No. B/103) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether he will state if he has received any application for the closure of sugar factories and, if so, whether any deadline has been set for such closure and the measures that have been taken for the forthcoming harvest in respect of these factories.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have received an application for the closure of St Felix Sugar Factory as from this year and on 31 March 2006, Government approved the closure in line with the Blueprint for the sugar sector.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES

(No. B/104) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, with a view to empowering principals of Government and Aided Primary Schools and Government Secondary Schools to maintain discipline, he will consider the advisability of amending the relevant regulations to provide for the setting up of disciplinary committees at the level of each of these educational institutions to deal with cases of serious misconduct and with power to suspend and expel students, and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to this question.

The Rectors of the State Secondary Schools are already empowered to maintain discipline at school and, for that purpose, disciplinary committees do exist in all the State Secondary Schools. In the Government Primary Schools, there is no disciplinary committee *per se* but cases of indiscipline

which are few and far apart, are dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis in consultation with parents and if required with the support of an education psychologist.

The disciplinary committee of the State Secondary Schools acts as an effective tool in the hands of the Rector to control indiscipline among students. The Rector ensures that the decisions of disciplinary committees are fair and commensurate with the offence committed. Punishment inflicted may be a warning, a Saturday detention or even a suspension which normally ranges between 3 days to a week depending on the gravity of the offence

As regards prolonged suspension and expulsion of students, it is already provided in the Education Regulations 1957, as subsequently amended, that in case of serious misconduct, same may be resorted to, with the approval of the Minister. As such it constitutes a measure of last resort when all attempts to improve the conduct and behaviour of a student have failed. However, with the introduction of compulsory education up to the age of 16 the question of expulsion has been considered in consultation with the Attorney-General's office.

Mr Dayal: The hon. Minister has mentioned "with the approval of the Minister". Will the Minister agree that since the promulgation of the present Regulation in 1953, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Government Secondary Schools and that it is practically impossible for Rectors of such institutions to enforce discipline in case of serious misconduct because this requires ministerial power? Even to suspend a student the approval of the Minister is needed, let alone the expulsion of a student.

Dr. David: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that there are some problems at school level, but expulsion is a very serious disciplinary measure taken against students. In all fairness, the Minister's signature and approval should not be taken away. Probably, the hon. Member is referring to delay difficulties. Well, this can be looked into. He may probably be thinking as well that the hands of the Rectors are tied up because no quick action can be taken, but again I believe that there should be ultimately some sort of last resort from the Minister.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring to Regulation 1953 section 13, for minor offences the Rector can suspend, but for serious offences the Rector must have recourse to the Minister; and this causes a lot of delay. In

the 1940s or 1950s there were only three or four Government Secondary Schools. Today with the number of Government Secondary Schools, this is practically impossible.

Mr Speaker: What is the question of the hon. Member?

Mr Dayal: Will the hon. Minister agree that in order to make the enforcement of discipline more timely and effective, he should give full powers to the Disciplinary Committee reserving to himself a right of appeal by the students?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer first.

Dr. David: The Disciplinary Committee is constituted as follows: the Rector or the Deputy Rector, the President of the PTA, a representative of the staff, the form teacher of the student, any co-opted member. If a decision is taken, an extreme decision, that is, expulsion, there should be a higher authority, the Minister must at least give his approval. I am not saying that there could be abuse from the school authority, but I am of the view that minor offences can be dealt with at school level, but in more serious cases where extreme punishment is concerned, the approval of the Minister should be sought. As regards administrative hurdles, it can be taken care of, but I believe that the Minister must be given the power of approval.

Mr Dayal: The hon. Minister has himself been head of a Secondary School. Will he agree that in case of Private Secondary Schools, disciplines are more effectively enforced because the powers are with the management? Therefore, I should like to ask the Minister whether he will consider reinforcing sections 152, 153 and 154 of the 1945 Regulations in order to reinforce disciplines in Government Secondary Schools?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not correct to say that the power rests with the management at private secondary school level. The PSSA has to be informed and just as in the State Secondary Schools, the expulsion of a student needs the approval of the Minister.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister consider the inclusion of a member of the Student Council on the Disciplinary Committee which is usually held in extreme cases?

Dr. David: This is a good suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I'll pass it on to the Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Ramloll: Is the hon. Minister aware whether Rectors of many secondary schools did make reports regarding indiscipline and misconduct on the part of students and where there has been no response from the Ministry and that has been ongoing and today we see so much of indiscipline in the schools?

Dr. David: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, causes of indiscipline are varied. It is not only because, as the hon. Member is saying, cases are not dealt with at Ministry's level. There are so many reasons why indiscipline prevails. Following question raised, I'll see to it if there are cases which have not been dealt with at the level of the Ministry. I personally doubt that there are cases which are blocked at that level.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking about disciplinary measures. I am not talking about the extreme, that is, expelling students. Will the hon. Minister state how many Government Secondary Schools have made regulations with the approval of the Minister to enforce discipline in Government Secondary Schools as provided for under section 34 of the regulation of 1953?

Dr. David: I have answered, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a Disciplinary Committee exists at the level of all State Secondary Schools.

Mr Dayal: My question is: how many secondary schools have made regulations with the approval of the Minister to enforce discipline in Government Secondary Schools as provided for under section 34 of Regulation 1953?

Dr. David: I will look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can't answer offhand.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister confirm whether the detaining of students as a disciplinary measure after school hours is still being practised?

Dr. David: Yes, Sir, and I even mentioned Saturday detention.

(Interruptions)

I think that parents should be informed one or two days before the detention of their wards.

**QUARTIER MILITAIRE ROAD/ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN -
TRAFFIC LIGHTS & ROAD WIDENING**

(No. B/105) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware that a number of serious road accidents including fatal ones have occurred at the junction of Quartier Militaire Road, leading to St Julien d'Hotman near the bridge commonly known as Pont Madame Françoise and, if so, will he consider making arrangements for widening the road and placing traffic lights thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Sir, I am informed that at the junction of Quartier Militaire Road, leading to St Julien D'Hotman, there has been no fatal accident recorded, but in each of the years 2004-2005 there were two serious accidents and five minor ones.

The advisability of providing traffic lights and widening the road at the junction of Quartier Militaire Road, leading to St Julien D'Hotman is presently under study by my Ministry. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has completed a traffic count at the junction in February 2006 and together with the Road Development Authority will carry out a site visit to evaluate the needs.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Bundhoo and myself, we had one of our agents who was victim of a fatal accident at that junction during the year 1998. Sometimes technicians cannot put themselves in the shoes of the common man. There is a problem of visibility there, especially coming from St Julien D'Hotman plying towards Quartier Militaire, near Pont Madame Françoise. I hope hon. Jugnauth will agree with me!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Dayal.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I take note of what the hon. Member has said. I regret the passing away of a friend and as I said the

record 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 showed no fatal accident there, but that does not mean nothing has to be done. We are looking into it.

L'ESPÉRANCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. B/106) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether he will state when the football ground at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire will be handed over to the relevant authorities for use.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that all the infrastructural works at the football ground of l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire comprising a spectator's stand, french drains and boundary fence have now been completed.

The levelling, topsoiling and grassing of the football pitch have also been completed.

However, the football ground can only be handed over once the grassing has attained its full growth and is suitable for playing.

I am further informed that the contractor is now removing unwanted grass and that the handing over of the site would be done shortly.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I should like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is a penalty clause in the contract and, if yes, whether the Minister will enforce such clause because the contractor has failed to complete the work within the period agreed upon. This work started since 2003 and three years have elapsed now.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I will look into it, Sir.

LABOUR ACT - REVIEW

(No. B/107) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether he will state if it is proposed to review the Labour Act and, in particular, to provide for more flexible conditions of employment.

Dr. Bunwaree: Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both PQ Nos. B/107 and B/108 together as they are interlinked.

I have, in fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, set up a Technical Committee at the level of my Ministry to look into the review of our labour legislation.

The Committee is working on the review of the Industrial Relations Act and the Labour Act as both the Industrial Relations framework and conditions of employment have to be attuned to prevailing conditions in the world of work and to expectations of the various stakeholders.

The review is a complex exercise as the hon. Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix will no doubt agree, given his past involvement in the matter.

Discussions have reached a crucial stage, especially with regard to the Industrial Relations Act. Given the sensitive nature of the issues under consideration, the House will appreciate that it would not be appropriate to reveal details thereof at this stage nor indicate a date by which the new pieces of legislation will be finalised.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister state when the committee at his Ministry will complete its work and when will the new Bill be ready?

Dr. Bunwaree: Sir, it is not easy for me at this stage to give the answer.

Mr Soodhun: In November last, the Minister mentioned that in three months' time, he would come with a Bill in Parliament. I would like to know when the Bill will be brought to Parliament.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has not listened to my reply at all. I have just mentioned it. I suppose he is thinking of his duty-free car which is going to his colleague! I said that discussions have reached a very crucial stage and a sensitive nature.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT - REPLACEMENT

(No. B/108) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether he will state if it is proposed to replace the Industrial Relations Act and, if so, when.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/107)

EPZ WORKERS - REDUNDANCY FUND

(No. B/109) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether he will state if it is proposed to set up a Redundancy Fund, especially for the workers in the EPZ sector.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am replying to both PQ Nos. B/109 and B/141 as they relate to the same subject.

Yes, Sir, I have received requests from various trade unions to consider the setting up of a Redundancy Fund, especially for textile workers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of a Redundancy Fund would only be welcomed if the economic context is blooming and can allow for it. As the House is aware, the present difficult local and international context where different trade agreements are being dismantled, will not be conducive to investment and job creation.

The creation of such a Fund to which employers would be called up to contribute, in the present economic context, would become an additional burden on them and this may prohibit investment and contribute to further job losses and closures.

As the House is aware, there exists presently a Financial Assistance Scheme for redundant workers which is operational under the National Solidarity Fund.

The scheme provides for a one-off financial assistance to workers who have been laid off following receivership or winding up of their enterprises and who have not been paid their wages or any indemnity as a result thereof.

I will see in which manner this assistance could be made more flexible to help alleviate the suffering of redundant workers.

Furthermore, I believe that it is preferable that we deploy our resources towards promoting employment creation, job placement and invest significantly in the training and multi skilling of laid-off workers and job seekers in general so as to improve their employability.

I can assure the hon. Members that we are leaving no stone unturned to work in this direction and we already have positive results. The best example is the case of Bentley Ltd. in receivership since February 2005 which, as they may be aware, has been given a new life and has increased its workforce from 257 to 293, i.e. an increase of 37 in the past weeks.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, it exists two different funds, one is the EPZ Redundancy Fund and the other one is the Employees Relief Scheme in case the factories are closed down and referred to the receivership. It is totally different. Last month the Minister gave a statement on television that he is coming with this EPZ Fund and now he is changing due to....

Mr Speaker: Put the question, please.

Mr Soodhun: I want to know why he has changed?

(Interruptions)

Mr Varma: The hon. Minister has just stated that he has received requests for the setting up of such a Fund. Can he inform the House why was such request made for the setting up of a Redundancy Fund?

Dr. Bunwaree: Sir, the request came from the unions to compensate workers who have lost their jobs.

Mr Varma: Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House of the number of factories which have closed down during the past five years as a result of which the workers have not received any compensation?

Dr. Bunwaree: Sir, I need notice of the question.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, will the Minister indicate how many workers have benefited from the payment of the Employees Relief Scheme which was introduced in the Budget of 2005/2006?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, due to the error made by the hon. Member who was the then Minister, no one has benefited so far.

**EPZ SECTOR – EMPLOYMENT LOSSES
- JULY 2005 TO FEBRUARY 2006**

(No. B/110) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the EPZ sector, he will state the number of persons who have lost employment from July 2005 to February 2006, indicating the number of persons who have been placed in alternative employment.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question which, as the figures I am going to give in my answer will clearly show, will help to understand that the situation has improved today as compared to the corresponding period one year ago.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, from July 2005 to February 2006, 1973 persons have lost employment in the EPZ sector; 829 have been placed in other jobs. The comparative figures for the corresponding period, twelve months back, are 2449, as compared to 1973 as I mentioned, losing employment and as regards placement, twelve months back, it was 661 only as compared to 829.

Mr Varma: Can the Minister inform the House about the number of persons who have lost employment in the EPZ sector from September 2000 to July 2005?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take notice of this question, but if a proper question is put, I'll reply to it.

ANAHITA IRS PROJECT – ASSOCIATION OF FISHERS

(No. B/111) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Anahita IRS Project of the Ciel Group, he will state if he met the association of fishermen of the region, indicating the subject of the discussion and the outcome thereof.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will seek your indulgence because the reply is quite lengthy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, following demonstrations by fishers of Trou d'Eau Douce, GRSE, Deux Frères and Quatre Soeurs, I met their representatives a first time on the 28 February 2006 along with the promoters, officers of my Ministry and the Ministry of Environment & NDU in the context of the Anahita IRS Project. At the meeting, the fishers alleged that the works being carried out in the sea under the project would affect their fishing activities.

After discussions with all parties concerned, it was *inter-alia* agreed that –

- (i) a Technical Co-ordinating Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary (Fisheries Division) would be set up to address the concerns of the fishers. The committee would hold its first meeting on Monday the 06 March 2006;
- (ii) the Albion Fisheries Research Centre would carry out a study on the impact of the rehabilitation works at Ile-aux-Chats on the marine environment and fisheries;
- (iii) CIEL Properties would be more precise regarding the social projects proposed for the fishers;
- (iv) The works on site would continue and fishers would not, in any way, stand as an obstacle to these works. Negotiations to reach an agreement on the issues raised by the fishers would continue in parallel at the level of the Technical Coordinating Committee set up.

The Technical Coordinating Committee met as scheduled on the 06 March 2006 under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of the Fisheries Division of my Ministry with all parties concerned. During the meeting, officers of Albion Fisheries Research Centre reported on the survey carried out at two sites called 'Magasin' and 'Four à Chaux'. The survey comprised studies on the water current, the ecology, and the quality of water. Nothing adverse was detected. Samples were collected, analysed. Be it at Four à Chaux, there was no living marine organism seen in the deposits. The quality of water was within coastal water quality guidelines limits.

Based on the survey and information on catch from 2004, it had been concluded that –

- (a) in the event sediment at 'Four à Chaux' would be removed, this would not affect bait collection; and

- (b) works at 'Four à Chaux' would in no way affect the marine ecology at 'Magasin'.

Besides the promoters had made the undertaking that an equal area under mangroves which would be uprooted would be replanted and maintained. There was no mooring of boats at the two sites.

The fishers were also informed that, for the time being, there was no indication that the fish catch in that region would be affected.

The promoters presented their proposals in relation to the socio-economic integration of fishers in the region to be implemented on short and medium term basis as detailed below -

Short Term Projects

- (i) setting up of an Information Centre where information on employment opportunities and career perspectives would be made available;
- (ii) job opportunities for the fishers and the community;
- (iii) setting up of a petrol station which would be of great assistance not only to the fishers but also to the inhabitants.

Medium Term Projects

- (i) setting up of a coral garden in the vicinity of the project.
- (iv) implementation of sustainable programme for lagoon fishing through the setting up of self regulated zones.
- (i) off lagoon fishing - a sum of Rs2 m had been earmarked to be invested in off lagoon fishing activities involving the fisher community;
- (ii) setting up of a Scholarship Scheme to ensure tertiary training to a number of secondary school leavers.
- (iii) setting up of a full fledged multi-disciplinary training centre to meet the manpower requirements of the project;

- (iv) creation of a kindergarten for working women to allow mothers to take up jobs and, at the same time, ensure the safekeeping of their children;
- (v) creation of a support group for entrepreneurs whereby Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the region would be providing coaching and training;
- (vi) upgrading of public infrastructure in the nearby villages specially pertaining to road safety, street lighting and cleanliness;
- (vii) buoys would be donated to demarcate a swimming zone and embarkation and disembarkation zones at Trou d'Eau Douce public beach;
- (viii) donation of IT equipment to schools in the area and sponsorship of a trainer to teach school children.

The next meeting of the Technical Coordination Committee was fixed for Friday 10 March 2006. However, on Thursday 09 March 2006, the Legal Adviser of the fishers officially requested that the meeting be postponed to Friday 17 March 2006 in the light of the report submitted by the Ministry on the rehabilitation works carried out at Ile-aux-Chats. He also intimated that the fishers were not agreeable with the said report and wished to have a second opinion concerning same. The meeting had been fixed for Friday 17 March 2006.

In the mean time, it was reported that, as from 13 March 2006, fishers of the region had again started demonstrations on site and thus hampering the progress of works. The intervention of the Police had thus been requested on the 14 March 2006 to allow the continuation of works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I again met the fishers along with all parties on 17 March 2006 and once again the findings of the surveys carried out by Albion Fisheries Research Centre and the proposals of the promoters were elaborated. I appealed to the fishers to allow the site works to proceed as per their commitment taken at the meeting held on 28 February 2006. I explained to them that the works at Ile-aux-Chats would be closely monitored by the Fisheries Division of my Ministry, the Ministry of Environment & NDU.

As a reasonable solution in trying to bring to an end the conflict between the fishers and the promoters, I requested the promoters to -

- (i) increase the quantum of Rs2 m to Rs3 m for off lagoon fishing, and
- (ii) provide an additional sum of Rs2 m which would be credited into a fund to assist the fishers.

In this context, the Legal Advisers of the promoters and the fishers have been requested to jointly work out the *modus operandi* for the management of the funds.

Subsequently my Ministry has been informed by the Police that the President of the *Movement Solidarité des Pêcheurs* has made a statement at the Bel Air Rivière Sèche Police Station on the 18 March 2006 to the effect that the promoters were not respecting the extent of works approved in the EIA Licence.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands was requested to carry out a survey in order to check the veracity of the statement of the fisher. I am informed that a survey was carried out by the Ministry of Housing & Lands on the 23 March 2006 and it indicated that whereas fill on public domain was authorised for 23700m², the actual area filled was slightly higher and it measures 25700m².

My Ministry held a meeting on the 29 March 2006 with representatives of the Ministry of Environment & NDU, the Ministry of Housing & Lands and the Police Department to take stock of the report and the way forward. The Ministry of Environment & NDU has requested the Ministry of Housing & Lands to take remedial action.

I am also informed that the promoters are prepared to either -

- (i) reinstate the boundary in accordance with the site survey carried out by the Authorities, or
- (ii) request that this small additional area be included in the portion of land to be leased from the Government.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we are all – and even the fishers - agreeable to the project. I listened to the answer of the Minister and the main contention of the fishers was that rocks were being filled at Ile-aux-

Chats. According to the survey which was carried out, I think the fishers were right in saying that rocks were being filled more than what were allowed to CIEL Properties. Am I right?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have stated in my reply that whereas the fill on public domain was authorised for 23,700m² square metres, the actual area fill measures 25,700m² which means that either they have to reinstate the boundary in accordance with the site survey carried out by the Authority or the main request that the small addition area be included in the portion of land to be leased from the Government.

Mr Guinness: May I ask the Minister whether the officers of the Ministry of Environment monitor the project, because it is a very sensitive issue. We can see why this problem has occurred. In fact, it is the fishers who brought it to the notice of the Ministry that before the revetment is being made, rocks are being filled.

Dr. Boolell: I am not going into details, which the hon. Member knows only better. There is constant monitoring by the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Housing and Lands. In the light of which, slight encroachment was detected and remedial action has to be taken.

Mr Guinness: The report from the Albion Fisheries Research Centre says -

"The partial removal of mangroves from Ile-aux-Chats would constitute a loss of an alteration in habitat which supports fish and other marine organisms at the juvenile stages. It would at the same time decrease available areas of bait collection."

Can I know from the Minister whether proper monitoring is being done for the removal of mangroves and whether they are being replaced elsewhere?

Dr. Boolell: In fact, I have stated that the area which has been uprooted has been replanted and there is constant monitoring to ensure that the bait of fishermen would not be at risk. All the necessary precautions are being taken. There is constant monitoring as well as proper interaction and all the relevant information are being relayed.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another dispute between the fishers and the Ministry on the two small islets 'Four à Chaux' and 'Magasin'.

According to one of the reports, it is said that the promoters are getting on 'Magasin' also. Is it the case?

Dr. Boolell: According to information which has been relayed to me and in the light of constant monitoring, this is not the case. There is also the scientific survey which is being conducted in respect of current study, ecological survey and quality of water. Based on the survey and information which are constantly being relayed to us, there is no damage.

Mr Soodhun: Will the hon. Minister state whether the promoters of the Anahita IRS project have benefited from any fiscal and other exemptions and, if yes, what are the quantum?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is not relevant to the question.

Mr Varma: The hon. Minister made mention of legal advisers who are involved in the negotiation. Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House who are these legal advisers?

Dr. Boolell: It is Mr Seetaram who was candidate in the last general election.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given a list of social measures. Can we have an idea of whether there has been the allocation of a budget for the social component of this project?

Dr. Boolell: This is a very good question. I have asked the promoters to confirm and it is quite a substantial sum.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, unlike hon. Varma, I am not doing politics on that issue and we said that we are for it. It seems that the Ciel Group is carrying out a full-fledged independent socio-economic survey in that region. May I ask the Minister whether CIEL Group has indicated a time frame as to when that independent survey will be completed?

Dr. Boolell: The survey was limited only to Trou d'Eau Douce and being an elected Member of Deux Frères and Quatre Soeurs, I impressed upon them that the survey should include these two regions. As far as I know, I do not have the reply. I will certainly seek the information and relay it to the hon. Member.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, off lagoon fishing is one of the measures that has been brought forward by the promoters. May I know from the hon. Minister how many of the fishers have been trained for off lagoon fishing in that region?

Dr. Boolell: I do not have the exact reply, but we have impressed upon FITEC to do the needful. They need to be properly trained and we have also to impress upon them that they need to have the basics of management, because off lagoon fishing entails a lot of responsibilities. We want to make sure that they are properly prepared so that when they move off lagoon, they will know what to do with the catch, how to invest earnings, etc.

Mr Speaker: Last question, please!

Mr Lesjongard; Mr Speaker, Sir, should not it be this way, that is, a thorough survey should have been carried out before coming forward with the proposal for off lagoon fishing?

Dr. Boolell: The hon. Member knows very well what we have inherited and what we are doing to empower the fishers community. We are doing a lot and we are leaving no stone unturned, Mr Speaker, Sir. This issue will be addressed in a very humane and forceful manner.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

DEPUTY RECTORS – APPOINTMENT – SELECTED CANDIDATES & QUALIFICATIONS

(No. B/112) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the last appointment exercise of Deputy Rectors, he will table a list of the selected candidates, indicating their respective qualifications.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following the last selection exercise carried out by the Public Service Commission, 41 candidates were appointed Deputy Rectors in December 2005/January 2006.

I am also informed that a few candidates who were not appointed felt aggrieved by the decision of the Public Service Commission and have

entered a case for redress before the Supreme Court. As the matter is *sub judice*, it would not be proper for me, at this stage, to disclose the information asked for.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister what were the minimum requirements for eligibility for that post?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the papers I have, the qualifications in the Grade of EO are as follows -

- (i) (a) Cambridge School Certificate with credit in at least five subjects, including English, obtained at not more than 2 sittings or
- (b) passes not below Grade C in at least five subjects, including English language obtained at not more than 2 sittings at the General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary level' provided that at one of the sittings, passes have been obtained either (i) in five subjects including English language with at least Grade C in any two subjects or (ii) in six subjects including English language with at least Grade C in any one subject.
- (ii) a Cambridge Higher School Certificate or passes in at least two subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education 'Advanced level', and
- (iii) a degree or joint degree from a recognised university.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister whether there was any minimum period of experience needed for that post?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, yes. The candidate should have at least five years teaching experience, after graduation, in a State Post Primary institution for candidates having successfully completed a one-year post graduate course in education or possessing an equivalent qualification acceptable to the PSC or at least eight years teaching experience after graduation in a State Post Primary institution.

Mr Guinness: I understand that the Minister says that the case is *sub judice*. But even though, can I know from the record of the Minister, whether all the 41 selected candidates met the minimum requirements or experience at least?

Dr. David: Well, it was for the PSC to assess.

PRIMARY SUBJECT ROADMAP PLAN – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/113) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, he will state if his Ministry has prepared a “Primary Subject Roadmap Plan” and, if so, will he state whether the matter has been discussed with all stakeholders.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of education reforms and World Class Quality Education, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources has come up with a series of measures for implementation at school levels.

One such measure is the introduction of a “Primary Subject Roadmap (Workplan)” which should be filled in by the teachers with a copy handed over to every pupil.

The objective of the roadmap is to enable the students to know well in advance the topics/chapters that the teachers propose to cover during and in the coming week thus enabling effective teaching and learning.

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that before coming up with such a measure, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Education & Human Resources, has, on different occasions and at different instances, kept stakeholders informed of his intention thereon. Moreover, in the quality initiatives for World Class Quality Education 2006 which was launched at the beginning of the School Academic Year and which has been circulated to all stakeholders, it is clearly mentioned that the weekly plan of work of teachers will be formalised and students will be provided with subject roadmap at the beginning of each term. Parents will, therefore, be informed of the weekly plan of work of the teachers and how their children are progressing. The Ministry believes that this is a good practice which is internationally accepted.

So far the Ministry has not received any official complaint on the implementation of the roadmap.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister whether there was a deadline for the filling of that roadmap?

Dr. David: I see from a letter dated 07 March, addressed to Directors of all zones in which it is mentioned that the roadmap should be sent to Head Teachers and Rectors. Anyway, teachers have been informed about it.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister, therefore, how many teachers have, up to now, done so?

Dr. David: I won't be able to know, Mr Speaker, Sir. The main question concerns the preparation of a Primary School roadmap. I don't have the information as to whether the matter has been discussed

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, because this question has not been answered, can I know from the Minister whether there have been discussions with the unions before preparing the roadmap?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not quite sure whether there have been direct discussions with the unions, but from the information I have, it has been aired sufficiently. Information notes to that effect have been widely circulated. I read from the World Class Quality Education brochure –

“The weekly plan of work of teachers will be formalised and students will be provided with subject roadmaps at the beginning of each term.”

This brochure has been circulated by hundreds, if not by thousands, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guinness: I understand that there have been no direct discussions as the Minister is saying. Therefore, is the Minister aware that the teachers already prepare their daily notes, their scheme of works, their weekly plan of work and their term-wise plan. Therefore, why should there be a duplication?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, weekly notes or termwise notes are in fact prepared. These are submitted to the head teacher. Now the Ministry wants parents to be involved and this is a good thing. Parents should know what their wards will cover during week 1, week 2, week 3 and so on. As I said, there has been no official contest submitted at the Ministry's level.

Mr Guinness: Since there has been no direct discussion, can I ask whether the substantive Minister will be prepared to meet the unions to discuss the matter?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the Ministry has received no official contest from the unions; no letter, nothing has been submitted by the the union.

SQUATTERS (REGULARISED) - UTILITIES - PROVISION

(No. B/114) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second 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 sites occupied by squatters whose situations have been regularised, he will state where matters stand regarding the provision of road networks, water and electricity.

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

I am informed that out of 3091 pre25 July 2001 squatters, 2190 have been regularised.

Regarding the provision of utilities on the sites, it is the practice of the Ministry of Housing and Lands to send layout plan on the regularised sites to the Ministry of Public Utilities, Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit (NDU Div), CEB, CWA, Wastewater Management Authority for the provision of utilities and access roads.

FISHERMEN - SEMI/FULLY INDUSTRIALISED VESSELS, LICENCES, ETC.

(No. B/115) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to artisanal or group of fishermen, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the DBM Ltd., the number thereof who have been granted loans for the purchase of semi or fully industrialised vessels since July 2005, and
- (b) state the number of licences issued to these fishermen.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, specific loan schemes have been devised in collaboration with the Development Bank of Mauritius to

encourage fishers to move away from our over fished lagoon to outer reef areas.

In this respect groups of fishers organised in a company, co-operative society or association and registered with the Fisheries Division of my Ministry are eligible for the purchase of boats and equipment to join the semi-industrial fishing sector.

Under the semi-industrial fishing scheme, loans are granted up to 75% of the project cost to a ceiling of Rs3 m. at an interest rate of 8% per annum. The repayment is for a period of 7 years including a 1-year moratorium.

The semi-industrial fishing scheme enables fishers to join the chilled fish fishery and the swordfish fishery. The chilled fish fishery is a fishery carried out on the smaller banks. Fishing vessels engaged in this fishery bring chilled fish for sale on the local market. 14 fishing vessels were engaged in this fishery in 2005 and landed 356 tonnes of fish.

The swordfish fishery involves fishing for swordfish and associated species such as tunas and dolphin fish, commonly known as “Dorado”. In this fishery, 6 fishing vessels were engaged in 2005 and landed 86 tonnes of fish mainly for the export market.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Development Bank of Mauritius that since July 2005 to date, no applications for loan have been received from artisanal or group of fishermen for the purchase of semi-industrialised vessels nor for fully-industrialised vessels.

No other such groups of fishermen have requested licences from my Ministry to join this particular fishery. Thus no licences have been issued.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, since we are promoting Mauritius as a seafood hub, may I ask the Minister why is it that we have so much lack of interests from local fishers for semi or fully industrialised fishing?

Dr. Boolell: I grant the hon. Member that we need to make the package of incentives and facilities more attractive. Over and above training that has to be dispensed to the fishers, of course the matter will be taken up and raised with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. We are also setting up a Fisherman Investment Trust to ensure that the fishery resources of Mauritius benefit the fishers' community at large. We are working on the modalities of the Trust. But at the same time I grant the hon. Member that we need to make the package more attractive. However,

having said so there is a new fisheries project scheme with the possibility for fishermen to obtain 70% of payment of project up to Rs30 m. We will look into all these and make sure that the package is more attractive. When the budget will be announced, some of these measures will be spelt out.

Mr Lesjongard: True it is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have to make the package more attractive. But since July a lot of officers from different Ministries have been travelling worldwide promoting Mauritius as a seafood hub. Can I know from the Minister what has been done locally for promoting the same seafood hub?

Dr. Boolell: What we have done is that we have had discussions with the fishers. We have exchanged views; we have analysed some of the proposals; we have seen to it that the DBM tries to be more flexible in respect of loans that have been granted to them in the past concerning the rescheduling of loans. But since discussions are ongoing, let us wait for them to make concrete proposals. In the light of the proposals being made, we will certainly entertain them to see to it that their cause is certainly not prejudiced in the light that more visibility is made to the sector. As I have stated, we are going to set up a Fisherman Investment Trust precisely to empower the fishers' community.

VALLEE DES PRETRES - SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS - PLOTS OF LAND -

(No. B/116) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if it is proposed to resume possession of two plots of land situated in Vallée des Prêtres (behind the dogpound), allocated to socio-religious associations and, if so, the reasons thereof.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, two plots of land of an extent of approximately 1550m² each situated at Vallée des Prêtres behind the dogpound have been allocated to two socio-religious associations.

Representations have been received from the residents of NHDC protesting against the development of the sites allocated to the two associations. The matter is still under consideration.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that the matter is still under consideration, that is, up to now no decision has been taken for retrieving the land?

Mr Bachoo: No decision has been taken.

CITES OUVRIERES - WASTEWATER TARIFF

(No. B/117) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether it is proposed to reduce the waste water tariff for the inhabitants of the "*cités ouvrières*".

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, at the request of donor agencies, a Consultant will be appointed shortly to carry out an independent tariff study for the waste water sector. The Consultant will consider, *inter alia*, affordability of the low-income group. The hon. Member will appreciate that I cannot pre-empt the propositions that will be made by the Consultant.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Minister if among the terms of reference the consultant will be working upon, there is the case of those at the low rung of the ladder, that is, reviewing the tariff structure for those consumers?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the objective of the tariff review study is to ensure financial sustainability of the wastewater sector over the period 2006/2010 taking into consideration the projects being executed and operated under the national sewerage programme. The wastewater tariff is one of the main components and aimed at putting in place a proper cost recovery system that will generate enough revenue to cover all costs which should include depreciation recovery on all operating costs. But one of the foremost objectives of this Government is to ensure the sustainability while, at the same time, looking at the most vulnerable group and the poor section of the population.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, when we were in power we gave the same argument, and they said that when they come in power, they would review the tariff structure in order to alleviate the problems of those at the lowest rung of the ladder. Are they going in that direction, Mr Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Kasenally: What is the question? There is no question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can state how many times the wastewater tariff in the *cités ouvrières* was increased during 2002/2005?

Dr. Kasenally: I need notice of the question, but one thing I can tell is that nobody owes us any living. If this project is going to be sustainable people will have to pay, but in the process we have to ensure, I repeat again, that the poor and the vulnerable group are protected; and this Government is going to see to it that this is so.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the Minister confirm that there was a decrease in tariff between 2000 and 2005?

Dr. Kasenally: I am sorry, I cannot confirm.

BOARD OF INVESTMENT/FINANCIAL SERVICES PROMOTION AGENCY - MEMBERS - ALLOWANCES

(No. B/118) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment information as to –

- (a) the composition of its Board of management, indicating the allowances payable to each of them, and
- (b) the date of the last and next Board meetings.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/118 and B/119 together. I am tabling two statements giving the information requested at part (a) of both PQ Nos. B/118 and B/119.

With regard to allowances payable to the members of both the Board of Management of the Board of Investment and of the Financial Services Promotion Agency, the monthly fees payable are Rs20,000 for the Chairman and Rs10,000 for Board members. I would, however, wish to point out that

the Chairman and one Board member of BOI have declined to accept the fees and as for FSPA, the Chairman is serving the Board on a no fee basis.

Regarding part (b) of both PQ Nos. B/118 and B/119, the date of the last Board meeting was 24 February 2006, and the date of next Board meeting is 27 April 2006. I have impressed on the BOI and on the FSPA on the need to comply with the statutory obligation of holding meetings at least once per month.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister just stated that he would instruct the authorities concerned to have the Board meeting. So, can the Minister inform the House whether the fact that there has not been any Board meeting, investment certificates which have been approved have not been issued? Because the Chairman has not signed same. Is the Minister aware of this situation?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, some of the powers of the Chairman have been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer. I would like to inform the hon. Member that I have acted in good faith. In fact, when the Question was asked two weeks ago, we could have requested them to have a meeting and to comply with the statutory obligation. But, I have acted in good faith. They have not had a meeting. I have impressed upon them that there is need to have a meeting once every month. There are some powers of the Chairman that have been delegated to the CEO, especially with respect to the issue of some certificates.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Minister whether, in fact, we should not review the situation? Appointment of Consultants as Chairpersons of Boards is already tricky. But does he, in fact, think that it is a good situation – nothing personal is meant - where a Consultant based in Singapore chairs these two Boards, they meet only when he flies in from Singapore and flies out again, with the result that the law is not abided by? This is not in order and I think we should review the whole situation.

Mr Sithanen: This is not exactly the correct situation, Mr Speaker, Sir. True it is that in that particular month they were under a lot of pressure to prepare a high level delegation in Paris. But, let me reassure the House that there is no project or no certificate that has not been issued by the BOI because of the absence of the person whom hon. Bérenger has mentioned.

Mr Bérenger: Again, the Minister is not replying to my question. Is it healthy for a Board like this one, when we are all trying desperately to get foreign investors in, to be chaired by a Consultant based in Singapore, who

flies in to chair that Board? Is that really in the interest of getting foreign direct investment in the country?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two ways of looking at this problem. We need people who have got worldwide expertise and we need people also who have got a network of investors that could come and see what can be done in Mauritius. Now, we know that the model of Singapore is probably one of the best model with a view to attracting foreign direct investment, but I'll make sure that there is no derogation basically from complying with the statutory obligation of the Board of Investment....

Mr Bhagwan: Since I have asked this Parliamentary Question, there has been a lot of harassment at the level of the BOI. I will give the Minister names afterwards. There has even been a case which has been referred to the Police by a lady.

(Interruptions)

We are here doing our job as Members of Parliament. It is very unfair upon the lady. The case has been referred to the Police. Can the Minister personally look into that and correct things?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was not in town. I am not aware of what the hon. Member is saying, but if he gives me the information I'll certainly look into it.

**FINANCIAL SERVICES PROMOTION AGENCY –
COMPOSITION OF BOARD, ALLOWANCES PAYABLE,
ETC.**

(No. B/119) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Promotion Agency information as to –

- (a) the composition of its Board of management, indicating the allowances payable to each of them, and
- (b) the date of the last and next Board meetings.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/118)

**MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY –
MEDICAL & HEALTH OFFICER**

(No. B/120) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the appointment of a part-time medical practitioner he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority the following information –

- (a) the date on which the post was advertised and the closing date for submission of applications;
- (b) the qualifications and other requirements specified in the advertisement, and
- (c) the name of the successful candidate, indicating –
 - (i) his qualifications and age, and
 - (ii) whether he applied within the time limit and was interviewed.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority as follows –

- (a) the position of Medical and Health Officer on a part-time basis was advertised in the local press on 27 and 28 October 2005, and the closing date was fixed for 15 November of the same year, and
- (b) the qualification requirements specified for the position were as hereunder –
 - (i) a degree in medicine, satisfying the criteria for full registration in Mauritius and acceptable to the Authority, and
 - (ii) at least 5 years' post qualification experience.
- (c) following a selection exercise conducted on 24 November 2005 by the staff committee of the Board of the Mauritius Ports Authority, the name of Dr. Mahmad

Aniff Kodabaccus was retained for enlistment as Medical and Health Officer on a part-time basis. The approval of MPA Board was obtained at its meeting held on 29 November 2005.

- (d) Dr. Kodabaccus is holder of a MBBS from Dhaka University, and is a fully registered Medical Practitioner, with over 22 years experience. He is 55 years of age, and
- (e) Dr. Kodabaccus submitted his application on 07 November 2005, that is, within the date limit set in the advertisement and was duly interviewed by the staff committee along with the other applicants.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is the same Dr. Mahmad Kodabaccus who is a member of his political party, the PMXD?

Mr X. Duval: He is a councillor at Port Louis ...

ALBION – SHELTER FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN DISTRESS - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/121) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the shelter for children at Albion, she will state if the enquiry conducted last year following allegations concerning malpractices thereat has now been completed and, if yes, the outcome thereof.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, following complaints received in early 2005 against Shalom Association, which manages the Shelter for Children and Women in Distress at Albion, a Fact-Finding Committee was set up in April 2005 under the chairmanship of the Principal Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare.

The Committee met on seven occasions during 2005 and the Chairman has now submitted a report. The findings of the Fact-Finding Committee indicate that –

- It was found that the shelter has been managed in an amateurish way by a group of people who had no previous experience in such matters. However, the allegations of sexual assaults were found to be flimsy.
- Besides, no conclusive evidence was found regarding the alleged '*imposition des mains*' and mismanagement of funds.

ALBION – SHELTER FOR CHILDREN – TENDERERS

(No. B/122) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the shelter for children at Albion, she will state for the year 2005 –

- (a) the names of the tenderers for the management of the shelter, and
- (b) the amount spent for its running.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, tenders for the management of the shelter at Albion for financial year 2004/2005 were launched on 12 January 2004, after consultations with the Central Tender Board.

Three bids were received by the closing date on 04 February 2004 from the following –

- (i) Terre de Paix
- (ii) Martingale Association
- (iii) Shalom Association

With regard to part (b) of the question, an average of Rs316,000 is spent monthly for the running of the shelter.

HOSPITALS – CASUALTIES – PATIENTS

(No. B/123) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware that there has been an increase in the number of patients attending the casualties department of our hospitals and, if so, will he consider the advisability of opening the area health centres on week ends and public holidays.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the attendance during the first quarter of each year is generally high compared to the rest of the year. This is the warmest period of the year, normally associated with a high prevalence of tropical diseases including fever, gastro enteritis and conjunctivitis.

According to official records, there was a slight increase in the number of patients attending casualty departments during the first two

months of the year compared to the same period last year. However, for the month of March 2006 an average increase of 15% has been noted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this increase is attributed to the emergence of chikungunya disease. The national media information campaign resulted in a large segment of the population, including children calling at the hospitals with fever and associated symptoms.

As regards the opening of area health centres on week-ends and public holidays, I must inform the House that on my assumption of duty as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, one of the first measures taken by my Ministry to improve the health services delivery is the extension of the opening hours of area health centres on all days of the week.

In fact, since 19 September 2005, most area health centres are operational from 0800 hours to noon on Saturdays and from 0900 hours to noon on Sundays and Public holidays.

In addition, these area health centres are opened until 18 00 hours on weekdays compared to 16 00 hours prior to September 2005.

However, Beau Bassin, Centre de Flacq, Mahebourg and Rose Belle Area Health Centres still operate until 16 00 hours on weekdays and from 0800 hours to noon on Saturdays in view of the low attendance rate.

Mr Speaker Sir, it is to be noted that on account of the high influx of patients at SSRN Hospital over the past few weeks, my Ministry took immediate measures to further extend the opening hours of the Triolet Area Health Centre during weekends and public holidays up to 18 00 hours. In the Accident & Emergency Department of all Regional Hospitals, more doctors have been deployed to increase the number of consultations, using the infrastructure of other departments. The public has been urged to attend the health centres near their place of residence in the first instance in cases of illnesses.

The above-mentioned measures will undoubtedly decrease the number of patients attending the casualty department of the hospitals, and will go a long way, not only to reduce waiting time but also in providing quality health care to the Mauritian patients within a well structured decentralised set up.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that one of the causes for the overcrowding in the casualty wards in the hospitals was the chikungunya problem. If you will allow me, can I ask the Minister whether the Ministry has looked into the required expert advice to know whether the chikungunya virus has developed into something different, less

serious but more widespread resulting in the number of cases in the emergency wards? There have been different views expressed in the press and it has impact on the number of people in the emergency wards. Has any study been carried out or is being carried out?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, due to the influx, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have asked the Virology Department at Victoria hospital to carry out a study, to take samples of patients who are coming to hospitals with fever and other symptoms and to see whether there are other viruses which are affecting them. One thing we are aware of is that all the cases coming to the hospitals are not necessarily chikungunya. Lots of people are coming with fever, but it is not necessarily chikungunya. So, we want to know exactly what are the other viruses which are affecting the people.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the increase in the number of patients attending casualties even Area Health Centres - for instance, at Tyack Area Health Centre where there is not enough space or shelter for patients waiting for doctors - can the hon. Minister tell us what does he propose to do to sort out that serious problem?

Mr Faugoo: There are two things that can be done, Mr Speaker, Sir. First, maybe we'll have to extend the opening hours maybe during the weekends or even in the weekdays, and secondly, in the long run - this cannot be done immediately - to see if we can expand or go to a different place, look for a better place or maybe a bigger place.

Mr Guttee: Sir, my question was strictly on weekends and public holidays. I would just like to inform the House that not only Triolet is facing the problem, but it is so all over the island. What does the hon. Minister propose to do for the area in Goodlands that covers Roche Terre, Grand Gaube, Petit Raffray and so on?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, I had discussed it with the Chief Medical Officer and other staff of my Ministry. We have an acute shortage of doctors in the service, Mr Speaker, Sir. I had asked the CMO to see to it if we can open some of the Area Health Centres, especially those affected areas. I was told this is difficult. They had a meeting in fact with the association of medical practitioners in the public service. They were not agreeable to it. I had given instructions to open all the Area Health Centres in the regions concerned. But I can still take on board the point raised by my friend, hon. Guttee, and see how we can help.

Mr Mardemootoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the problem at medical care clinic at Tyack, will the Minister consider making arrangements to use the big monument at Souillac Hospital, at least, to comfort all the people in the surroundings?

Mr Faugoo: I will definitely consider this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: ...all the people who attend casualties at the hospitals with symptoms of chikungunya are treated as having the virus of chikungunya or do the doctors have to carry out any test before deciding whether they are suffering from chikungunya?

Mr Faugoo: I wish to inform the hon. Member and Members of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there is no treatment for chikungunya virus as such. What we do is we treat the symptoms. There are professionals outside who are claiming that they have got solutions for the virus itself. I reiterate that there is no treatment for the virus as such, but what they treat are the symptoms, namely fever. This is what they do in all cases where the patient has fever and pain.

PEREYBERE - FLOODING

(No. B/124) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre D'Or) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that a number of houses in Pereybère were flooded during the recent heavy rainfalls and, if so, will he state what remedial measures were taken in the short term and will be taken in the long term.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Pereybère has been listed as a flood prone area in the report of National Land Drainage study published in 2003.

I am given to understand that the causes of the flooding problems in Pereybère are the obstruction of an existing natural drain at its outlet to the sea, low lying area and poor natural drainage capacity.

The consultant of the National Development Unit has already undertaken a study of the problems and based on the recommendations that have been made, it is proposed to implement a project in two phases at Pereybère as follows -

- (i) Phase I - the rehabilitation of the existing natural drain and the upgrading of an existing culvert crossing the main road and the public beach, and
- (ii) Phase II - the construction of a reinforced concrete drain network over a length of 2 kms within the residential area.

Necessary clearances from different authorities concerned including financial clearance have been sought for this project and Phase I is expected to start by June 2006.

Mr Guttee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said that it is a low-lying area and it is flooded. What are the short-term measures he proposes to take to evacuate the water which is always there?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we did not find any solution for the short term because once it gets flooded, it is very difficult for the fire services to come in. Once or twice we have tried it, but it hasn't given good results.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 - SPORTING FACILITIES – SURVEY

(No. B/125) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if any survey of existing sporting facilities has been carried out in Constituency No. 13 (Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac), indicating the measures that would be taken to improve the existing sporting facilities in Rivière des Anguilles, l'Escalier, Bois Chéri and Souillac.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my previous replies to PQs on sport infrastructure, I mentioned that a condition audit was carried out to take stock of the state of sports infrastructure. The Condition Audit revealed that an amount of Rs150 m. to Rs200 m. would be required to improve and upgrade these infrastructure.

In view of limited budgetary provisions of my Ministry, the assistance of the National Development Unit and the Ministry of Local Government were sought for the improvement of sport facilities in several regions.

In this context, the National Development Unit and the Ministry of Local Government and the Grand Port Savanne District Council carried out a survey of existing sport facilities in Rivière des Anguilles, Bois Chéri and Souillac to determine the scope of works and costs estimates thereof.

I am informed that according to the survey, the District Council of Grand Port Savanne has estimated the cost of upgrading of the Souillac football ground to be around Rs500,000. The cost for the upgrading of Rivière des Anguilles and Bois Chéri football grounds as well as the volleyball pitch at Grand Bois has not yet been finalised by the National Development Unit.

Sir, I would like to assure the House that remedial works will be undertaken as soon as funds are made available and my Ministry is exploring all possible avenues.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he can give us an indication as to when the report with regard to the other football fields being carried out by the National Development Unit will be ready?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, it will take some time, but I think during the next year.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister assure the House, at least, for the benefit of the state of mind of the inhabitants of constituency No. 13 that he will do everything in his possibility to try to obtain the necessary budgetary allocations for those improvements to be done? And, if so, what exactly has he done up to now with regard to trying to find the necessary finances?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that everything will be done to his satisfaction.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 - STATE-OWNED SCHOOLS – INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. B/126) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if a survey has recently been carried out to assess the state of the infrastructure of the state-owned schools in Constituency No. 13 (Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) and, if so, will he state the outcome thereof, indicating what is being done to address the present state of affairs.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that surveys have been carried out to determine the state of infrastructure of state-owned schools in Constituency No. 13. I am tabling a list of the works identified, as well as their status.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, to previous questions in Parliament, the hon. Minister of Education had replied that necessary repairs would be carried out to Rivière des Anguilles Government School during school holidays of December 2005-January 2006. Therefore, why have those works not been carried out as yet?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, I have on the list submitted to me by the Ministry 15 items concerning the schools situated in Constituency No. 13. Reference has been made to the Rivière des Anguilles Government School. Let me just read the status report. For the construction of new toilet blocks, a preliminary design has been completed by MPI. A Building Plans Committee is to be convened by the MPI round about the middle of April 2006 for the approval of the project. At the same school, there will be re-roofing works of two school blocks. Evaluation of tenders has been completed on 31 March 2006. The letter of award is expected to be issued by next week. Works will be completed by the end of June 2006. Upgrading works in toilet block are being carried out now. As regards upgrading of the yard, the NDU will be requested to carry out the works during the August 2006 holidays.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I, therefore, humbly request the hon. Minister to table a progress report at latest end June 2006, in order that we may find out that, in fact, those works that have been promised are indeed being done?

Dr. David: I will pass on the request to the substantive Minister.

**LA FLORA, GRAND BOIS & BOIS CHERI RESIDENTS –
HEALTH SERVICES**

(No. B/127) **Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will state what measures will be taken to provide medical facilities to the residents of La Flora, Grand Bois and Bois Chéri in their region.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, health services are available island wide in the five main regional hospitals, namely –

- (i) SSRN Hospital
- (ii) Flacq Hospital
- (iii) Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital
- (iv) Victoria Hospital, and
- (v) Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital

To render the services more accessible to the Mauritians, health services are also provided through a network of 24 area health centres, 112 community health centres and also two medi clinics.

The Southern part of the island is catered for by J. Nehru Hospital as well as by four area health centres and 16 community health centres.

The inhabitants of Grand Bois are provided with medical facilities at Grand Bois Community Health Centre, which caters also for the inhabitants of La Flora and Bois Chéri and are at 1 km and 2 kma respectively from Grand Bois Community Health Centre.

The centre is open from 9 00 a.m. to 6 00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 00 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

The medical services provided are -

- Basic health services
- Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health Services (i.e. ante-natal and post-natal clinics, well-baby clinics)
- Vaccination
- Non Communicable Diseases (NCD).

/...

However, the present building housing the Grand Bois Community Health Centre is too small to cater for the increasing number of persons calling there. Consequently, my Ministry proposes to construct a new area health centre at Grand Bois. A plot of land of 8442 m² has already been

vested in my Ministry to that effect. In view of financial constraints, the project will be implemented in the financial year 2007-2008.

SOUILLAC – WATERFRONT - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/128) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment and NDU whether he will state if it is proposed to construct a waterfront in Souillac and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not within my Ministry's programme to construct a waterfront in Souillac.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of the reply, could the hon. Minister tell us what would be within the confines of his Ministry for the Souillac waterfront, not necessarily the physical aspect of what we call a waterfront but the beach frontage of Souillac?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is advisable for us to have a site visit and see what type of upgrading works can be done.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider the construction of a garden at the *emplacement* of the MPI for the widening of the Telfair Garden?

Mr Bachoo: I will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES – AWARENESS BY STUDENTS

(No. B/129) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if the school curricula will be amended with a view to increasing the awareness of human rights principles by students.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, citizenship education was supposed to become an integral part of the primary school curriculum as from 2001, and for that purpose a sum of more than Rs3 m. has been spent to produce a textbook, which was subsequently found to be inadequate and inappropriate for use at primary level. While on the one hand the textbook was overloaded with technical details, basic issues like national festivals were mishandled and some national festivals were omitted in the textbook, thereby causing serious prejudice to national

harmony in the country. As a matter of fact, the textbook, which was badly conceived, was rejected by the teachers, and as a consequence, citizenship education is not being taught in our schools.

As regards the secondary sector, the teaching of citizenship education and human rights is done in an informal manner, cutting across subjects.

As a remedial step, consideration will be given to the possibility of integrating citizenship education and human rights education into the main domains of learning as a cross cutting theme. Pedagogical activities aiming at raising awareness of children will also be organised.

Further, the Ministry has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross in November 2005 for the training of our teachers on humanitarian law. The Ministry will integrate the teaching of humanitarian law into the secondary curriculum.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is envisaged that human rights becomes an examinable subject?

Dr. David: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, it may not become an examinable subject, but it will form part basically in most of the subjects taught at school. For example, in an English or French class, human rights could be taught from appropriate passages. This may be the case for other subjects where it is possible to have it as a component.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two ways of including the human rights education in the curriculum. First, we can institute a separate subject dedicated to human rights education and second, we can integrate human rights in all the subjects like geography, history and biology. Can the Minister state, at this point in time, what are the future options of his Ministry regarding increasing the awareness of human rights principles by students?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has just mentioned two possibilities. I believe that they are not mutually exclusive. Both can be included in the school curriculum. I consider human rights to be a very important component at school level. This is the place where students may learn about their rights and responsibilities. Every opportunity, apart from the classroom where this can be inculcated, would certainly do good to democracy.

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE – OPERATION

(No. B/130) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether it is proposed to set up a Human Rights Centre and, if so, when.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government does propose to set up a Human Rights Centre, which, shall, as far as possible, become operational on a pilot basis during the second half of this year. The Human Rights Centre which will be located in central Port Louis and close to the Supreme Court will be equipped with state-of-the art and user-friendly research and documentation facilities for the use of one and all. It will also have conference rooms to host regular talks and conferences by local and international resource persons. The staff of the Human Rights Centre will be permanently involved in advancing and promoting human rights and will have the task of mobilising all strata of society for that purpose.

The Human Rights Centre will play an important role in the promotion of human rights in Mauritius and will, in particular, assist in the dissemination of the provisions of the Constitution and of the various human rights instruments to which Mauritius is a party.

Mr Rucktooa: We have a view of increasing awareness of human rights principle to students at school, we have a well-established Human Rights Commission. Can the Minister just give some highlight of how it is going to function?

Mr Valayden: As I stated in the answer, the centre will mainly disseminate human rights value to all strata of the society. How will it function? The centre will be at the centre of the country and then human rights will be disseminated around different Citizens Advice Bureau. But members will be kept informed and in due course I will give all the details to the House.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the administrative framework of the Human Right Centre has been finalised?

Mr Valayden: My answer is ‘no’. We are still discussing on the different possibilities and the way it will function because it will not only function at the level Human Right Centre in Port Louis, but it will go throughout the island

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Centre will function? Will function together or will they act separately?

Mr Valayden: It is two different things, Mr Speaker, Sir. We set up the Commission of Human Rights, especially section 4 of the functions of the National Human Rights Commission. It will be completely different because the National Human Rights Commission has as objective, that is, to inquire, to visit Police cells and also to look in all sorts of complaints, whereas the Human Rights Centre will be to disseminate, that is, being a more positive and going towards the people to enrich the people, to empower the people, to enlighten the people.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is it envisaged that the Human Rights Centre liaise with the Citizens Advice Bureaux in different areas to disseminate information as far as human rights are concerned?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is one area where I am asking the hon. Member to be patient because more details will be given when it has been fine-tuned.

Mrs Martin: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether a budget has been earmarked for the Human Rights Centre?

Mr Valayden: This is why we are asking the House to be patient because the budget will have to be written. On the other hand as I stated in my speech on 10 December last, we are working together with the UNDP and we are on the verge of concluding an agreement. But I will be very patient to see the conclusion of the agreement before giving more details.

BOIS D'OISEAUX ROAD, POUFRE D'OR - BUS STOP SIGNS

(No. B/131) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware that many bus stop signs have been erected along Bois d'Oiseaux Road, Poudre d'Or and, if so, will be state –

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

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in April 2001 two bus stops were fixed along Bois d'Oiseaux Road by the former Road Section of the Public Infrastructure Division of my Ministry following a proposal of the NTA to reroute bus routes 26 (St Antoine-Central Flacq) and 53 (Rivière du Rempart-Port Louis) via Dumping Road and Bois d'Oiseaux Road at Poudre d'Or.

In reply to PQ No. IB/104, I informed the House that following a subsequent road test carried out jointly by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the National Transport Authority, the road was found to be too narrow for buses and also could not be enlarged.

A further site visit was effected on 30 August 2005 with all parties concerned including the National Transport Authority, Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit, Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council, the Police and the Ministry of Housing & Lands to explore all possibilities for satisfying the bus users of the village. The visit confirmed unfortunately that the overall enlargement of the Bois d'Oiseaux Road is not possible in view of the existence of houses and other structures.

To reduce the walking distance of the inhabitants of Bois d'Oiseaux Road to catch the bus service, the National Transport Authority held a meeting with the bus operators of routes 26 and 53 to discuss the possibility of extending the bus service up to Poudre d'Or Hospital. They have agreed, in principle, to the proposal. It is expected that the service will be operational soon. The walking distance would thus be about 400 metres.

As the bus stop signs fixed in 2001 do not have any *raison d'être*, the Road Development Authority has been requested to remove them. I thank the hon. Member for drawing my attention to it.

Mr Rucktooa: When the bus stop signs were erected by the officers, the obvious reason was that a bus service is going to be provided. Are the same officers today coming and telling the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that the bus cannot be provided along that road?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If I understand rightly, looking at the file, the decision to put a bus route there was subject to the approval of the Traffic Management Unit, but unfortunately, it was not consulted properly.

CITÉ LA CURE, PORT LOUIS – HOUSES – FLOODING PROBLEMS

(No. B/132) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware that a number of houses at Cité La Cure, Port Louis were flooded during the recent heavy rainfalls and the cyclone Diwa and, if so, will he state what remedial measures are envisaged.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is aware of the flooding problems at Cité La Cure, Port Louis since the site is listed as a flood prone area in the National Land Drainage study.

I have been informed that the Municipal Council of Port Louis which is working in close collaboration with NDU for the implementation of the National Land Drainage Programme, has taken remedial measures for the cleaning and unblocking of all existing drains at Cité La Cure following the recent heavy rainfalls.

I am also advised that Cité La Cure has been included in the priority list of the Municipal Council of Port Louis regarding construction of drains under the National Land Drainage Programme. The project will be implemented as soon as all necessary clearances are obtained.

I would also like to inform the hon. Member that projects regarding drainage systems at Morcellement Foondun and Ste Croix and upgrading of Ruisseau Terre Rouge have been implemented by the National Development Unit to resolve problems in the catchment area of which Cité La Cure and Le Hochet form part. Major problems of flooding have thus been resolved. I must add that 326 flood prone area have been identified through the island but only in this area a sum of Rs62.5 m. has already been invested. Other areas need to be attended to as well.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Would the Minister indicate to the House when the particular problem of drainage at Cité La Cure will start, considering the heavy rainfall expected? Is the hon. Minister aware that recently, with cyclone Diwa, the inhabitants of Cité La Cure resided illegally in Cité La Cure Community Centre?

Mr Bachoo: As I have just mentioned, we have already spent a few millions rupees in that particular region and as far as the additional roads are

concerned, I do hope that in the forthcoming budget we will have enough funds to be able to spend.

IMPASSE EUGÈNE, LE HOCHET – FLOODING PROBLEMS

(No. B/133) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware of the flooding that took place during the cyclone Diwa at Impasse Eugène, Le Hochet and, if so, will he state what remedial measures are envisaged.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is aware of the flooding problems at Le Hochet as this locality is also listed as a flood prone area in the National Land Drainage study.

Relevant drain projects will be implemented in that locality in due course as priority is now being given to other areas that are more flood prone.

As indicated in my reply to PQ No. B/132, projects are being implemented in the catchment area which are alleviating major flooding problems at Le Hochet.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Is the Minister aware that there was one case of death reported last year in the said area that we are talking about where there has been flood?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned, we should not forget that funds are limited. We don't have unlimited funds.

(Interruptions)

And it is not a matter to be laughed at, because in the past you were there and you know what were the difficulties. This is something very serious that I am talking.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that Rs63.2 m. had been spent in that particular area and the hon. Member has to bear with us because funds are limited. We have got over 325 locations which need special attention by the Government and we are doing more than is humanely possible. I do hope in the forthcoming budget whatever money we will get we will try to utilise it in such a way, so that the maximum areas which are affected can be looked into.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Virahsawmy: I agree totally with the Minister about the budget. But the two cases I have mentioned are most important because people's lives are concerned and the ex-Government had done nothing about ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Virahsawmy: This is why I am requesting the present Government to take into consideration the life of people and not to let them die like it happened last year.

Mr Bachoo: The Member is aware that we have conducted site visits, we have seen the area properly and we are working on the documents. Definitely as funds will be made available, we will look into these problems.

Mr Speaker: Time is over. I have been informed that PQ No. B/155 has been withdrawn.