

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****DR D. RAMJUTTUN & MR G. PHILIPPE – ADVISERS, PMO –  
CONTRACT, SALARY ETC.**

**(No. B/543) Mr R. Bhagwan (First 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, in regard to the appointment of Dr. Dinesh Ramjuttun and Mr Gilbert Philippe as Advisers at the Prime Minister's Office, he will state –

- (a) in which category of advisers they have been appointed;
- (b) the terms and conditions of their contract;
- (c) their monthly pay packet including basic salary and other allowances, and
- (d) the duties assigned to them.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the full details of the terms and conditions of the contract of Dr. Dinesh Ramjuttun and Mr Gilbert Philippe.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as everybody is aware, it is a common practice for Governments to enlist the services of advisers. The recruitment of these two Advisers is in line with this practice. However, I must add that the terms and conditions offered to the two Advisers in question are much less favourable than what had been granted to senior and special Advisers employed by the previous Government.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, how does the hon. Prime Minister reconcile his regular statements as to *serre ceinture* ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** How does the hon. Prime Minister reconcile his statements as to the policy of *serre ceinture*, asking Ministers not to use telephones, and the appointment of these Advisers?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should be very careful when he asks questions. The former Prime Minister had 21 Advisers.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Let the Prime Minister answer the question.

**The Prime Minister:** They do not want to listen because, as far as I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member, himself, has never occupied the office of Prime Minister, yet, he had 11 Advisers!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the same Dr. Dinesh Ramjuttun ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! We cannot hear the question from the hon. Member. Order!

**Mr Dayal:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the same Dr. Dinesh Ramjuttun was employed by the previous Government in the office of the Prime Minister and, if yes, in what capacity and whether subsequently he was offered a job in New York and, if yes, in what capacity?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, Dr. Ramjuttun was employed, first of all, as Adviser in Public Relations in the Prime Minister's Office with effect from 02 October 2000 with a contractual salary – I do not want to give the details – with the same terms and conditions. From 04 September 2001 to 03 September 2004, he was employed as Special Adviser to the Mauritius Mission at the United Nations and then this contract was

extended by the former Prime Minister on 04 September 2004 to 03 September 2005. However, Dr. Ramjuttun resigned on 12 March 2005.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the monthly pay packet of Dr. Ramjuttun?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say something which I would have said earlier, namely, that none of the Advisers whom I have named sits on any Board whatsoever unlike those of the previous Government whereby they were getting additional pay. If you want me to give the additional pay, I will do so.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the salary and privileges being drawn by Dr. Ramjuttun as compared to, let us say, Mr Jean Mée Desveaux?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, hon. David! You are defying my ruling.

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, I will be laying on the Table of the Assembly the terms and conditions. He is drawing a salary of Rs48,000, plus Rs8,000 and another Rs5,000 plus Rs6,450 which compared to Mr Jean Mée Desveaux, who was drawing a salary of Rs126,000 and that, Mr Speaker, Sir, does not include the Boards on which he was sitting. If we add the money he was getting on the Boards he was sitting, it comes to, practically, over Rs175,000.

**Dr. Ramloll:** I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether rent allowance of Rs15,000 and entertainment allowance of Rs5,000 are being paid to Dr. Ramjuttun, as compared to the previous Adviser.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, in fact, as I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can give the figures one by one, but it is substantially less than what Dr. Ramjuttun is getting.

**“CLEARSTREAM” AFFAIR – MAURITIAN BUSINESSMAN -  
INVOLVEMENT**

**(No. B/544) Mr R. Bhagwan (First 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 has been made aware of the involvement of a Mauritian businessman in the “Clearstream” affair in France and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House state if –

- (a) he has directed our Embassy in Paris to obtain further information from the French Authorities, and
- (b) the relevant financial authorities are inquiring thereinto.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken cognizance of the “Clearstream” affair through the media. I have requested our Embassy in France to follow the matter closely and keep me informed.

Following the naming of an offshore management company in the issue of “Week End” of 21 May, my Government has referred the matter to the Financial Services Commission for any investigation it deems appropriate. I am informed that a full investigation is already under way to find out whether any Global Business Company incorporated in Mauritius is involved in any way.

I would also like to add that any request from the competent French authorities for assistance in this connection and investigation into the matter, will be acceded to in conformity with the provisions of the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters Act 2003.

## **RAPES AND THEFTS – PUBLIC SAFETY - REINFORCEMENT**

**(No. B/545) Mr R. Bhagwan (First 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 in regard to the cases of rapes and thefts which have been reported to have taken place during the past weeks, he will state the actions that have been initiated to reinforce public safety.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated in my reply to PQ B/489 last week, Government intends to introduce legislation to render the punishment for rape more severe by increasing imprisonment from 15 to 16 years to a maximum of 60 years without remission.

Lately, the Police has put in place the following strategies to combat rapes and thefts with a view to reinforcing public safety –

- (i) hotline service to provide prompt assistance;
- (ii) high visibility presence through Police patrols;
- (iii) crackdown operations by specialised Police units;
- (iv) sensitization campaigns and educational programmes;
- (v) proposed installation of a Close Circuit Television Systems, and
- (vi) training of Police officers in new surveillance and investigation techniques.

While reinforcement of public safety is at the core of Government functions, it is imperative that Government and civil society play their respective role and conjugate their efforts so that we can deal effectively with our social problems and enhance public safety.

### **CHAGOSSIAN COMMUNITY – BRITISH HIGH COURT - JUDGMENT**

**(No. B/546) 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, following the recent judgment rendered by the British High Court with regard to the Chagossian community, he will state the measures that Government proposes to take.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I indicated that I will answer Parliamentary Questions B/546 and B/552 at the same time as they relate to the same issue.

As the House is already aware, on 11 May 2006, the UK High Court overturned the two Orders in Council of 10 June 2004 which prevented the Chagossians from returning to and residing in the islands of the Chagos Archipelago.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since I assumed office, I have left no stone unturned to reiterate both in the local and international fora our legitimate sovereignty claim over the Chagos Archipelago. I have forcefully made the point that

the people of the Chagos Archipelago, who were evicted from the islands, were still struggling for their right to return to their birth place. The House will recall that following my meeting with the British Prime Minister last year, the latter agreed to my proposal to allow a group of Chagossians to visit their ancestral graves.

Indeed, this judgment from the UK High Court comes soon after the historic and humanitarian visit last month of the Chagossians to the Chagos Archipelago.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the British authorities have a period of 28 days from the date of judgment to appeal against the verdict of the High Court.

I also understand that members of the Chagossians community are lobbying influential personalities in the UK to convince the British authorities not to appeal against the decision.

The State Law Office and our Consultant in London are currently studying the full implications of the High Court Judgment for Mauritius. It would, therefore, be premature, at this stage, to disclose the course of action that the Government of Mauritius intends to take. The more so, because the British Government is yet to take a decision whether to appeal against the High Court Judgement.

However, I have suggested through diplomatic channels that a meeting should be arranged at the earliest between the British Prime Minister and myself as well as a meeting with the newly appointed Foreign Secretary.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether our Legal Adviser/Consultant, Mr Brown Lee in London, has been asked specifically, to comment on the impact of that judgment on an eventual case by Mauritius before the International Court of Justice?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I talked to Mr Brown Lee personally, on the same day. He has looked at the judgment and he has referred back certain things to me. But, as I said, I think it would be premature to disclose what we intend to do, but we are looking at the impact of that judgment.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister state whether any representative of the Mauritian Embassy in London was of any help whatsoever to the Chagossian delegation during their stay there and was any representative of the Embassy present during judgment delivery?

**The Prime Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, we wanted to just observe what is happening, and also I must point out that Mr Bancoult made an application to the U.K High Court of Justice as a British subject.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister if he has any indication as to whether the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, will agree to have a meeting with him, and if so, when?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I think that it would be appropriate that we should have a meeting. But as I understand the British Government is still deciding whether to appeal or not. I take it therefore, they want to take that decision first.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that in whatever initiative taken by the Government of Mauritius, a Member of the Chagossian community, duly elected by the Ilois Welfare Fund be included in that initiative?

**The Prime Minister:** We always keep them informed of what we are doing, and in fact, we have not changed our position. And this judgment has not changed the legal position between the UK and Mauritius.

## **MBC - WORLD CUP FOOTBALL MATCHES**

**(No. B/547) Mr A. Jugnauth (First 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 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to whether all the football matches of the World Cup will be broadcast live on channels 1,2 or 3 of the MBC/TV and not on the MBC Digital Channel 6.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, and given that Soccer is probably the most popular sport in Mauritius, apart from politics, I have ensured with the MBC that the viewers' interest is put first. Therefore, the Mauritius

Broadcasting Corporation has already arranged for all matches will be broadcast on MBC Channel 3, that is, 56 games live and 8 delayed, as these will be played simultaneously on the last day of the group phase. MBC will also broadcast the same number of matches on Digital Channel 5.

Mauritius will be, Mr Speaker, Sir, among the 200 countries to broadcast this unique sports event and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation has obtained exclusive rights for radio and television. It is indeed a great achievement as many countries are still striving hard to obtain the relevant rights from foreign countries.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if MBC can table a chart of all the football matches?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I must tell the hon. Member that these are all in the newspapers, I am sure.

**Mr Leopold:** Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that we are having Channel 1 only in Rodrigues, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister what will happen in the case of Rodrigues?

**The Prime Minister:** I think, from what I understand, they are trying to make arrangements for Rodrigues as well.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister as to the cost of acquiring those rights?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, as the hon. Member is well aware, as I said, football is a sport that everybody follows and I know that all her colleagues want to see the matches.

## **FISHING PORT AREA - DRUG TRAFFICKING**

**(No. B/548) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third 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, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether it has



been established that some fishing vessels are involved in drug trafficking and, if so, will he state the preventive measures that have been or will be taken in order to reinforce control in the fishing port area.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, again with your permission, I propose to answer Parliamentary Questions Nos B/548 and B/554 together as they relate to the same subject.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for period 2000 to date, 21 ships were secured for cases of drugs among which only 4 were fishing vessels.

However, one has to reckon with the fact that Mauritius, being an island, is vulnerable to drug trafficking by sea. The possibility that fishing vessels dealing with drugs, having contacts with other islands in the Indian Ocean during their '*sorties*' does exist. Conscious of this possibility, the Police, in collaboration with the Customs and Excise Department and the Ports Authority, have taken the following preventive measures -

- (i) patrols in the fishing port area are being maintained by personnel of Port Police, Anti Drugs Smuggling Unit, National Coast Guard and Central Investigation Division;
- (ii) a Joint Port Drug Unit operating at the harbour is tasked to analyse intelligence, risk, commercial documents and also to profile containers and vessels;
- (iii) interaction of ADSU with marine agencies and stakeholders operating in the port;
- (iv) the 23 National Coast Guard posts located all along the coast of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon carry out active boat and mobile patrols in the lagoons and the beaches respectively. In addition to the routine checking of pleasure craft, random stop and search is carried out daily for inspection of the vessels in the event of any information or suspicion;
- (v) coastal patrol within the territorial waters of Mauritius, is conducted by the minor ships of the Coast Guards, namely, CGS Guardian and the Zhuk class vessels.

- (vi) Offshore patrol vessels outside territorial waters within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is presently conducted by CGS Guardian.

Additionally, the Dornier and Defender aircraft of the National Coast Guard are also utilized for maritime reconnaissance missions within the EEZ in co-ordination with appropriate surface assets for prevention, detection and/or suppression of any illegal activity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, given our vast EEZ area and the development of the Seafood Hub, for example, we need additional capacity to patrol our sea territory.

It is in this context, during my official visit to India last October, that I had discussions with the Indian authorities regarding the procurement of an offshore patrol vessel, an advanced light helicopter and a coastal electronic surveillance system which would reinforce the patrol within our EEZ.

I should also say that I am advised that the Customs and Excise Department is in the process of procuring a Small X-Ray Scanner at the passenger ferry terminal to scan baggages of arriving passengers. Additionally, the Customs Launch has been refitted with radar and other equipment in early May this year to allow surveillance in the inner harbour and anchorage area.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been published in the Audit's report that the National Coast Guard is not making optimum use of their vessels. Can I impress upon the Prime Minister to see to it that the rate of searches on our Exclusive Economic Zone be intensified and be on a monthly routine?

**The Prime Minister:** It is not easy, because they are not properly operational at the moment.

**Mr Leopold:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to certain information, at times drugs coming to Mauritius transit through Rodrigues first. Can I know from the Prime Minister whether reinforcement measures will be taken to control the port and airport of Rodrigues to combat drug trafficking?

**The Prime Minister:** I hope that the hon. Member knows that we also co-operate with the authorities in Rodrigues to ensure that all this information is passed on to the authorities concerned.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Vessel Monitoring System which has been recently commissioned is of any help for tracking vessels within our territorial waters?

**The Prime Minister:** I would say that our electronic surveillance is very advanced, which will be able to track all vessels.

### **SEBASTOPOL - MRS R. R. - ALLEGED RAPE & MURDER CASE**

**(No. B/549) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether an inquiry has been carried out in the case of alleged rape and murder of Mrs R. R. of Sebastopol on or about Saturday 13 May 2006 and, if so, where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Major Crime Investigation Team is carrying out an enquiry to look into the case of murder and rape of one Mrs R. R which occurred during the night of 13 May 2006.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two suspects had been arrested. The first one, on 15 May 2006, against whom a provisional charge of murder was lodged before the Flacq Court on 16 May 2006. He was remanded to Police cell up to 23 May 2006. The second suspect was arrested on 19 May 2006 and is actually detained at the Moka Detention Centre. A provisional charge of murder has been lodged against him on 22 May 2006 before the Flacq Court.

The Major Crime Investigation Team has so far interviewed 14 persons in connection with the abovementioned case.

The inquiry is still underway and on completion, it will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the village of Sebastopol is already traumatised with this crime and all persons who have been arrested were

complaining about Police brutality. We agree that we have to arrest the suspect, but I would like the Prime Minister to see to it that such brutality on the part of the Police is not used to make people aver. I have met various persons who have been arrested by the Police and who have complained about brutality. I would like the Prime Minister to look into it.

**The Prime Minister:** Does the hon. Member have any name of the Police who has committed brutality? If yes, he could give me the names and I will do the needful.

**MR K. B (ALIAS SIVEN) - BEL AIR –  
POSSESSION OF CANNABIS**

(No. B/550) **Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether one Mr K. B, alias Siven, of Bel Air was arrested on or about 10 May 2006 for possession of cannabis and, if so, the charges that have been retained against him.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on 10 May 2006 at 1730 hours, one Mr K. B, alias Siven, a resident of Royal Road, Bel Air Rivière Sèche, was arrested by the Eastern Division ADSU.

On 11 May 2006, he appeared before Flacq District Court and was provisionally charged for “Possession of cannabis”. He was released on bail on the same day upon furnishing a recognisance of Rs25,000.

The inquiry is still in progress.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it seems that this is a very serious case. Can I know from the Prime Minister if people can be released on parole when they are arrested for possession of cannabis? It seems that this person is a chief Labour agent in that region; and a lawyer...

*(Interruptions)*

Everybody knows him because he is a chief Labour agent in that region and has been *the parrain* of some candidates. He has been released on parole. Can I know whether we have two types of law, one for the Labour agents and one for ordinary citizen?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a shame that the hon. Member has asked that question like this. First of all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In fact, there is a Labour agent - if you call it that way - who has been arrested. He has not been spared from being arrested. Secondly, he was released on bail upon furnishing a recognizance, as I have just said, of Rs25,000.

**Mr Guinness:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that when he was arrested on the 10, a lawyer intervened and he was released on parole and it was the next day that he was brought to the Court?

**The Prime Minister:** I should also ask the hon. Member to be careful. It is his right to ask questions, but I do not know whether he is aware that the same person had made a complaint against the MMM only a few days before?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll take what the Prime Minister has said and I'll put a question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Guinness:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the same person he is referring to made a case against the MMM because we were holding our congress in Bel Air and that supposedly we were making noise? Is he aware of that?

**The Prime Minister:** Is it a coincidence that just after he made the complaint he was arrested?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Next question.

## **OFFICE SPACE - RENT BY GOVERNMENT**

**(No. B/551) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** 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 the amount spent as rent by Government on rental of office space for each of the last five financial years.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being tabled. In fact, I can say that huge sums are being spent by the Government yearly on rental of office space, mostly in Port Louis. In view thereof and in order to address the problem of congestion in Port Louis, the idea for the construction of a New Administrative City away from Port Louis is being envisaged. I think it has been envisaged in the past also.

In this context, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is preparing a Concept Paper and the World Bank has already been approached for further examination of the idea along with the central highway project linking the northern part of the island to the center through La Nicolière.

## **CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - HIGH COURT IN LONDON - JUDGEMENT**

**(No. B/552) Mrs M. 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 will state the measures that Government proposes to take following the recent judgement of the High Court in London with regard to the Chagos Archipelago issue.

*(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/546)*

## **H5N1 AVIAN-FLU - NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

**(No. B/553) 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, in regard to the threat of the H5N1

Avian-Flu, will state if he proposes to chair a national committee with a view to setting up a national pandemic control plan and a communication strategy to raise public awareness on the threat of such a pandemic.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the pertinence of the issue, I propose, with your permission, to give a lengthy reply. I hope the House will bear with me.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** A National Emergency Preparedness Committee comprising Government officials and the private sector has been set up and has been meeting regularly since November 2004. The Committee is chaired by the Principal Veterinary Officer and comprises the representatives of the following institutions -

- A representative of Prime Minister's Office
- Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries
- Ministry of Health and Quality of Life
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Environment
- Police Department
- Special Mobile Force
- Road Traffic Management Unit
- Plant Quarantine Services
- Agricultural Research and Extension Unit
- Poultry Breeding Centre
- Airports of Mauritius Ltd.
- Mauritius Ports Authority
- Mauritius Customs
- Outer Islands Development Corporation
- National Parks and Conservation Unit, and
- Major Private stakeholders from the poultry industry.

As I said, this Committee, chaired by the Principal Veterinary Officer has been meeting regularly since November 2004. As from 2005, monthly meetings were being held to follow the evolution of the disease when it first appeared in South East Asia. With the evolution of the disease affecting certain European and Baltic countries, the Committee has started meeting on a weekly basis as from November 2005. The Committee is closely monitoring the spread of the disease worldwide, in particular African

countries and the outbreak that has occurred in India during the last months. The Committee is closely monitoring the movement of migratory birds and the biological samples are being collected for detection of Avian-Flu virus. The surveillance also includes on wild local birds (Pigeons, Parrots), domestic poultry (industrial and backyard), exotic and wildlife birds from Casela and Le Val Nature Park.

A National Contingency Plan has been put in place and is constantly being updated following the pattern of the disease and its occurrence.

Insofar as the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is concerned, I am informed that an “Avian Influenza Preparedness Plan” has been prepared since March of this year (2006) in line with WHO recommendations. In this plan, the following aspects have already been included -

- Increased surveillance at Port and Airport.
- Advice to travellers visiting affected regions (i.e, they are asked to refrain from visiting poultry farms and markets where poultry are being sold in these countries).
- Indication of isolation wards in all regional hospitals, in case of emergency.
- Visits by Health Inspectors to poultry farms to ensure proper husbandry practices and to report abnormal deaths of poultry.
- Procurement of personal protective equipment as per WHO guidelines.
- Stockpiling of anti-viral drugs (160,500 treatment doses of Oseltamivir are available).
- Control practices in health care facilities have been reinforced
- Continuing medical education for medical and paramedical staff.
- Regular samples of throat swabs are taken by the virology laboratory as a surveillance measure, and
- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and rapid tests for diagnosis of svian influenza at the virology laboratory have been increased.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has prepared protocols, guidelines and recommendations for the following -

- Airline flight crew.
- Persons meeting passengers arriving from areas with avian influenza.



- Airline cleaning crew and maintenance crew.
- Baggage/package and cargo handlers for airlines returning from regions affected by avian influenza.

In addition, preventive measures to restrict entry of the disease have already been implemented, such as ban on importation of live birds and poultry products from certain countries. Vigilance at ports of entry has been reinforced. For example, foot dips with virucidals have already been placed at our ports of entry. Private shipping agents have been issued a communiqué to implement a foot dip with virucidal on their ships. Ship inspection forms are being faxed to the Mauritius Ports Authority by the plant quarantine on a regular basis. Passengers in touch with poultry or farms during their outward visits are being screened by the Ministry of Health, which is working in close collaboration with the Plant and Quarantine Services of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries. Pamphlets have already been prepared by the Ministry of Health for distribution to outgoing passengers.

The sanitary officers of the Ministry of Health and the quarantine officers of the Ministry of Agro Industry are also on the alert. Among steps taken and recommended in the Contingency Plan, we have already imported necessary equipment such as protective clothing, disinfectants and biological tests kits.

A consignment of 225,000 doses of vaccines against Avian-Flu in poultry has already been received. A vaccination programme has been worked out in consultation with international institutions, like the World Animal Health and the FAO, and will be implemented.

Our veterinary officers have recently attended workshops on Avian Influenza in Pretoria and Libreville under the sponsorship of the SADC, World Animal Health, FAO and WHO. Our services are in constant contact with international experts who have visited Mauritius recently and participated in the meetings of the Avian Influenza Committee.

A simulation exercise was organised on Saturday 06 May 2006 to test and validate emergency operational measures. The response from all stakeholders was prompt and effective and it is said that the exercise was correctly done and successful. A similar exercise will be carried out, this time targeting a large industrial poultry farm.

The Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life have devised communication strategies in order to create awareness on Avian-Flu among poultry breeders, health workers and the general public. Officers of AREU are educating poultry breeders on biosecurity measures to be taken in the context of this Avian-Flu. 2000 information sheets have been prepared and distributed to poultry breeders. Officers of both Ministries have been participating in radio and television programs to inform the public about Avian-Flu and preventive measures to be taken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House would appreciate that the Government is leaving no stone unturned in the fight against the possible introduction of Avian-Flu into the Republic of Mauritius.

I am fully briefed of the workings of the National Committee and I personally commend the work, which has been done so far. Of course, I shall chair the National Committee in the light of the evolution of the disease.

**Mr Bérenger:** I am sure the hon. Prime Minister agrees with me and he is already aware that the availability of the required number of Tamiflu and other such drugs for human protection is a vital part of the measures to be taken to be prepared to face the threat from Avian-Flu.

I understand that we have had problems recently to obtain the required number of Tamiflu drugs. I am surprised, therefore, that the Prime Minister has not referred to that. Can we be enlightened?

Can we have information on whether we are already late and, if yes, what measures are being taken to catch up and be ready with the required number of Tamiflu human drugs stocks?

**The Prime Minister:** I thought it was in the answer that we already have Tamiflu. There was some difficulty at the beginning, Mr Speaker, Sir, because many countries were asking for the same products and there were problems with the generic names and all this. In fact, in India and China, they were trying to see whether they could produce it at a cheaper rate, but this problem has now diminished. I think we had few *cargaisons* of the tablets. I, myself, have seen the tablets that the Ministry of Health has shown to me. I must tell the House, however, that there is a problem and the Director of the WHO – we are sorry that he passed away – was here recently and he also confirmed that the problem with the virus is that it can replicate

differently and, therefore, there is a risk that the tablet won't be effective if it replicates. But, that is a risk that we have to live with.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to double-check? My information is different from what he has just said. The Minister of Health, in Parliament, gave a strict timetable by which date the required number of Tamiflu drugs available would be increased. Of course, for a number of years there have been a number, but very insufficient. I would request the hon. Prime Minister to double-check. I understand that there have been problems, and that, therefore, the timetable that has been presented to the House by the Minister of Health is not being abided by.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not use the word 'Tamiflu', but I used the generic word. Of the 165,500 doses that have been purchased, the stock that we have is about 95,100 and the difference, I am told, will arrive at the end of this year.

**Mr Speaker:** One last question, because time is nearly over.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this question of Tamiflu is a question of protection of lives and livelihood, because we must think of a sort of compensation initiative to encourage poultry breeders to dispose of their infected poultry. Will that Committee look into that aspect also?

**The Prime Minister:** If we have a case. We have not got a case, so they can't go and destroy the poultry now. The Committee obviously will look into that aspect.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a representative of the Ministry of Education on that Committee and whether, as far as school children are concerned, in case there is an outbreak, what are the remedial actions they are proposing to the country?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, as I said, the Committee is a very large one and they are looking at all the aspects.

**(PQ. Nos. B/554 to B/560 – See “Written Answers to Questions”)**

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that PQs B/560, B/561, B/564, B/565, B/576, B/588, B/593 and

B/625 have been withdrawn. Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Mrs Martin!

**(PQ No. B/561 - See "Written Answers to Questions")**

**CULTURAL CENTRES - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE –  
REPORT**

**(No. B/562) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state the date on which the Ministerial Committee on the Cultural Centres last met, indicating when it proposes to submit its report.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministerial Committee on cultural centres last met on Thursday 11 May 2006.

The recommendations of the Committee are being finalised and will be submitted in due course for consideration and approval by Government.

Members of the House will be apprised of the recommendations of the Committee thereafter.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether we could have an idea of the main recommendations.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I need notice of the question.

**HAJJ PILGRIMAGE (JANUARY 2006) - COMPLAINTS,  
VACCINATIONS, ETC.**

**(No. B/563) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the January 2006 Hajj pilgrimage, he will -

- (a) state if he has received complaints from the pilgrims against the Hajj organisers and, if so, whether he proposes to institute an inquiry thereinto, and
- (b) obtain from the Hajj Committee, information as to the vaccination requirements imposed by the Saudi Authorities, indicating which local company performed the vaccinations.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, no complaint has been received from Hajj pilgrims at my Ministry against Hajj organisers for the January 2006 Hajj pilgrimage. The question of instituting an inquiry therefore does not arise.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Islamic Cultural Centre that vaccination against meningitis has been made mandatory by the Saudi Authorities for Hadjis and that this vaccine was imported as in preceding years by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Vaccination against meningitis was carried out by the staff of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life on Saturday 26 November 2005 from 08 00 hours to noon in the following hospitals -

- Jeetoo Hospital, Port Louis
- Victoria Hospital, Candos
- Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle
- SSR National Hospital, Pamplemousses
- Flacq Hospital

No local company was involved in the vaccination against meningitis.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that not only one vaccination has been requested by the Saudi Authorities and that this year all the Hadjis were requested to have three vaccinations? I'll give the names of the vaccination: *anti Grippe, menococal* and *méningite*. Is the Minister aware?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is optional. Meningitis was mandatory and the other two vaccinations were not compulsory.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether he is aware...

*(Interruptions)*

I never disturb Members when they speak and I hope it will be the same for me.

Can the hon. Minister confirm that he has received an official circular from the Saudi Authorities to the Islamic Cultural Centre that all the Hadjis were bound to have all the three vaccinations?

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister answer.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will request the hon. Member to table this letter.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether he has received it or not. It is not a question of tabling it. I will table it!

**Mr Gowressoo:** Sir, I said I have not received. I ask the hon. Member to table it.

**Mr Soodhun:** Sir, I am going to table this letter officially.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Soodhun:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there is a judgment from the Supreme Court by his Lordship K. Matadeen and Ag. Senior Puisne Judge, His Lordship E. Balancy for the Independent Committee. Is the Minister aware that this Committee is not functioning since last year? If you allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll just quote what the Judge has said.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, there is no need to quote.

**Mr Soodhun:** I can quote it for the information of the hon. Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Soodhun:** The issue is above politics. The Prime Minister is not to be blamed. So, let me read.

"In order to encourage transparency and dispel any misapprehension which may still subsist about the fairness of those licences, the respondent has decided to set up a committee of persons independent and will be presided by former Judge Ahmed to oversee the operation of the licence and carrying out of duties of operators including the respondent itself."

Is the Minister aware of that?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Sir, as the hon. Member is aware, he can table it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is very serious. I would like to know whether the Minister has received a complete report from the Hadj mission concerning the treatment and the behaviour of the Hadj organisers for this year.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, there has been a report. There was a PQ concerning this.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me clarify it to the Minister. It is true that there was a PQ, but the report that the Minister tabled is not the report that we have asked because this report deals with the terms and conditions applied to all Hadjis in the world in Saudi Arabia. This is the report which I would like to table. I make a humble request...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Soodhun:** This is very serious. I'll ask the Minister to go through this report; there are a lot of complaints. I am making an appeal to the Minister that this case should be referred to ICAC.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Can the hon. Member table the report?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member has tabled the report.

**TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF  
VULNERABLE GROUPS - BOARD MEETINGS, APPLICATIONS  
FOR FUNDS, ETC.**

**(No. B/564) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether in regard to the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to -

- (a) the number of Board Meetings held to date, and
- (b) the number of applications for funds presented to the Board and approved, indicating when funds will be released in each case.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **HAJJ PILGRIMAGE (JANUARY 2006) - VACCINATION**

**(No. B/565) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether in regard to the January 2006 Hajj pilgrimage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to if, prior to their departure, the pilgrims were vaccinated thereat against payment in favour of the Biocom Ltd.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MORCELLEMENT LA VALLEE, CITE LA CURE – SEWERAGE PROBLEMS**

**(No. B/566) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he is aware that the inhabitants living near the Masjid Gulzar-E-Madina in Morcellement La Vallée at Cité La Cure are encountering sewerage problems and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take as a matter of priority.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, complaints have, in fact, been registered from the inhabitants living near Masjid Gulzar-E-Madina in Morcellement La Vallée at Cité La Cure regarding wastewater disposal problems. I am informed that the Wastewater Management Authority carried out a survey and found that the area is not a sewered one and that the inhabitants resort to on-site disposal facilities. In case of overflow, they have to make arrangements for the emptying of the cesspits. Private contractors are readily available for this purpose.



However, the permanent solution to the problem would be in the form of an extension of the sewer network to reach that area. The extent of work has already been assessed and would involve the laying of 379 metres of main sewer and 240 metres of sewer reticulation for about 35 houses with an approximate cost of Rs6.5 m.

I shall cause the matter to be looked into with a view to finding out whether this work can be tagged with a certificate of urgency provided funds are available.

### **PERE PIVAUT STREET, STE CROIX - DRAIN WORKS**

**(No. B/567) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that the drainage works at Père Pivault Street, Ste Croix are incomplete, thereby causing the proliferation of mosquitoes due to stagnant water and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the drain work along Père Pivault Street, Ste Croix, forms part of a global project which includes drain works along Richard Miles and Père Laval Streets. The project is expected to be completed by mid July 2006.

The drain along Père Pivault Street is made of slotted slabs on the first 80 metres and reinforced concrete pipes on the remaining 200 metres. According to the Consultant of the NDU, the first part of the drain might have been obstructed and might be the source of proliferation of mosquitoes. The contractor has accordingly been instructed to remove the slotted slabs, clean the stretch of the drain concerned, reposition the slabs, temporarily seal the slots and maintain the drain until the project is completed.

**Mrs Virahsawmy:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister tell the House when was the first contract awarded and what was the cost thereof?

**Mr Bachoo:** The commencement date of the contract was 12 July 2004 and the contract value was Rs7,276,850 excluding VAT.

**Mrs Virahsawmy:** Can the Minister inform the House as well as to why 50% of the work was not completed?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, probably the reason might have been the network of the existing services, such as telephone, water and sewerage along Père Laval Street. That normally takes a bit of time.

**Mrs Virahsawmy:** Was the whole amount paid to the contractor for the contract?

**Mr Bachoo:** I don't have the figures, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL – MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

**(No. B/568) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Hospital, he will state if he is aware that there is a lack of medical practitioners, especially in the evening thereby causing inconveniences to the patients and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**The Minister of Education & Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I propose to reply to both questions B/568 and B/569 simultaneously.

In the wake of the chikungunya disease and other seasonal viral infections in the past months, there has been an increase in the attendance rate of patients attending hospitals in all the regions. Consequently, action was taken by the Ministry on 30 March 2006 to post one additional doctor at Montagne Longue Hospital on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. As such, on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, two doctors work from 9.00 a.m. on one day to 9.00 a.m. the following day.

The situation is gradually coming back to normal, and it is expected that in the coming weeks there will be a decline in the level of attendance.

With regard to the number of patients attending Long Mountain Hospital, I am informed that, for the last four months, a daily average of 216 patients have been attending the hospital.

I am also aware of the conditions in which medical practitioners are operating. However, it is a fact that infrastructural problems exist because the hospital is old and most of the infrastructure is beyond repairs. I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/331 in October 2005,

when it was mentioned that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure has condemned the old administrative block.

Presently, patients are not admitted but can be kept for observation only as the hospital is functional on an outpatient basis only, pending the construction of a new block to house a male and female wards and other services.

In the meantime, this Government has taken short-term measures to improve the infrastructural limitations, by converting the male ward into an administrative block and doctors and nurses mess, while the doctors' consultation rooms are accommodated in the female ward, already renovated.

I am informed that the conditions in which the staff is now working are satisfactory.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned an increase due to chikungunya. Can I know the percentage increase?

**Mr Gokhool:** I have the figures, but they are not in percentage terms. I don't have the figures relating particularly to chikungunya, but the figures relating to attendance as was asked in the main question.

### **LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL – PATIENTS – ATTENDANCE**

**(No. B/569) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Hospital, he will state if he is aware of the number of patients attending thereto and the conditions in which medical practitioners are operating thereat and, if so, will he state the immediate remedial measures he proposes to take.

*(Vide reply to PQ B/568)*

### **STUDENT COUNCILS - MEMBERS**

**(No. B/570) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he

will state the number of colleges having student councils, indicating the established procedure for the selection of students to sit thereon.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 65 out of 70 State Secondary Schools and 95 out of 102 private secondary schools, including Rodrigues, operating under the aegis of the PSSA have a student council.

In the State Secondary Schools, the students' council consists of representatives from different sections of the student community in such a way that each class has a spokesperson therein.

The members of the students' council are elected class wise by the students themselves, usually under the supervision of the form master. Once the council is constituted, it elects a President and a Secretary. Usually, meetings between school management and the students' council are organised once monthly or when the need arises.

As regards private secondary schools, I am informed that there is at present no established rule for setting up of students' council, but generally each class is represented therein by either the class captain or a representative.

I believe there is need to bring about standardisation of the procedure for setting up of student councils and their functioning in private secondary schools.

The PSSA is looking into the matter.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that in the 1990s, the student councils used to benefit from a grant of Rs1,000 from Government and, if so, whether they are still receiving their grant now?

**Mr Gokhool:** Grants are made to schools. When activities are organised, these are done jointly by the student council and the management of the school.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it used to be the practice in the 1990s for the Minister to have regular meetings with the student councils. I will ask the hon. Minister whether he proposes to meet the representatives of the students councils and, if so, when?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for asking this question, and I would like to inform him that I have already met a number of representatives of student councils during my regular visits to schools.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that, out of 70 State colleges, 65 have a student council. Can we know the names of the five colleges that do not have one?

**Mr Gokhool:** I have to go through the list to give the names of the five colleges that do not have a student council.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that there was a committee, which was set up under the chairmanship of Mr Santosh Kumar Mahadeo in 1994, to review the role and activities of student councils?

**Mr Gokhool:** As I said, there is need for improving the functioning and working of the student councils, and this will be taken into account in the work that the PSSA, as well as at the Ministry, is doing.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister ready to legislate, in order to give legal recognition to student councils in all colleges?

**Mr Gokhool:** I will be awaiting the recommendations of the PSSA, and I will also look into the situation in the Government schools. In the light of the recommendations, consideration will be given to the request of the hon. Member.

*At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

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

**Mr Speaker:** I have got an announcement to make. I have been informed that PQ B/583 and B/604 have been withdrawn. Hon. Varma!

### **CAMP BAILLE, BEAU VALLON – LANES – RESURFACING**

**(No. B/571) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Environment & National

Development Unit whether he is aware that the five lanes in Camp Baille, Beau Vallon urgently need resurfacing and that the first lane is impracticable during heavy rainfalls and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that there are, in fact, six lanes at Camp Baille, Beau Vallon which need to be resurfaced.

The NDU has already initiated action for the resurfacing of five of the lanes. The remaining lane will require the construction of a drain prior to its resurfacing. This will be attended to at a later stage.

**Mr Varma:** Can the hon. Minister kindly inform the House when the roads will be resurfaced?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, last week there was a meeting in my Ministry at which the hon. Member was present; and I hope that by next week at latest the works will start.

### **LA CHAUX RIVER, VILLE NOIRE, MAHEBOURG – RIVER BANKS – POLLUTION**

**(No. B/572) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware that the banks of La Chaux River in the region of Magasin Street, Ville Noire, Mahebourg, are polluted resulting in serious unhygienic conditions and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that due to the fact that the banks in question are found at the lower point of the river, all refuse dumped upstream or in nearby drains are being carried and deposited in that place during heavy rainfalls. The Grand Port-Savanne District Council had cleared this part of the river in March this year during their chikungunya campaign. But the recent rainfalls have caused refused to be deposited again.

It is to be noted that the Local Authorities are normally responsible for cleaning of rivers in their respective areas. However, my Ministry does assist in cleaning of rivers when there are such requests. The *Police de l'Environnement* also keeps a watch as far as possible and responds to the reported cases of dumping along river banks and in rivers.

I also wish to inform the House that a Technical Advisory Committee on rivers, streams and canals has been set up under section 12 of the Environment Protection Act to advise on measures to be adopted for the short-term and long-term protection and sustainable management of our watercourses. The Committee is expected to submit a final report by the end of this year. Interim recommendations will be made on immediate measures to upgrade our rivers and other freshwater courses. My Ministry will follow up the problem at La Chaux River with the Grand Port-Savanne District Council.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether it was the same locus that he visited in November or December of last year?

**Mr Bachoo:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister also confirm that whatever information he has gathered from the authorities is actually inaccurate? Because, no works, as far as the Environment and the District Council are concerned have been carried out at that place since last year.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that basically it is the responsibility of the local authorities to look after rivers. Secondly, I have also mentioned that previously works had been carried out to a limited extent. I have also stated that my Ministry also comes into support and one thing I would like to inform the House that dredging of rivers was never done in the past. For the past few weeks, at least five rivers have been dredged, one in Bel Air, one in Central Flacq, two in Triolet Constituency No. 5...

*(Interruptions)*

and few others are to be dredged. So, I would ask the hon. Member to be patient a bit, because the dredging as well as the cleaning of all the rivers will be done.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether prior to the dredging of the rivers, any consultancy work has been carried out to the effect of the dredging of the surrounding area?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when we undertake slight dredging, we do not need any consultancy work. If we start consultancy work, that would take us another few years.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that prior to any dredging work, we need to get permit from the Ministry of Housing to ensure that whenever dredging takes place, that the river banks be maintained in the way they are so that there are no repercussion on the downstream, the amount of water that flows down the river?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I maintain again that the way we conduct the dredging work, we try to ensure that we keep the river in its original shape.

### **PROJECTS (EAMARKED) – CONSTITUENCY-WISE**

**(No. B/573) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to projects earmarked since July 2005, he will state, constituency-wise –

- (a) the amount of money already spent on projects which have been implemented, and
- (b) the amount of money to be spent on projects to be implemented during the current financial year.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that Rs65 m. have been allocated to NDU to start work as from Wednesday next and which will end on 10 June?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is normal and this is the practice every year. I am here for the third term and I know that before the end of every financial year the Ministry of Finance normally makes available a sum of money to the NDU, as well as to MPI. This is the fact that we are going very fast and we want to complete the work within a few weeks.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the hon. Minister confirm that most of the contractors have refused to carry out the work, because of the time limit?



**Mr Bachoo:** No, Sir.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir ...

**Mr Speaker:** Can I now give a chance to hon. Guinness.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has just said that the answer is being compiled. I think we must treat Parliamentarians in a better way because the same question was asked on 11 April. Nearly two months have elapsed and the answer today is: Sir, the information is being compiled.

**Mr Bachoo:** Sir, in the past I remember 10 similar questions were asked on 10 different occasions and till today we are awaiting a reply. Mine is only the second.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can I give the hon. Minister details of the Rs65 m. allocated by him and I would like to table...

*(Interruptions)*

Can the hon. Minister, in the interest of the country at large give the details of scope of work allocated to each constituency?

*(Interruptions)*

Can the hon. Minister consult this official document in which Constituencies Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 have been allocated Rs30. m?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am willing to produce before the House copies of statement of accounts which have been earmarked and spent in different Constituencies from 2000 to 2005. Second, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Let the hon. Minister answer.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, within one hour, I am going to present before the House the list of the works which have been undertaken for the past few weeks and the House will know how much money has been spent in different constituencies.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dayal!

**Mr Dayal:** In the same exercise, is the hon. Minister willing to submit a list of all projects undertaken, constituency-wise from June 2000 to July 2005?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bachoo:** I am willing to do so, but I need a bit of time.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the Minister sincerely confirm that in Constituency No. 9, that RDA has made a provision of Rs8 m. for the same project and for NDU Rs20 m.?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I am concerned I am not aware how much is being spent by RDA because I am not the Minister of MPI. And secondly, I cannot confirm how much money. But within one hour, I am sure I will submit to the House how the amount of Rs65 m. is being spent.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the hon. Minister confirm that Constituencies No. 4 and No. 5 have been allocated only Rs6 m. ...

*(Interruptions)*

In the constituency of the Prime Minister.

**Mr Bachoo:** This is not true, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Soodhun!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE LABOUR WELFARE FUND –  
STRATEGIC PLAN - 2006-2010**

**(No. B/574) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment whether, in regard to the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund, he will state if an action plan for the period 2006-2010 is under preparation and, if so, where matters stand.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Strategic Plan of the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund (EPZLWF) for the period 2006-2010 has already been finalised and I am informed that distribution to all stakeholders will start shortly and a copy will be made available on the website of the Fund by the end of this very week.

**HIV/AIDS – POSITIVE CASES**

**(No. B/575) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to HIV/AIDS, he will state the number of persons who are HIV/AIDS positive in Mauritius.

**The Minister of Education & Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to official records, the number of persons who have been detected HIV/AIDS positive in Mauritius as at 31 March 2006, is 2,295 of whom 2,172 are Mauritians and 123 non-Mauritians.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I know that the Minister is replacing. We all know that these days more than 90% of the new cases are through *seringue* drugs. We are all expecting a report from the United Nations and yet I have seen reports to the effect that there is going to be a free campaign of “*Seringues For All*”, if that is the expression. Can we know where matters stand?

**Mr Gokhool:** In fact, there is a decision with regard to syringe exchange and this programme has been agreed by the National Aids Committee and the Ministry is looking into the possibility of implementing this decision.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I know the criteria as there is a programme for *seringues* distribution? According to what criteria? In what way?

**Mr Gokhool:** I think the decision has been taken. At the level of the Ministry they are looking into how to implement the programme because I think there are many people who may be concerned with this programme. So, they have to work out the modalities of implementing the programme.

**Mr Bérenger:** My point is: is it *à la demande* of those who will make the request? Is it *à la demande* or will it be following strict criteria?

**Mr Gokhool:** I do not have this information. We'll have to refer the question raised to the Ministry.

### **ST FELIX S.E. (PROPOSED CLOSURE) – EMPLOYEES - COMPENSATION**

(No. B/576) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to the proposed closure of the St Félix Sugar Estate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the compensation to be offered to the employees.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **BOARD OF INVESTMENT – RECRUITMENT/PROMOTION**

(No. B/577) **Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** 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 the number of persons who have been recruited and/or promoted since August 2005, indicating if the posts were advertised.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that BOI has since August 2005 recruited two officers, one as Manager – Project Monitoring Unit and one as consultant in the Seafood/Logistics “Market Facing Unit”.

The recruitment of the Manager – Project Monitoring Unit was advertised internally and externally in February 2005. He was interviewed in August 2005, but assumed duty in January 2006. The consultant has been recruited on a contractual basis in view of his wide experience in the logistics sector. He was previously employed in a Government owned company.

Nine other persons, I understand, who were either on employment as trainees or on contract for nearly one year with BOI, have joined the permanent establishment. They have been found, after assessment, to have acquired the necessary skills and training to join the organisation.

I am also informed that BOI has recently reviewed its organisation structure to enable it to deliver results more effectively. The new structure was approved by the Board on 31 January 2006, and subsequently presented and agreed with BOI staff. The structure is benchmarked against the best IPAs worldwide, and provides for the creation of six “market facing units” each to drive the priority sectors as identified by Government. The structure has also taken into consideration the integration of the Mauritius Freeport Authority staff as per the Freeport Act 2004 into the Board of Investment.

The structure is being implemented in phases. Within the first phase, ten officers have been promoted as follows –

- (1) One Manager to the grade of Senior Manager;
- (2) Three Investment Executive to the grade of Manager;
- (3) Two Investment Executive to the grade of Senior Investment Executive, and
- (4) Four Compliance/Administrative Officers to the grade of Investment Executive.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister confirm then that in the new structure the post of Assistant Manager does not exist?

**Mr Sithanen:** I do not have the information, but I can check with the BOI and give the answer to the hon. lady.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can the Minister check also whether there have been cases of Investment Officers being appointed directly at managerial level without going through the level of Assistant Manager?

**Mr Sithanen:** I'll check, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – FOB PRICE,  
PREMIUMS, ETC.**

**(No. B/578) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau-Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the contract for the supply of petroleum products for financial year 2006-2007, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, the following information –

- (a) the FOB price of each of the petroleum products;
- (b) the premium paid comprising freight, insurance, bunkering and port charges and the profit margin for –
  - (i) heavy fuel oil;
  - (ii) kerosene;
  - (iii) mogas, and
  - (iv) diesel
- (c) if the fuel oil will be transported by double hull tankers;
- (d) if the white oil product will be carried by tankers accredited internationally to discharge their products on terminals of major oil companies, and
- (e) if the black and white oil products will be carried in separate tankers.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of petroleum products is of national importance. As the hon. Member of the Opposition has raised - in his question - different issues pertaining to this very sensitive subject, I humbly invite the House to bear with me. I am prepared to give all information sought as far as possible.

For period 2006-2007, Mauritius will import all petroleum products from Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), India, as approved by Government on 05 May 2006. This is the first time ever that the Government of Mauritius has entered into a direct agreement with a foreign refinery for the supply of petroleum products. MRPL is a subsidiary of Oil and Natural Gas Company (ONGC), which is owned by the Government of India. It's a Government to Government initiative.

This decision has helped the country to achieve two things – one, it puts aside intermediaries and traders; second, the country stands to gain in terms of savings. In fact, the amount of savings would be around Rs350 m. Issues like security of supply, mode of transportation, specifications of products and respect of international norms have all been taken into due consideration.

As regards part (a) of the question, relating to FOB price of each of the petroleum products for 2006-2007, I wish to inform the House that these would only be available in August 2006 when the first consignment will be loaded. In fact, FOB prices of petroleum products changes almost everyday, and sometimes many times in a day.

FOB prices are based on the Platts Publications which is an international publication providing data on the daily prices of petroleum products applicable at different ports of loading. For instance, Arabian Gulf, Singapore, Mediterranean (Italy). FOB prices of petroleum products have witnessed considerable increases during the past months.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to give some examples –

FOB price of Mogas was around 325 USD per MT early January 2005; reaching nearly 800 USD per MT early September 2005 and 450 USD per MT early February 2006.

FOB price of gas oil was around 43 USD per barrel early January 2005; reaching 77 USD early September 2005; and around 64 USD early February 2006.

FOB price of DPK was around 43 USD per barrel early January 2005; reaching 74 USD per barrel early September 2005; and nearly 74 USD per barrel early February 2006.

FOB price of fuel oil was around 151 USD per MT early January 2005; reaching 295 USD per MT early September 2005; and 315 USD per MT early February 2006.

With regard to part (b) of the question, which relates to premium paid and comprising freight, insurance, port charges and the profit margin for fuel oil, kerosene, mogas and diesel, it will be most inappropriate to disclose

these information at this stage, as these relate to sensitive commercial information.

Revealing same, I repeat at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, might be viewed with concern by parties involved.

I must also add that even when STC used to float international tender for the purchase of petroleum products, the issue of premium was never disclosed until such time this was commercially and administratively possible.

Market intelligence reveals that there are numerous risks associated with the element of premium. These risks tend to influence the premiums on the high side. The Member may wish to note that for year 2006-07, and according to reliable information obtained from well-known international suppliers, the premium would be very high on the international market. The geopolitical situation relating to Iran, Nigeria, Venezuela etc. explains this trend. As a matter of fact, the premium has increased drastically over the last three years.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that this will be the case, that is, we would be supplying fuel oil by double hull by double hull tankers.

However, I need to highlight a few more points. According to the International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships, that is, MARPOL 75/78, single hull tankers are allowed for transportation of fuel oil until 2015. This was exemplified at a committee chaired by the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2003. It was even suggested, at a subsequent meeting held on 06 February 2003, that all extra costs for chartering of double hull vessels for transport of fuel oil would be passed on to the Mauritian consumers. I am informed that this precise information was never made public.

In August 2003, the then Government decided to ban single hull vessels for shipment of fuel oil into Mauritius. Nevertheless, and after August 2003, the then Government did allow for derogation for shipment of fuel oil by single hull vessels into Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as per the MARPOL Convention and according to international regulations, Mauritius can still allow accredited single hull vessels to call at Port-Louis harbour. It is to be noted that authorisation to



allow single hull vessels to carry fuel oil is only delivered by MARPOL. In addition, the House may wish to note that MRPL has offered, in addition to other alternatives, to carry fuel oil in double sided vessels. This refers to vessels having double hull on the two sides of the ship. This double sided vessel is already serving ports in Singapore, Korea, Indonesia and even Japan. I must add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that STC will have its shipment of fuel oil in double hull vessels for the year 2006-2007.

The answer to part (d) of the question is that white oil product will be carried by vessels accredited by MARPOL.

As regards part (e) of the question, the answer is in the affirmative.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can the hon. Minister lay on the Table of the Assembly the contract which has been signed between the Government of Mauritius and the Mangalore refinery?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member must be aware that, for the purchase of petrol products, we normally go by a document. And this document was posted on the website of STC. If he wishes to find the information, all the information is available there.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can I know from the hon. Minister whether STC has now gone on the international tanker market to look for accredited tanker?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is wrong. He probably does not know that ONGC produces 80% of crude oil utilised by India; and furthermore, this arrangement has the blessing of the Indian Government. It is not only the Indian Government, the hon. Prime Minister of India has given his approval of this project. So, the hon. Member can rest assured that STC is doing the needful for the supply of this product.

**Mr Jugnauth:** STC has now gone on the international tanker market looking for the accredited tanker.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as a routine, STC deals in various commodities. They have to make sure that we get the best deal for each commodity that we are dealing in.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Is it now that the STC has gone on the international tanker market looking for accredited tanker?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this arrangement is from the Government of Mauritius to the Government of India and it's MRPL which is going to provide us with this commodity. As I said, if the hon. Member would look at the document that is supplied for the supply of this commodity, it is all specified here. For example, let me read –

‘Conditions of carrier vessel

The successful tenderer will be required to ensure that the carrier vessel complies with the International Shipping Management Code (....)’

It goes on like this and there about ten different parameters that they have to abide by.

**Mr Jugnauth:** If the Minister still does not know whether STC has gone on the international tanker market to look for accredited tanker how come that he mentioned the figure of Rs350 m that they are going to save? Can we know from the Minister on what basis he has come forward to say that we are going to save Rs350 m?

**Dr. Jeetah:** That is a fair question. And here again it shows that the hon. Member was not listening to my answer. Mr Speaker, Sir, on the purchase of petroleum products, we have two elements; it is the Platts rate and the premium. The Platts rate is the figure that is shown on the world market, and here it is the premium that we have been talking about. The premium covers the cost of freight. So the question does not even arise.

**Mr Jugnauth:** The question does not arise when we don't even know the accredited tanker which has not yet been obtained, how much it is going to cost! The Minister says the question does not even arise and he says that we are going to make Rs350 m profit!

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

## LA TOUR KOENIG COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/579) **Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware that there is an increasing number of people attending the Michael Leal Community Health Centre at La Tour Koenig and, if so, will he consider the advisability of renovating same.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Michael Leal Community Health Centre at La Tour Koenig is accommodated in a building of 468 sq ft and caters for a population of around 11000 inhabitants. The existing facilities and space are inadequate.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping, which was requested to arrange for the extension of the building, has advised that it was not possible to do so due to site constraints. The Ministry of Housing has been requested to acquire land adjacent to the Community Health Centre or identify an alternative site for the construction of a new Community Health Centre.

### **SQUATTERS - LA TOUR KOENIG NHDC HOUSING ESTATES**

**(No. B/580) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if the squatters who broke into the NHDC houses at La Tour Koenig in June 2005 have now obtained a plot of land or a housing unit and, if not, why not.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on several occasions stated while answering questions on the problem of squatting which occurred on the eve of the General Election at the various NHDC housing estates including La Tour Koenig. These problems were the tangible and awful consequences of the incompetence and acts of gross irresponsibility of the previous Government.

Sir, I am advised that there were 162 squatters at the NHDC units at La Tour Koenig. 32 families have been reported by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups as hardship cases deserving consideration. Consequently, 19 of them have each been allocated a building site lease at Bambous and 13 at Bois Marchand.

### **RECTORS – PROMOTION**

**(No. B/581) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources

whether he will table a list of Rectors who have been promoted following the last promotion exercise.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the list of the persons appointed rectors so far.

### **RODRIGUES - CHIKUNGUNYA CASES**

**(No. B/582) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the chikungunya disease in Rodrigues, he will state –

- (a) the number of cases reported monthly since January 2006 to date;
- (b) the medical treatment afforded to the patients, and
- (c) if any case was reported of person/s who died while being treated for chikungunya.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the number of confirmed cases of chikungunya reported in Rodrigues since January 2006 is as follows –

January	-	0
February	-	1
March	-	56
April	-	393
May		
(up to 20 May)	-	79

With regard to part (b), as no specific treatment is available for chikungunya, patients are treated with analgesics and non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs in accordance with the protocol for treatment issued by the Ministry.

As regards part (c) of the question, no cases of death or complications have been reported from patients treated for chikungunya in Rodrigues.

**Mrs Martin:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether the treatment which is being administered is sufficiently available?

**Mr Gokhool:** I think there is a number of quotas which was made available to Rodrigues. I would think that these are sufficient to deal with the problem at present.

### **SWIMMING POOLS – SAFETY MEASURES**

**(No. B/583) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to private and public swimming pools, he will state if Government proposes to introduce legislation with a view to providing for compulsory safety measures in accordance with international safety norms.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **ABANDONED CHILDREN ( JULY 2005 – MAY 2006) - REPORTED CASES**

**(No. B/584) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether, in regard to abandoned children, she will state –

- (a) the number of reported cases since July 2005 to date,  
and
- (b) if any study has been carried out thereinto.

**Mrs Seebun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, since July 2005 up to now 74 cases of child abandonment have been reported comprising 33 boys and 41 girls.

As regards part (b), no specific study has been carried out so far.

However, constant monitoring by the CDU has given us some indication on common features of child abandonment which are: teenage pregnancy, rape, incest, prostitution, drug addiction, alcoholism, extra-marital relationship, conflicts at home, financial problems, amongst others.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with the increasing number of children who are being abandoned, will the hon. Minister say, whether there is any need for her Ministry to come up with a specific policy on that matter?

**Mrs Seebun:** There is no increase as such, Mr Speaker, Sir. Annually, around 75 cases are reported. However, we do not exclude mechanisms to be contemplated to see to it that there is decrease, if not, a complete elimination, of child abandonment.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Can I know then what is actually the policy of the Ministry with regard to these abandoned children? What does the Ministry propose to these children?

*(Interruption)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, I said!

**Mrs Seebun:** In fact, the hon. Member should have come up with a substantive question. However, I will give an answer to her question. Regarding children who are already abandoned, we take them on board in our shelters and we give them the necessary care as well as education. The Attorney-General's Office is currently working on the family law which will take care of all aspects of family, right from alimony up to child abandonment.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** The Minister will no doubt agree that putting these abandoned children in shelters is only a temporary measure. What is the Ministry contemplating with a view to having a permanent measure for these children?

**Mrs Seebun:** The hon. Member is right in saying that putting children in shelters is not a solution. But we are putting the children in shelters only on a temporary basis. Quickly afterwards, we look for foster and responsible parents who do not have any children, but who do have deep affection for children and human care. We send the children to those parents who are carefully chosen.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Would the hon. Minister tell us then how many foster parents have taken care of abandoned children?

**Mrs Seebun:** I cannot give the exact figure, but there is a considerable number of parents who have expressed the desire to take those children on board.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister state whether she proposes to review the policy on adoption, especially following the recent report of the Ombudsperson for children?

**Mrs Seebun:** As far as adoption is concerned, this is taken care of by the Prime Minister's Office, but as far as local adoption is concerned, we do give our fair share of contribution in it and we will continue to do so.

### **ACCIDENTS (FATAL) - DRIVERS – ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION**

**(No. B/585) Mr A. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to fatal road accidents for the last two years, he will state the number of cases involving drivers with alcohol concentration exceeding the prescribed limit.

**The Minister of Environment and National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled.

### **STATE LANDS - LEASE**

**(No. B/586) Mr A. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State lands which have been leased since July 2005 to date, he will table a list of applicants who have been granted a lease, indicating the date of application and the purpose for which each plot of land was leased.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since July 2005, a number of leases has been granted, including building site leases to squatters and hardship cases. Additionally, some 2200 letters of intent were issued more or less around the eve of last General Election to squatters and since July 2005, the exercise of finalising the lease agreement in favour of those beneficiaries has started and will be completed in the near future.

Sir, the detailed information requested for is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly, as soon as the exercise is completed.

## CASTING OF SLAB – APPLICATIONS - AFFIDAVIT

(No. B/587) **Mr A. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware that people who apply for financial grant for the casting of slab are required to swear an affidavit and, if so, will he give the reasons therefor.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that since 30 March 2005, the NHDC Ltd is requesting self-employed applicants to submit, along with their applications for financial grant for the casting of slab, an affidavit whereby they are required to declare, *inter alia*, their monthly household income. This measure allows examination and approval of applications on a rational and fairer basis.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, formerly, it suffices for applicants to write a letter to the Ministry and then inspectors from the Ministry or the NHDC went to check as to whether they are speaking the truth or not. Now, when an applicant swears an affidavit, does the Ministry base itself on that affidavit to grant the money for casting of slabs or does it still send inspectors to do the job which they were doing when only a letter sufficed?

**Mr Dulull:** When someone swears an affidavit, the presumption is that the person is telling the truth and the practice is to make the approval of applications on a more rational and fairer basis.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, these people who are poor and vulnerable make an application to get Rs40,000. Asking them to go and swear an affidavit will cost more money. Before, as I said, a letter sufficed. If the Ministry is doing the same job as before, that is, a letter was sufficed, why insist on these people to go and swear an affidavit?

**Mr Dulull:** The previous system was exposed to abuses. We wanted that the most needy get the money. That is why we wanted to have a fairer and more rational approach for the casting of slabs because, over the past years, we have seen that some people were making false declaration and the system was exposed to abuses.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Can the Ministry envisage returning the money spent on the affidavit back to the people concerned in case it is proved that they deserve the grant?



**Mr Dulull:** As a caring Government, we are concerned and we are conscious that people who ask for the money are needy. We will explore this possibility.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether he finds it in order for Members of Government to remit to the beneficiaries the financial grant for casting of slabs?

**Mr Dulull:** Can the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he finds it in order for Members of Government to remit the financial grant to the beneficiaries?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** This does not arise from the question.

### **SUGAR - EUROPEAN UNION –COMPENSATION**

**(No. B/588) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the compensation to be paid by the European Union in the form of accompanying measures following the 5% decrease in the guaranteed price of sugar this year, the will state –

- (a) the amount in Mauritian rupees;
- (b) the mechanism to be set up to manage and distribute this sum, and
- (c) the percentage of this sum that will be allocated to small planters to alleviate their conditions.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **BEL AIR SUGAR ESTATE – LAND LEASE - IRS PROJECT**

**(No. B/589) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will

state if the application of Bel Air Sugar Estate for the lease of around 100 *arpents* of State land for the development of an IRS Project is still under consideration at his Ministry and, if so, when the lease agreement will be signed and, if not, why not.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this Parliamentary Question which allows me to set records straight. In fact, records indicate the following –

Bel Air Sugar Estate submitted a first application for an IRS Project, as far back as on 02 April 2001, involving a hotel and an international 18-hole golf course.

Following a number of meetings and consultations, the final project proposal, as submitted on 01 October 2004, relates to a request for the lease of two contiguous plots of *Pas Géométriques* at Bel Air and Rivière des Anguilles totalling 104 *arpents*. The project comprises –

- up to two 5-star luxury village type hotels, including Spa and wellness centre, with an 18-hole international championship golf course, and associated high-class amenities, and
- some 60 prestigious villas, a practice golf course as well as ancillary facilities, including a low rise business park within the context of the Integrated Resort Scheme.

The whole project is to be implemented, according to the final project proposal, on the 104 *arpents* of the *Pas Géométriques* and on freehold land.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a project of this magnitude, including and relying on such an extraordinarily substantial extent of 104 *arpents* of *Pas Géométriques*, cannot be considered lightly and on a merely routine basis, inasmuch as Government is the trustee of the State belongings and must at all times ensure that these belongings are used and utilised for the ultimate benefits of the nation at large.

The application is being considered in the context of our policy of democratisation of the economy and of equitable distribution of wealth of the nation.

The application of Bel Air Sugar Estate cannot escape being considered in the context of the public interest, of the national interest and of the common good. And the Government is the guardian of the public

interest, of the national interest, and of the common good. The application thus continues to be so considered in this very context of democratisation of the economy, and of Government's fiduciary responsibility and accountability for the sound management of the wealth of the nation in the best and superior interests of the entire people of our rainbow country.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Dulull:** In the final analysis, *les biens de l'Etat appartiennent à tous les citoyens – non seulement aux riches mais aussi aux plus pauvres*, and projects which will wholly take the country forward towards overall economic success and overall peoples' good and welfare, will certainly be given the weightage and consideration they deserve. The application of Bel Air Sugar Estate which, let it be reminded, had already, for so many years - almost a century, I understand – enjoyed the use and the utilisation of the 104 *arpents* until 1999, is certainly no exception to such weightage and consideration. The national interest will guide a final decision thereon. And the national interest cannot be pressed into hurried decisions.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have heard the answer of the hon. Minister. May I know when will his Ministry reach a decision on this issue?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, national interest cannot be pressed into hurried decisions.

### **CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT – MODERNISATION – EUROPEAN UNION GRANT**

**(No. B/590) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if Mauritius has benefited from the grant of the European Union allocated to SADC countries for the modernisation of their Customs Department and, if so, will he state the

amount and how this sum would be used and, if not, will he take up the matter with the party concerned.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the financing agreement between the European Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) making available a grant of Euro 18 million was signed only on 27 April 2006. The grant is meant to support SADC member countries projects and programmes relating to customs modernisation and trade facilitation.

We are shortly approaching the SADC Secretariat regarding the modalities and criteria to benefit from this grant facility.

### **TRIPARTITE MEETING – WAGE COMPENSATION**

**(No. B/591) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the recent annual tripartite meeting, he will state whether a final proposal for wage compensation has now been made to the Trade Unions and, if so, what has been their reaction.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I had explained in my reply to the PNQ on this subject last week, various factors are taken into account for awarding salary compensation. Apart from the increase in the Consumer Price Index for the preceding year, we have to bear in mind the economic and financial situation of the country, the ability of enterprises and Government to pay the salary compensation, and the need to protect those who are at the lowest rung of the income ladder.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in spite, amongst others, of the high budget deficit, the alarming level of debt, the high unemployment rate, the surging deficit of the external balance and the adverse impact of the loss of trade preferences in our economy, Government has made an effort to award a full salary compensation for the lower income group and the threshold of Rs2,700 was thus maintained. For those drawing a salary of more than Rs2,700, a flat rate of Rs135 was proposed. This will cost Rs1,445 m. to the economy - Rs690 m. for the public sector and Rs855 m. for the private sector.

The Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF) was not in favour of awarding any compensation to the EPZ and sugar sectors which are facing serious economic challenges. However, as a compromise, it proposed a salary compensation of 3.5%, but not exceeding Rs110, for those drawing a monthly salary of up to Rs4,000 and 3%, but not exceeding Rs120, for those drawing monthly salary of more than Rs4,000.

The Trade Union Common Platform, on their part, made a first proposal for a salary compensation of Rs718 across the board and a second one of Rs392 across the board. The costs of the proposals from the trade union to the economy are estimated at Rs6 billion in the first case and Rs3.3 billion in the second one. These proposals, Mr Speaker, Sir, were not considered to be acceptable.

To show the goodwill of Government, I proposed that our initial stand be retained. However, I further proposed that a Committee be set up to identify the sectors which can afford to pay more than the minimum proposed. The MEF finally agreed to this course of action, but considered that the additional increase should not be mandatory. The trade unions, for their part, did not agree to the proposal and made a walk out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is still prepared to set up a mechanism to ensure that those sectors which can pay more than the minimum proposed should do so. In fact, during my pre-budget consultation meetings with representatives of the Joint Economic Council on Saturday last, I exhorted all economic sectors which have the capacity to pay to make efforts for paying more than the proposed minimum. This will be to the benefit of workers themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir. It will enable enterprises which are facing difficulties to preserve their current level of employment and for those doing well to better remunerate their employees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to set the example, I am pleased to announce that Government has requested State-owned enterprises that have the ability and the capacity to pay more to do so. Thus companies like State Bank of Mauritius, SICOM, Mauritius Telecom, Mauritius Duty-free Paradise, State Investment Corporation will pay more than the above minimum decided at the tripartite meeting. I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that companies in the private sector which can pay more will also do so.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the highly globalising environment where we have to compete openly with giant economies like China and India, we can no longer rely on a wage settlement mechanism which does not take into account ability to pay. This will erode the competitiveness of our economy

and lead to the closure of a number of enterprises and rising levels of unemployment, thus affecting the very tool that we want to protect. This is what we have to avoid. We thus need to take bold reform measures which will encourage the inflow of investment, propel growth to a higher trajectory and create gainful employment opportunities to all our citizens.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister give the figure, for example, for the compensation last year and the compensation this year? Can we know the savings the private sector is making and the Government is making?

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I answered the question last week. The quantum depends also on what is the rate of inflation. Mr Speaker, Sir, if the rate of inflation is higher, compensation will be higher. Let me clarify two very important issues, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Opposition would like us to believe that it is the first time that this is happening. Again, I don't want to play party politics, Mr Speaker, Sir. There were instances in the past where the country was in difficult conditions, where the rate of inflation was 13.8 and the compensation given to those at the lowest rung was significantly lower than that, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was in 1982/1983.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Sithanen:** Second, Mr Speaker, Sir, the next year something exceptional happened because again the country was in difficult conditions. I will refresh their memory that in 1983/84 the minimum was reduced compared to the previous year by Rs50.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we can play cheap politics, but what we are saying is that there have been instances in the past where even those who earned the lowest salary were not fully compensated by inflation.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that the Government has asked SIC and other companies to give more. Can we know whether Government has given the figure will be paid?

**Mr Sithanen:** The hon. Member must understand the principle that has been spelt out clearly. We said that it depends on the capacity to pay; it depends on the ability of the enterprise to pay and it depends on

competitiveness. They will decide, basically, how much more they can pay. Let me give the hon. Member one example. There are cases where probably they will get more than they would have had from Central Government for the simple reason that in many of these enterprises, the lowest salary is well above Rs4000.

**Mrs Perrier:** Je voudrais savoir du ministre le nombre de travailleurs qui vont bénéficier du *full compensation* de R135.

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question later on. Let me reassure the hon. lady that all the time the minimum has always been driven by the minimum salary in the EPZ sector. Mr Speaker, Sir, the information I have is that ..

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sithanen:** We have two minimum, hon. Leader of the Opposition. First, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are about 500,000 people who are classified as employees in this country. For all intent and purposes, when we do such calculation, we remove those that are self-employed and the principle that you do not pay to yourself. So, if we remove these 100,000 people, then the percentage of people who will benefit from this maximum compensation is about 10% to 11% on the 400,000, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the intention might be good, but, firstly, in the past, we have had the experience when Government has asked those who are able and who could pay more to do so, but we know that none of these companies or enterprises has done so. Secondly, the hon. Minister of Finance have made mentioned of certain big companies. Can we know from the Minister how is he going to control these companies? Is he not going to open the floodgate and those people earning more will get a lot more than those who are at the lower rung?

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to decide what we want. It will not make sense for Central Government to impose how much each sector and each enterprise in a particular sector will have to pay. And that is why my colleagues, hon. Bunwaree, hon. Jeetah and hon. Boolell who is absent today - he is fighting the case of sugar for Mauritius - we propose to sit down and set up a committee - we cannot control - to at least monitor the situation. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, on Saturday, when I met with the JEC, I

told them that it is a question of their credibility also. And I said it again in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, the appeal I have made to the JEC is a question of their credibility. We know what are the sectors that can pay and we wanted to sit down to identify how we can monitor the situation, because there are sectors that can pay. In fact, there are some sectors that will pay 5% even for those who earn more than the amount that you are talking about for the simple reason that in these sectors the minimum is higher than what has been decided.

**Mrs Perrier:** Le ministre vient de nous dire qu'il s'est basé sur les employés de la zone franche. Or, d'après le *Remuneration Order*, un *skill worker* gagne, au minimum, R188.31 par jour, ce qui revient approximativement à R23 l'heure, donc au-dessus de R2700. Je voudrais savoir exactement qui va bénéficier de ce *minimum compensation*.

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not know how long the hon. lady has been studying the case of the Export Processing Zone.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, she keeps on making nasty remarks. We all know that one of the issues that we face in the EPZ sector is the difference between the minimum wage and the take home pay. In fact, if the hon. Member had listened to what the trade unionists had said, that there are so many people who are at the particular level that they want an across the board compensation of Rs712. *On ne peut pas vouloir quelque chose et se contrer en même temps.*

*(Interruptions)*

I just gave the figures to the hon. Member. I told her ...

*(Interruptions)*

Let me repeat.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Sithanen:** I have just stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, out of an average of 500,000 people who work, we have to deduct about 100,000 people who are self-employed and out of the remaining between 10% and 11% will benefit from this full compensation.



**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Jugnauth, last question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sithanen:** It is about 30,000 to 32,000. The computation is very easy.

**Mr Jugnauth:** I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether his proposition is not going to create an unfair situation in the country if, as he is saying, people who can pay will do so and those who cannot will not pay. The full compensation is Rs135. Is he not going to create an unfair situation in these days of high prices when everybody has to struggle to earn a living?

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have said it very clearly, we would have liked to give more. Everybody would have liked to give more. We are all politicians who want to be re-elected, but we also have to act responsibly. We have suggested that the compensation cannot be driven by those who can pay the highest and Government has proposed this amount and whichever sector or enterprise can pay, it should pay more.

**Mrs Perrier:** Est-ce-que le ministre veut nous faire croire que dans le EPZ sector, il y a des personnes qui touchent moins que R 2700?

**Mr Sithanen:** Basic salary.

**Mrs Perrier:** J'aimerais bien qu'il me dise quelle catégorie de travailleurs touchent moins de R 2700 par mois?

**Mr Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is what we call basic salary, which is different from take home pay.

*(Interruptions)*

*Bien sûr, qu'il y a!* Of course, there are people who earn basic salary, because one of the requests of the trade unions, since 1980, has been that compensation should be based on full take home pay and not on basic salary. All Governments have maintained the compensation on basic pay as opposed to take home pay. The hon. Member can go and check with the Trade Union Movement and can ask Mr Sooklall who is a specialist on that matter.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Guinness.

## DENTAL COUNCIL - ELECTION & COMPOSITION

(No. B/592) **Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Dental Council, he will state -

- (a) when was the last election held, and
- (b) whether the composition of the Council has been *gazetted*.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the last election of the Dental Council of Mauritius was held on 25 March 2006, and the composition of the Council has been gazetted on 13 May, as per Government Notice No. 671 of 2006.

It is to be noted that the first meeting of the newly elected Dental Council has been scheduled for Thursday 25 May 2006.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not hear when the result of the election was gazetted.

**Mr Gokhool:** On 13 May.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that according to the Dental Council Act, I quote -

"The Minister shall, within 21 days of receipt of the results of election, publish in the gazette the composition of the Council."

The Minister just said that election was held on 25 March and it is only on 13 May that it has been gazetted. Is it in order?

**Mr Gokhool:** I am aware of the delay that exists in the law for the publication in the gazette, but there has been a delay and this is an oversight. We have checked with the State Law Office and I have to assure the Member that this delay is not the result of deliberate action. It is an oversight and it has been addressed. The meeting of the Dental Council will be held shortly.

**Mr Gunness:** In the meantime, I understand that the Council has not met on 25 March and it is only when I put the question that it has been gazetted.

**Mr Gokhool:** The fact of the matter is that the Council's meeting is going to be held on 25 May.

**Mr Guinness:** I take it from the Minister that there must be somebody in the Ministry who is responsible of the file and has not done his job.

**Mr Gokhool:** I think the hon. Member is labouring the point. I have said that there has been an oversight and I have checked with the SLO. It is not going to cause any prejudice because the Council is going to meet on the 25 May.

### **PRIMATES – EXPORT - COMPANIES**

**(No. B/593) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will give a list of companies engaged in the export of primates for use in laboratories.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **AIRPORT (NORTH) – FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**(No. B/594) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if Government is planning to build a second airport in Mauritius.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Government Programme 2005-2010 provides, at paragraph 135, for a feasibility study to be carried out regarding the construction of an airport in the north.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the implications of the proposed study are being examined by the Ministry.

### **CONSTITUENCY NO. 7–TOURISM SECTOR – IRS**

**(No. B/595) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will status if any new project in the tourism sector is being proposed in the Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Board of Investment that they have received a proposal for the development of an Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) project with a tourism component in the Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart.

The project is planned to be implemented at Roches Noires in over 352 ha of freehold land and is expected to create about 2,000 jobs in the long run. The total investment for the project amounts to 540 USD M (Rs16.2 billion).

The project comprises of 3 components –

- Tourism component: one resort hotel, one boutique hotel, one wellness centre/clinic;
- IRS component: a golf course, 100 chalets around *barachois*, 300 marina villas, 400 golf villas;
- Commercial component: one business park and retail centre.

**Mr Boodhoo:** May I ask the hon. Minister what is the status of application at the moment?

**Dr. David:** Well, I understand there is a letter of comfort.

### **HOTEL MANAGERS/SENIOR EXECUTIVES – REPRESENTATIONS**

**(No. B/596) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he has received representations from Mauritian managers and senior executives in hotels in Mauritius to the effect that they are being victimized in matters of promotion and remuneration in favour of expatriates and, if so, the measures he intends to take to ensure that the Mauritian nationals are treated equitably.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** No, Sir, I have not received such representations from Mauritian hotel managers or senior executives, but I must say that I have been made aware of the existence of such problems in certain cases.

Each time we have obtained such information at the level of my Ministry either through anonymous letters or hearsay, we have intervened.

In the case where an employee feels aggrieved on matters of promotion, salary and conditions of employment, there exists a procedure for dispute resolution, which has given satisfaction so far, and most cases brought to my knowledge have been settled.

As a general rule, the Labour Inspectorate of my Ministry enquires discretely in the first instance and if there is any indication of possible victimization, the matter is referred to the relevant unit for mediation and conciliation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Parliamentary Question raises the pertinent question of equality of treatment to Mauritian nationals and expatriates with equal competence and qualifications. I am personally very sensitive to this issue.

It is, however, a more complex matter than what it could seem, but I can assure the hon. Member that we are doing all we can to ensure that Mauritian nationals working at hotels, especially at managerial levels, are treated equitably.

I have liaised with my colleague, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of tourism, Leisure and External Communications, for the issue of guidelines to the Work Permit Committee for due attention to be given to the availability of qualified and experienced Mauritian nationals when considering applications for work permits to expatriates to perform in managerial positions in the hotel sector.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister may be aware that in spite of the fact that guidelines do exist in that sector, these are not necessarily being followed. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he would come forward with a clear policy, which is based more on rules rather than a case by case settlement of issues.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem is more complex than what it may seem superficially. I, myself, have been shocked to learn, for example, that more than 35% of the clientele of hotels are people who come on a regular basis. They live as if in their home; they are

coming every year. So, we have to take into consideration various aspects, but we are working on the points raised by the hon. Member.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** May I make a request to the hon. Minister, if it is possible for him, to table a list of all expatriates working in Mauritius and their schemes of work?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, they work for the private sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't think we can table all, but if there is any specific question, I'll look into it.

**MUTTEEPUTH FOWDAR GOVT. SCHOOL, CAMP DE MASQUE  
PAVE – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS**

**(No. B/597) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mutteeputh Fowdur Government School at Camp de Masque Pavé, he will state if he is aware of –

- (a) the derelict conditions of the toilets;
- (b) the repeated water shortage problems, and
- (c) the flooding of the classrooms caused by broken window frames during heavy rainfalls and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take, as a matter of priority.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, there are recurrent backlog of recurrent repairs and maintenance problems in some schools. Coming to part (a) of the question asked by the hon. Member, I would like to inform the House that there are problems with regard to some of the flush tanks in the toilets.

These will be replaced during the coming school holidays to avoid inconvenience to the pupils, as the whole toilet block will have to be closed for the purpose.

In the meantime, optimum use is being made of the toilets which are in a good state.

With regard to part (b) which relates to the repeated water shortage problems, I am informed that this is due to the regular water supply cuts in

the region. However, a 2,500 litre capacity water tank is being immediately purchased and needful will be done to fix same as soon as possible.

As regards part (c), it has not been possible to replace the damaged naco frames up to now. However, a proper survey will be carried out by my Ministry in two weeks' time. The works proper will be effected as soon as the November/December 2006 school vacation starts, since these comprehensive works which may last up to 10 weeks have to be carried out in the absence of pupils. In the meantime, to avert inconvenience to the pupils, temporary remedial works will be carried out by the Maintenance Unit of the zone.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Minister if he can consider the possibility, together with the hon. Minister of Environment, hon. Minister Seeburn and hon. Sayed-Hossen, of fixing a date and time so that they can *de visu* look at the situation?

**Mr Gokhool:** I am taking note of the request and I'll inform the hon. Member when we can make the visit.

### **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CONFERENCE CENTRE – ORIENTATION FAIR – INCIDENT**

**(No. B/598) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if any incident occurred during the orientation fair which was held during the second week of May 2006 at the Swami Vivekananda Conference Centre and, if so, will he state if an inquiry was carried out therein and the outcome thereof.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the International Careers Guidance and Education Fair is organised since 14 years by the Rotary Club of Grand Bay, but with the participation of the Careers Guidance Service of my Ministry.

I am informed that there was no incident of a serious nature during the fair. However, a minor disturbance involving some students did take place. No formal declaration was made to the local Police.

The hon. Member may wish to note that it is, however, a usual phenomenon for students to tend to be noisy, but according to the organizers of the event the situation never went out of control.

Consequently, the question of carrying out an enquiry does not arise.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister mean to say that there were no chairs damaged or anything else for that matter, and that the security was not called upon to take control of the situation?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a bit exaggerated. I have the report from the Police authorities that this was a minor incident and the situation never went out of control.

### **COLLINE MONNERON SSS/RESERVOIR – PLOT OF LAND**

**(No. B/599) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if the plot of land situated between the Colline Monneron State Secondary School and the reservoir has been earmarked for any particular project and, if so, will he give details thereof.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a plot of land being part of State land at Monneron Hill of an extent of 21,165 m<sup>2</sup> lying between the land vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the plot of land leased to the CWA has been earmarked for the construction of a fire station, to replace the existing Municipal fire station.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping is actually carrying out a geotechnical investigation at the proposed site.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether this plot of land was not first earmarked for sports infrastructure of Colline Monneron SSS?

**Mr Dulull:** The land is still uncommitted.

### **SCHOOLS (PRIMARY) - ICT TEACHERS - EMPLOYMENT**

**(No. B/600) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he



will state if his Ministry is considering offering permanent employment to the information and Communication Technologies (ICT) teachers who are presently working as such in the primary schools of Mauritius and the Island of Rodrigues.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, ICT was introduced in primary schools in January 2003. The original project had planned for the setting up of fully equipped IT laboratories in fifty primary schools per year. However, to this date, only fifty (50) IT laboratories have been set up. At this rate, the setting up of IT laboratories in all the 275 primary schools would have to wait for five years.

My Ministry has, therefore, evolved a new strategy to accelerate the process of the establishment of IT laboratories in primary schools. Under the new strategy, each school will be provided with five (5) computers and one printer. The procurement of equipment is under way.

In view of the fact that the General Purpose teachers were not appropriately trained in ICT, 329 ICT teachers were recruited in four batches as from April-June 2002 on a four-year contract basis to allow implementation of the ICT project. The ICT teachers were required to follow a full time training course at the MIE as from April 2002 to May 2003, leading to the "Certificate of Proficiency in ICT Education" before being posted in primary schools in January 2003 for the teaching of ICT.

There are presently 243 ICT teachers and they have recently been informed that their contract of employment has been renewed for a further period of two years, upon the same terms and conditions of their initial contract of employment.

The Ministry is in the process of setting up a Joint Committee comprising the MIE and the CIB, (Central Informatics Bureau) among others, to map out the future IT strategy for primary schools, including the future staffing requirements. The decisions of this Ministry will be governed by the recommendations of the Joint Committee.

## **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - REGISTRATION**

**(No. B/601) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the criteria laid down for the registration of educational institutions with the Special Education Needs Unit of his Ministry.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the criteria laid down for the registration of educational institutions with the Special Education Needs Unit (SENU) of my Ministry have been worked out by the Special Education Needs Unit in close consultation with the relevant organisations in the sector through an *ad-hoc* Committee set up in March 2005.

Registration Certificates are valid for a period of two years. The educational institutions are registered either as Special Education Needs (SENS) Schools or as Special Education Needs day care centres. The SEN schools are those which provide educational services to children with disabilities, by either qualified or trained or experienced teachers, with a proper curriculum and appropriate pedagogical tools. SEN day care centres are those which provide care to children with disabilities, basic living skills and basic educational activities.

Except for this difference in the teaching mode, the registration criteria governing the SEN Units are the same for both the SEN schools and the SEN day care centres and these relate to *inter alia* issues such as -

- credibility of the institution (e.g. registration with the Registrar of Associations);
- quality;
- health and security ;
- qualifications and experience of the staff;
- recourse to appropriate curriculum and pedagogy;
- the provision of medical and para-medical services;
- the provision of specialised rooms;
- presence of adapted furniture and equipment;
- the school population;
- the age of the student population, and
- the teacher-pupil ration and the space-child ratio.

A draft handbook on the criteria governing registration has been prepared and this document is being finalised for the publication after necessary clearances are obtained.

## **LABOUR FORCE - TRADE UNION**

**(No. B/602) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

whether he will state the percentage of labour force belonging to a trade union giving details specifically for small and large enterprises.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information obtained from the Registrar of Associations and the Central Statistics Office, the percentage of the labour force belonging to a trade union stood, as at end of December 2005 at 21%.

I am afraid, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not possible at this stage for me to provide details specifically for small and large enterprises. The information is being compiled and - if we succeed, I must say because it is very difficult - will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

**PQ NO. B/603 - See "Written Answers to Questions"**

### **MEDICAL CONSULTANTS - TRANSFER**

**(No. B/604) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if most medical consultants from different units of all regional hospitals were on Saturday 06 May 2006 transferred to other regional hospitals with effect from 08 May 2006 and, if so, the reasons therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MGI - COUNCIL MEETINGS AND ADVISERS**

**(No. B/605) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mahatma Gandhi Institute -

- (a) the number of council meetings that have been held since the appointment of the new Chairperson, and
- (b) a list of advisers recruited thereat since July 2005, indicating their qualifications and the allowances and other benefits to which they are entitled.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that two council meetings have been held since the appointment of the new Chairperson with effect from January 2006.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been informed that the MGI has no adviser recruited since July 2005.

**AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND –  
SOFTWARE (STOLEN) - CASE**

**(No. B/606) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, information as to whether any pressure has been exerted on Board members to have the case of stolen software reported to the Police withdrawn.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund that no pressure was exerted on its Board members to withdraw the case of stolen software reported to the Police.

However, I have also been informed that at one of the meetings, the possibility of withdrawing the case was evoked by the Board in order not to tarnish the image of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, the more so as the Aapravasi Ghat is being considered for nomination on the World Heritage List.

The Board ultimately decided to let the Police carry out its inquiry.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister confirm whether the Chairperson in that meeting had left the meeting because the members were not willing to withdraw the case?

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister had, on a former occasion, mentioned that he was aware, he told us that he would go and look for information. I am sad to know that he still does not have the information.

**Mr Gowressoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have requested that an inquiry be carried out.

## PATIENTS - CHIKUNGUNYA/PERFORATED PEPTIC ULCER

(No. B/607) **Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state the number of persons suffering from perforated peptic ulcers and who are also being treated for the chikungunya disease.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the House to the reply the substantive Minister of Health and Quality of Life made to PQ B/479 on 09 May 2006 and wish to add that according to our records, there are no patients presently suffering from Perforated Peptic Ulcer who are also being treated for chikungunya disease.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has the information about the 10 persons who have died of perforated peptic ulcer and whether these people had, at one point in time, been suffering from chikungunya and have been treated for it?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said, according to records, there are no such cases, but if this is the situation, it will be looked into by the Ministry.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will agree with me that all of us in the House here have come across cases where people who are being treated for chikungunya have had problems of peptic ulcer? I mean this is a fact.

*(Interruptions)*

If the hon. Minister says that he does not have record, doesn't he think that it is important for him, as Minister of Health, to ask for the information to go up to the records so that he, in the first instance and the rest of the population, can know what is happening in that matter? I am sure he has come across cases like this.

**Mr Gokhool:** I think the hon. Member has expressed an opinion. This has been noted and this will be referred to the people concerned and they will look into the matter.

**Mr Speaker:** If a specific question is going to be put, the Minister will answer the question. Next question!

### **HSC SCHOOL LEAVERS - LOAN SCHEME**

**(No. B/608) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the number of HSC school leavers who have benefited from the loan scheme set up in the last budget to help students to have access to tertiary education.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, a Tertiary Education Interest Support Scheme was approved by the former Government in the 2005/2006 Budget to provide financial assistance at concessionary interest rates to HSC holders for access to tertiary education locally. The scheme involving a total amount of Rs25 m. was launched by the Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank Ltd. on 02 May 2005. It was withdrawn in July 2005 as it did not prove to be sustainable. I am informed by the MPCB that a total of 179 students benefited from the scheme.

I wish to inform the House that with a view to increasing access and improving equity in the Tertiary Education sector, my Ministry is coming up with a Tertiary Education Loan Scheme in the White Paper on Tertiary Education. The proposed scheme will have to be discussed with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and other stakeholders in due course.

The loan will be open to all students following full-time and part-time award tertiary level education and training programmes in local, public and registered private institutions. It will cover the costs of tuition fees, books, examination fees and other related costs.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister knows that there is a question of guarantee, that is, students cannot provide collateral's guarantee when they are taking the loan. Will this scheme provide for exemption of guarantee to students?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the scheme is being worked and the issue that has been raised will be considered in the context of the finalisation of the scheme.

## SCHOOLS – SEX EDUCATION

**(No. B/609) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to sexual abuse, he will state if it is proposed to introduce school based programme designed to teach children to recognise threatening situations and to provide them with skills to protect themselves against such abuse.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. Sexual abuse is becoming a major concern for all of us. It is not limited to school premises or school hours. It is a societal problem which should concern everyone and we should all play our roles to protect our children and our citizens.

As far as schools are concerned, the existing primary and lower secondary curricula do provide for basic sex education. I wish to refer the hon. Member to my earlier replies to PQs B/137 and B/298.

My Ministry has also introduced a youth empowerment programme for lower secondary students, namely Life Skills for Teens. This programme is being run on a pilot basis in 50 State and private secondary schools. The themes covered are, *inter alia*, responsibility, self-management skills, resisting peer pressure, and making right choices. This programme is being integrated in Social Studies and will be taught through brainstorming, role play, interactive methods and the participation of learners.

Where sexual abuse is concerned, it is not only the cognitive development of the learner that must be aimed at, but also his/her affective development in a value-based context. In this regard, we are going beyond the curriculum to approach the issues.

Apart from schools, parents and the media have an important role to play in enabling students to recognise threatening situations. Society should partner with schools in our responsibility of equipping children to protect themselves.

I am working towards integrating parental involvement into the education process of the child. Parents will thus be called upon to assume greater responsibilities.

I take the opportunity to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/137 and PQ B/298.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider having sexual education as a subject on its own and not part of any other subject, be it social studies or biology? Because, up to now, we have always included it in other subjects, and all of us know what is the result. When are we going to have *l'éducation à la sexualité et non seulement une éducation sexuelle qui fait tout simplement partie de la biologie, notamment la vie reproductive, mais aussi le développement émotif des jeunes? Quand va t-on introduire un tel sujet dans nos écoles?*

**Mr Gokhool:** I have answered this question previously. But, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that we are dealing with children of very young age to secondary school going population, and we cannot have one size fits all programme for everyone. The programme must be tailor-made, and this has been taken care of.

**Mrs Labelle:** Certainement, M. le président. Il est connu que l'éducation à la sexualité commence dès très jeune, et il y a des programmes qui sont élaborés pour chaque groupe d'âge. C'est de cela que je parle et non d'un programme uniforme pour les enfants et les adolescents. Donc, nous parlons de programmes différents pour des différents groupes d'âge. *That's what I am saying.*

**Mr Gokhool:** This is being taken care of in the programme that is being elaborated.

### NHDC LTD OFFICE PREMISES - CAMERAS

(No. B/610) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NHDC, information as to whether cameras have recently been installed in the NHDC office premises and, if so, the rationale and the reasons therefor.



**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the NHDC Ltd has since February 2006 installed cameras in areas accessible to the public – cash office, public waiting room and corridors used by the public. This measure has been taken to ensure the protection of staff members, as there have been cases of theft and cases where members of the staff have been verbally abused/molested, and threatened with physical violence.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not the first time that cameras are installed in an office for security. May I ask the hon. Minister whether prior measures have been taken to inform employees that cameras will be installed? Was there a public notice, so that human rights of employees are not infringed?

**Mr Dulull:** Based on information made available, two cases of theft have been reported to the Rose Hill Police Station.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether appropriate accountability and transparency measures exist, and whether the purchase for these cameras was done according to these transparency and accountability measures?

**Mr Dulull:** I will look into it and come up with a reply, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITIES – STAFF – POSTING**

**(No. B/611) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if his Ministry proposes to adopt a policy of regional placement for all staff posted at various Local Government authorities, so that these employees do not have to criss-cross the country in order to go to their place of work every day.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that posting of staff of the Local Authorities falls under the purview of the Local Government Service Commission, an independent body. My Ministry, therefore, cannot adopt any policy, which may tantamount to influencing the Commission.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry proposes in the future to adopt something like a unified

service, so that we don't have this problem of people coming from Goodlands to Quatre Bornes or vice versa?

**Dr. David:** This is an excellent suggestion, which will be taken on board, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## SWIMMING POOLS – INTERNATIONAL SAFETY NORMS

**(No. B/612) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to private and public swimming pools, he will state if Government proposes to introduce legislation with a view to providing for compulsory safety measures.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that all Government owned swimming pools are in accordance with international safety norms. A set of standard safety and security measures, namely –

- (i) controlled access at the pools;
- (ii) constant supervision of qualified life-savers;
- (iii) provision of essential rescue equipment, comprising rescue pole, life-buoy and first-aid kit, and
- (iv) conspicuous display notice of rules, regulations and guidelines governing the proper use of pools is in force.

I would also like to inform the House that construction of public pools are governed by international norms recommended by the *Fédération Internationale de Natation*.

Regarding private swimming pools on commercial establishments, mainly hotels, I am informed that a safety audit had been carried out in July 2002 by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with all stakeholders, with a view to making proposals and recommendations to reinforce safety measures. I understand that the previous Government did not consider it a priority to implement the recommendations made therein. However, I am further informed that, in spite of this, most of the hotels do provide for basic safety measures, *inter alia*, supervision by swimming pool attendant and provision of rescue equipment and first-aid kit.

With regard to other private pools, particularly on private premises and bungalows, Government is envisaging to carry out an inventory and

come up with standard guidelines on necessary safety and security measures. The Ministry of Youth & Sports will take up the matter with the Ministry of Local Government to ensure that their respective owners take necessary safety measures to minimise risks and prevent accidents.

### **CUREPIPE & MIDLANDS – LOW COST HOUSING UNITS**

**(No. B/613) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether he will state the number of applicants for low cost housing units in the constituency of Curepipe & Midlands, indicating what measures will be taken to satisfy the demand.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the number of applicants for housing units for Curepipe & Midlands is 2,850.

Suitable plots of land for housing projects in the region are being identified.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Dayal.

### **DEBT SERVICING – 2006-2007 BUDGET**

**(No. B/614) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will state the amount which will be earmarked for debt servicing in the next budget.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MONT ORY, MOKA - RETAINING WALLS**

**(No. B/615) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of retaining walls on both sides of the road at Mont Ory, Moka, leading to the trunk road, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

## SSS - TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/616) **Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state when qualified teachers and instructors working in State Secondary Schools will be appointed or absorbed as full fledged Education Officers as per the recommendations of the PRB Report 2003.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in November 2003, Government decided that employees of the Technical School Management Trust Fund, involved in the pre-vocational education should be absorbed on the establishment of my Ministry. Procedures for the prescription of the scheme of service for the post of Education Officer (Pre-Vocational) were completed only on 14 June 2005 following which 57 posts were created on the establishment of my Ministry as follows –

- 15 vacancies to absorb Instructors/Teachers BSS/Teachers on contract from TSMTF who possess SC + degree or 2 “A” levels + degree
- 42 vacancies to appoint 42 primary school teachers (SC with degree) who were called upon to service the pre-vocational sector.

Vacancies in both grades have already been reported to Public Service Commission on 22 June 2005. Following a *Mise en Demeure* served by the TSMTF Employees on my Ministry, the Commission was requested to stay action on the filling of the vacancies. However, the State Law Office advised this Ministry that it would not be unreasonable to proceed with the recruitment exercise as per existing scheme of service.

The Commission was apprised of the advice from SLO on 24 August 2005 and was requested to proceed with the recruitment exercise. However, following Government decision not to proceed with the filling of vacancies, the matter was kept in abeyance. In September 2005, a case was made to the Secretary to Cabinet & Head of the Civil Service for the post to be filled. On receipt of his green light, the PSC was informed, in a letter dated 06 October 2005, that it could proceed with the recruitment exercise. The matter now rests with the Commission.

## L'ESPÉRANCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE – MULTI-PURPOSE COMPLEX

(No. B/617) **Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if it is proposed to construct a multi-purpose complex at L'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, and, if so, when.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the L'Espérance Village Council had requested for the pulling down of the existing Village Hall as it did not meet the needs of the inhabitants of the area and the construction of a modern multi-purpose complex in its place.

In 2002, the National Development Unit had agreed to fund the project and the District Council had agreed to maintain and operate the building after its completion.

I am informed that the then Private Parliamentary Secretary of that constituency was monitoring this project and chaired several meetings. This project never took off. There were only meetings and premises. *Effet d'annonce* as usual.

I am now informed by the Ministry of Environment & National Development Unit that the project has been included in its plan 2005-2010.

**Mr Dayal:** Can I ask the hon. Minister to consider the advisability of including it in the project? Because according to information reaching me, there is about a quarter *arpent* of land available in the vicinity. If the present building cannot be pulled down, can the hon. Minister consider the advisability of having it on the land there?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, since the NDU has agreed to finance the project, my Ministry will liaise with the Ministry of my colleague and the suggestion of my hon. friend will certainly be taken into consideration.

## CEB – INDEPENDENT POWER PROVIDERS - ELECTRICITY GENERATION, PEAK DEMAND, ETC.

**(No. B/618) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity generation, he will -

- (a) state the number of GWh of electricity generated by;
  - (i) the Central Electricity Board, and
  - (ii) Independent Power Providers during the year 2005
- (b) give the peak demand reached in terms of MW, and
- (c) the percentage of increase as compared to the year 2004.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) (i), I am informed that, for the year 2005 the electricity generated by the CEB was 1180 GWh.

With regard to part (a) (ii) whereas, the electricity generated by the Independent Power Producers was 835 GWh, this makes a ratio of 56% from the CEB and 44% by the Independent Power Producers

In reply to part (b) of the question, the peak demand in 2005 was 353 MWh; and this was during the festive season towards the end of the year.

As for part (c), the percentage increase in peak demand as compared to 2004 is 6.2%. Electricity generated by the CEB decreased by 1.5% in 2005 as compared to 2004 whereas electricity generated by the IPPs increased by about 15% during the same period.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I as the hon. Minister whether he has the date on which the peak demand was reached?

**Dr. Kasenally:** It was just around Christmas time.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to this project, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the costs to the CEB per KWh in comparison with the *Centrale Thermique de St. Aubin*?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I need notice of this question to give the hon. Minister the precise figure, but actually the price for which the CEB produces power

is about Rs2.41 per KWh, whereas the one for St. Aubin comes to around Rs3.00 per KWh.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he intends to initiate a Fact Finding Committee to investigate the whole circumstances under which St. Aubin was given the permit to operate?

**Dr. Kasenally:** We will consider this request, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give his answer with regard to the peak demand reached in terms of MW?

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Kasenally:** I have already answered, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was 353 MWh.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** In answer to the question of the hon. lady, who asked the comparison between the cost operation of CEB and that of St. Aubin, perhaps, the hon. Minister - if he does not have the answer now - can table the answer, with the other IPPs also as compared to CEB.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Sir, I'll most certainly give a comprehensive breakdown of all the figures, so that all hon. Members can make their own conclusion.

### **MERCHANT NAVY CLUB – GOVERNMENT GRANT, OPERATION ETC.**

**(No. B/619) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the Merchant Navy Club, he will state –

- (a) if the Club receives any grant from Government and, if so, the purpose and the account thereof;
- (b) if the Club is still operational, and

(c) whether it is situated on State or private land.

**The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), I am informed that the Merchant Navy Club is entitled to a grant of Rs400,000 annually from the Seafarer's Welfare Fund for the purpose of providing welfare facilities to seafarers. The last payment was effected for the year 2004. No claim has so far been received for 2005.

As regards part (b), the Club informed the Ministry on 26 March 2006 that it had ceased its operations on 01 April 2006.

As regards part (c), the Club is situated on private land.

**Mr Barbier:** Can the Minister table copy of the letter sent by the Club informing the Ministry about their intention to cease operation? And can he also see whether this is being done intentionally so that this land is given to a promoter for commercial development?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, our Ministry has a copy of the letter which they have written to us. I have no objection to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly.

**(PQ Nos. B/620 to B/625 – See “Written answers to Questions”**

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