

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/727 in regard to amendments to legislation on the renewal of driving licence, and PQ No. B/729 in regard to the introduction of a Fiscal Responsibility Bill addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping and Dr. the Hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment respectively.

In keeping with practice, PQ Nos. B/727 and B/729 will be replied at the end of Question Time, that is, after PQ No. B/795, time permitting.

POLICE VEHICLE REGISTRATION NO. 5630 DC 05 –

ROAD ACCIDENT

(No. B/718) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the road accident which occurred, on or about 11 March 2008, involving the Police vehicle bearing the registration number 5630 DC 05, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) value of the damages, and

(b) outcome of the inquiry.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that an amount of Rs65,560.14 was spent for repairs to Police vehicle bearing registration number 5630 DC 05, which was involved in a road accident on 11 March 2008.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am also informed that the enquiry into the circumstances of the accident has been completed and the Director of Public Prosecutions has on 01 July of this year, advised that Departmental actions be instituted against the Police officers involved in this accident, and in the circumstances of the case.

I am informed that the four officers concerned have been interdicted.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand with regard to a provisional charge of conspiracy to commit forgery which was lodged against the Police Constable, A. M., before the District Court of Port Louis?

The Prime Minister: I just said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the file was completed and sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. He advised that there should be Departmental actions instead of proceeding with the case and this has been looked into and the four officers have been interdicted.

NATION-BUILDING – NATIONAL CIVIC SERVICE

(No. B/719) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to nation-building, he will state if Government will consider setting up a compulsory National Civic Service for all citizens.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the advisability and desirability of setting up, what the hon. Member is suggesting, a National Civil Service - I must say we canvassed internally on many occasions during the last elections as to whether we should have a National Civic Defence - we did not canvass on the National Civil Service - and also on other occasions during various brainstorming sessions at our level, again we canvassed the idea with a view to further consolidating the process of nation-building. This was in response to what we could see, the whittling down of moral, social and spiritual values in our society and also, I should say, a concurrent rise in anti-social behaviour and also a lack of discipline among some of our youth, even grown-up, a lot of lack of disciplines in this country.

Nation-building has always been high on the agenda of my Government.

In the Government Programme, we have pledged to consolidate the long tradition of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding and to garner all our will power and energy to shape a prosperous nation where our unique cultural mix would become a source of pride, inspiration and strength rather than a constraining factor in our development process. I have myself seized every opportunity to impress upon all our citizens the need to look beyond differences of race, class, creed and religion and to see ourselves first and foremost as Mauritians.

In fact, during the debate on the DNA Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I made reference to the fact that 99.9% of our genes are the same, whether we are an Eskimo, a Japanese, an Indian, an African or an European. We fight on 0.1%. We think we are different. In fact, we are all human beings. That is why – I again say it – I impress on our citizens on the need to look beyond differences of race, class, creed or religion and to see ourselves first and foremost as Mauritians.

This is precisely the reason why on acceding to power in July 2005, we took a commitment to focus and reinforcing our multiculturalism, celebrating our diversity and promoting patriotism and national unity. We have accordingly been working hard to build a country where there are opportunities for all. In fact, we passed the Equal Opportunities Bill, the Commission is in the process of – the members are being named, it is always difficult to find the right people, but this is being named, probably this week, where we want to have these opportunities for all where economic success will be characterized by equity and social justice. There are, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the conditions that we feel absolutely necessary for nation-building.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports organises regular programmes and activities such as the National Youth Achievement Award which comprise, *inter alia*, community service activities. The National Youth Council which was instituted in 1998 through an Act of Parliament has been involved in the organisation of several civic activities for youth club and organisations. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Division of the Ministry of Social Security undertakes regular community actions in terms of training for community development with the assistance of NGOs. All these initiatives are precisely geared towards promoting citizenship values and nation-building.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over and above the measures I have just enumerated, consideration is being given to the setting up – either we have to look at it carefully whether it should be a National Civil Defence or a National Civic Service. It is a National Civil Defence whether it should be a voluntary service in its initial stage, at least. I believe that such a service can provide a framework to reinforce national identity and social solidarity and at the same time link the rights and responsibilities that go with the privileges of being Mauritian. It must be clear that wherever you have rights you also have responsibilities.

Such schemes already exist in many countries in varying forms, may be slightly different in each country. We would carefully draw inspiration from these models to evolve one that would be suitable for our own social and economic realities. A number of issues will have to be addressed, for example, whether the scheme arrested should be voluntarily or compulsory, what could be the target age group, the duration of the service, the number of participants to be enrolled each year. All these will have to be looked into.

Experiences elsewhere have demonstrated that such a carefully designed Service can bring significant contribution in enhancing the civic consciousness of young adults and will help to build a stronger society characterised by understanding, respect and life long engagement.

I am therefore all in favour of the idea, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, I can say that preliminary discussions - because we have brainstormed the issue before - have already started at the level of the Ministry of Finance, involving several Ministries including the Attorney-General's Office on the introduction of such a Service, whether, as I said, it should be a National Civil Defence or not.

We are also considering the advisability of seeking expertise from abroad in this endeavour.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - I was thinking more for target group of people who are coming of age, that is, adults of 18 years old - whether before issuing ID cards to those at the age of 18, they could go for a programme at the end of which they would swear an oath of citizenship just to bind that civic consciousness? Can that be envisaged?

The Prime Minister: That is certainly something that we can envisage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Perhaps I should add that when people get their nationality, they apply for citizenship, especially foreigners who are taking the citizenship of Mauritius. I used to, in my first mandate, actually have a ceremony at Clarisse House and give them a copy of the Constitution and make them understand the importance that they have to be patriotic to the flag and to the country of Mauritius. I must say we haven't done it recently because of time constraints. Maybe that is something again that I should restart doing.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned several Ministries. But I think he would agree that one of the main Ministries which could make a difference in inculcating the spirit of nation building would be the Ministry of Education. The hon. Prime Minister talked about young adults, but I think preventive action must be taken much earlier *en amont*. Will the Government be ready to review the curriculum at various levels to inculcate the right dosage of nation building elements?

The Prime Minister: I did not mention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the Ministries because there are some Ministries, but certainly the Ministry of Education is very much involved. I think it has started the work. We need also to make sure that the young know the values that they have to have in life and this is very important because we see this is lacking. It is not just a question of going to school and passing an examination. You must know about the values that you need to have and to defend in this country, especially patriotic values and, as I said, being responsible citizens.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this spirit of building the nation, will the hon. Prime Minister consider the introduction of community service for our youngsters in the curriculum as it is the case in some private schools?

The Prime Minister: As I said, this is being considered already at the Ministry of Education.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that such a service will strengthen the sense of belonging, the sense of sharing, of equality, with a shared vision and a future, I think a lot would depend on the financial implications of such a project. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this is being taken on board?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, part of this has already been mentioned in our Manifesto and the Government-Programme and for something like a nation building, I don't think we should look at the constraint of finance and this will have to be found.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in light of the questions asked about education, may I ask the Prime Minister - when we talk about education, what we see today is that a lot of people are opting out of the public schools, for example, middle-class people - whether people of different various social classes can come together in one group instead of

being in their own schools and going through that community service? I was thinking of bringing people of different classes and ethnic groups together so that they have a common experience in the community service that has been proposed.

The Prime Minister: I think that again is a very good suggestion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We need to make sure that people mingle together so that it will enhance this idea of all of us being Mauritians.

CATAMARAN – HIJACKING

(No. B/720) **Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether in regard to the hijacking of the catamaran on which Mr J. F. C. was a skipper, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in relation to the inquiry into the involvement of persons locally.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following the recovery of the trimaran registered under the name Patrol One, by the Malagasy Authorities, Interpol Mauritius requested Interpol Madagascar to trace J.F.C, the skipper of the boat and the two other passengers on board. Interpol Madagascar has informed that searches are still underway to locate these persons but so far they have failed to locate them.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that in the course of the enquiry being conducted into the matter, 10 persons have been interviewed by the Police. On the return of the boat to Mauritius also, it has been examined for evidence by the Forensic Science Officers, the Scene of Crime Officers, Draughtsman and Photographer. Enquiry into the case is still in progress.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that since that boat has returned from Madagascar, 10 persons have been interviewed by the Police. Does that mean that during that lapse of time, between the disappearance of that boat and its coming back there was no local inquiry and it can't be. Then can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, in the family of the victim, there is a feeling that the inquiry locally concerning possible accomplices, taxis or whatever that this local inquiry was not done seriously?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, maybe I said it too quickly. The 10 persons who have been interviewed by the Police were interviewed before the return of the boat maybe I said it too quickly. Afterwards when the boat came to Mauritius, it was then examined by the Forensic Science Lab. As for whether other people should have been interviewed, I can ask the Commissioner of Police to see to it whether there was a rigorous investigation. Ten people, as I have said, have been interviewed by the Police and the Police is still inquiring into the matter.

Mr Gunness: Can I have from the hon. Prime Minister, I am not going to ask for the name obviously, whether the taxi in which the fugitives travelled, whether the taxi driver has been interviewed?

The Prime Minister: I only have the names of the persons here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but yes I can say that the taxi driver has been interviewed.

NON-PAYMENT OF FINE - IMPRISONMENT

(No. B/721) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to persons who have been imprisoned for non-payment of fine, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, since July 2005 to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that during the period 01 July 2005 to 30 June 2009, the number of persons who were imprisoned in default of payment of fine and costs is as follows -

<u><i>Period</i></u>	<u><i>No. of persons</i></u>
July – December 2005	379
2006	907
2007	987
2008	1343
2009 (as at 30 June)	654

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. I have one supplementary. Very often, warrants of arrest for non-payment of fine are being issued with force in the early hours of the morning. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, as per the annual report on the Human Rights Commission, suggestions have been made that warrants for non-payment of rent should not be issued outright, but as a last resort and for the first instance, maybe we can warn the offender that payment of fine has not been effected. May I know what is the feeling of the hon. Prime Minister as regard the suggestion made by the Human Rights Commission? Is Government in that direction?

The Prime Minister: First of all, I would like the hon. Member to clarify for me. When the hon. Member is talking about rents, is she talking about people who rent or is she talking generally about the fines that they had to pay?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The fines.

The Prime Minister: If it is the fines yes. I did see this remark made in the report of the Human Rights Commission. But I have been told that very often, what happens if you go on normality, you can never find the person, that is why they try to get them early in the morning or whatever, but my view is, if they have been fined, they have to know that they have to pay. They cannot go against what the courts have said.

Mr Dowarkasing: I can understand that the delay for the payment of these fines is seven days. At least, can the hon. Prime Minister look into extending that to, at least, a minimum of 15 days, so that these people have ample of time to organise themselves to pay their fines.

The Prime Minister: I can pass on that suggestion.

POLICE VEHICLES – REPAIRS & SERVICING - EXPENSES

(No. B/722) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Police vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, details of the expenses incurred for the repairs and servicing thereof, since December 2008 to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling a statement giving the information requested as provided by the Police.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the service provided by local agents, however, is of a high quality. In fact, according to the Police, with the introduction of the new repairs, maintenance and servicing policy, the vehicles lying idle, as well as the frequency of breakdowns have been significantly reduced. The roadworthiness and operational effectiveness of vehicles have thus improved considerably.

Mr Barbier: Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister, at least, which are these local agents who are dealing with the Police Department for repairs and servicing of the Police vehicles? Can we have an indication of the amount paid for this period to each of these local agents he mentioned?

The Prime Minister: I should say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't choose who are the local agents. In fact, the policy is: wherever make the motorcar or the motorcycle is, it is that agent who will provide the services.

In other words, if the hon. Member looks at the list of agents, he will see ABC Motors, Toyota, Iframac, Man Hin, Emcar, Axess, Kalachand and all those. Whoever provides either motorbikes - Honda, Yamaha or whatever or cars whether it is a Mercedes or Toyota, Datsun or whatever, it goes back to the dealer. The other point is the total expenses as compared. We have spent so far 57% of the total amount that was earmarked during the financial year 2008/2009. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we think it could well be slightly higher we are not sure yet. We have to wait for one year because the Police garage was closed only on the 01 October. It was a transition period as you know for these cars. It was only closed on 01 October. So, we have to get the figures for the year and then we can compare.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether, apart from the main local agents, whether there are registered workshops at the Ministry which are being engaged for repairs by the Police Department.

The Prime Minister: Not as far as I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I should say perhaps, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from what I have said that we are ensuring also that, for example, we don't keep spare parts anymore. It is the agents who have to keep spare parts; it is the agents who actually provided the vehicles in the first place. They are the ones who are keeping the spare parts. There is a warranty that goes with it, that is why it goes back to the agent who provided for the car, for the motorbike.

STREETS – HARASSMENT CASES

(No. B/723) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the harassment of persons on the streets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since July 2005 to date, indicating the measures taken to prevent same.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is no offence of ‘harassment of persons on the streets’ in our Criminal Law. However, if the hon. Member has in mind, which I think that is what he has in mind, whether it is a conduct whereby a person doing his business in the street is troubled or annoyed by another person, such a conduct might come under a different classification. It might be an offence of “Assault”. It might be an offence of “Rogue and Vagabond” or other offences under the Criminal Code Act. So there is no such offence as harassment. There is no figure that I can give for harassment. But if the hon. Member were to ask a question under a different group, I can give it to him.

Mrs Martin: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister because it has come to my attention that very often, especially girl students, coming out of schools, after school hours or before going to school, are very often troubled by people on the streets. Would it be possible for the Prime Minister to look into the possibility of speaking to the Commissioner of Police, to see how these behaviours can be attended to because these young people are very often scared as to the reactions of the people who are harassing them. Since that is not included in the law, is there any support that can be provided to them?

The Prime Minister: What I said was: harassment as such is not included in our criminal law, but there are others; that is why I said, if the hon. Member asks a specific question on the different headings, whether it is assault, whether it is rogue and vagabond or other things, it is all covered. It is not that it is not covered, but it is not under harassment. I will certainly ask the Commissioner of Police to look into the matter further.

MINORS & STUDENTS – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES - SALE

(No. B/724) **Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors and students, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of cases of retailers who have been booked in relation thereto, since January 2007 to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, during the period January 2007 to 02 July 2009, the Police has booked nine retailers for the offence of “Selling Liquor to Minor”. Eight cases are already before the Court, one case is still under inquiry.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Prime Minister may be aware that this is the tip of the iceberg and that many cases are not reported since it deals with young children and minors. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he could speak to the Commissioner of Police so that the *Brigade des Mineurs* could see to it that shopkeepers are sanctioned? Because there must be many more cases, we are looking at the number of cases we are having in schools where children are consuming alcohol.

The Prime Minister: The problem is always the manpower or the womanpower, if I may say so. We cannot come to a situation where I will have to put one Policeman for every person in this country. There are already 1.3 m. nearly. But we will try our best on what possibility that we have.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, do you have any question? No! The Table has been advised that PQs Nos. B/727, B/729, B/730 and B/737 have been withdrawn. Next question hon. Mrs. Hanoomanjee!

DOGS (FEROCIOUS) – ATTACKS - REPORTED CASES

(No. B/725) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether in regard to attacks by ferocious dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, in which members of the public have been victims, over the past four months.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 38 cases of attacks by dogs on members of the public, including two on public beaches, have been reported over the past four months. Out of these 38 cases, 34 are pending enquiry, three are before the courts and one has been classified.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production & Security is having consultations with the Attorney-General's Office for a revision of the existing legislation with a view to setting up control mechanisms regarding breeds of dogs which are considered as being dangerous dogs.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister – I think it was some time in 2007, I made a suggestion to the effect that when owners of dogs take them for a walk that the owners should, at all costs, be compelled to put muzzles to the dogs – whether this suggestion had been retained and where matters stand with regard to this suggestion?

The Prime Minister: I can't say, in all honesty, whether this measure has been retained. I remember the hon. Member making that suggestion. I will pass it on again.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in case where dog shows are organised and where members of the public participate and attend and even in high numbers with children, can the hon. Prime Minister say whether there are security norms which exist where the Police has compulsorily to be informed?

The Prime Minister: I take it that the hon. Member is referring to what the MSPCA...

(Interruptions)

As I said, I suppose the hon. Member is referring to them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: When they organise, they tell the Police and also they take all sorts of precautions when they do that.

Mr Bérenger: Maybe I heard the hon. Prime Minister wrongly, but I thought I heard him say that the Minister of Agriculture is in discussions with the Attorney-General's Office and the MSPCA concerning what the degree of dogs will be classified as dangerous. But does not the hon. Prime Minister think - being given the number of cases and this affects tourism as well - that we should review the penalties provided for?

The Prime Minister: In fact, for importation, for example, there is already a list of breeds of dogs which are known to be potentially aggressive and which are strictly forbidden to be imported in Mauritius. That is the first thing. And the second thing is I should say also that we are now catching about four times more stray dogs than we were catching formerly.

Mr Bhagwan: Last time, I raised the issue of security on health tracks. Again this question relates to ferocious dogs on health tracks. There are many health tracks at Rose Hill or even on Signal Mountain where women and old persons go. These people bring their dogs in the morning and the Police, even when they are called upon, does not act. We don't know whether there is no legislation or whether there is a problem of manpower. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to ask the Commissioner of Police to, at least, have specific attention on these health tracks with regard to these ferocious dogs which attack the old persons, even women attending these health tracks, especially in the morning?

The Prime Minister: I will ask the Commissioner of Police to look into that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that, in fact, the problem is reviewing the substantive law? Because however ferocious a dog is and whatever injuries somebody suffers, the offence is allowing animal to stray which is visited by a small fine and this is what happens in our courts of law. So, the victims report the matter to the Police and then the Police prosecutes the owner for an offence called 'allowing animal to stray', which is visited by a small fine. So, the solution would be perhaps to review the substantive law.

The Prime Minister: This is being reviewed, as I said, between the two Ministries. They are looking at the whole review, including the review of fines.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the Prime Minister has mentioned that there is a committee at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture which is dealing with the issue, can I ask him to consider making it compulsory for pedigree dog breeders to follow a course in *capacité de l'élevage* as it is being done in France?

The Prime Minister: This, in fact, should be made like any other profession, we should have regulations because people think here anybody can go and start breeding dogs. This is something that we have to look into. The other danger is inter-breeding; this is very dangerous.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/738, B/756, B/769, B/774 and B/775 have been withdrawn. Hon. Mrs Martin!

CHEMIN FRANÇAIS, BELLE RIVE – REPAIR WORKS

(No. B/738) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether in regard to the proposed repair works to be carried out at the Chemin Français, in Belle Rive, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to the estimated cost thereof, indicating when works are expected to start.

(Withdrawn)

ABORTION – STAKEHOLDERS - DISCUSSIONS

(No. B/739) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether in regard to abortion, she will state the outcome of the recent discussions held with the various stakeholders.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ No. B/121, I informed the House that my Ministry would kick-start a debate on the issue of abortion.

On 29 April 2009, a Consultative Session was accordingly held with different stakeholders with a view to listening to the divergent views and gathering information from all quarters concerned on the issue.

The session was attended by 51 participants from Women's Association, Socio-Religious Bodies and the Civil Society; Rodrigues was represented during this Consultative Session by the Commissioner for Social Security, Women's Affairs, Child Development & Family Welfare, Rodrigues. Hon. Minister Mrs Bappoo, Attorney-General, hon. J. Valayden and hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun were also present.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the session, I stressed upon the fact that all policies formulated by my Ministry have always been guided by international and regional instruments geared towards the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and that significant progress have been made in that respect.

The participants expressed divergent views. Given that no consensus was reached on that day, stakeholders were invited to submit their proposals in writing to my Ministry by 31 May 2009, at latest. As at date, my Ministry has received only 17 submissions, majority of participants have not yet submitted inputs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view that the issue of abortion has to be considered from a social, medical and legal perspective, submissions received have been forwarded to the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life and the Attorney-General's Office to facilitate further consultations.

The House would agree that 17 submissions do not significantly reflect the views of the whole population. Hence, the need for wider consultations is greatly felt at this stage.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned that 17 submissions are not sufficient. May I ask her, in her opinion, how many submissions would be sufficient?

The Deputy Speaker: Questions as to opinions are not allowed according to the Standing Orders.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister how she would consider going forward with the submissions that have been given? If they are not enough, when would she be willing to go forward, as from what level and what number of submissions?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am waiting for the other inputs to come and ultimately we shall have further consultations. Regarding the question about how many representatives do I need, my Ministry has to be satisfied that the whole nation have expressed their views. It is only then that we are going to legislate it.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe the hon. Minister has now sent the submissions to the Ministry of Health. Can she say now what is the next step she is envisaging?

Mrs Seebun: At this point in time, I cannot expect the Ministry of Health or the AG to take up any action. Just like my Ministry, they are also waiting for further inputs so as to reach a consensus on further actions.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the feeling is that there should be wider consultations. Could she inform the House whether there is a framework which has been set up by her Ministry for wider consultations?

Mrs Seebun: The Gender Unit and the Family Unit are currently working on procedures.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as legislator here in the House, we are the first concerned. Can I ask the hon. Minister if it is possible to have a copy of the Minutes of Proceedings of the meeting held?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, let us have all the inputs and then we can think whether this is envisageable. At this point in time, I do not wish to commit myself.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what are the mechanisms her Ministry has put in place to receive the inputs and from whom is she expecting these inputs?

Mrs Seebun: I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that officers of my Ministry have taken significant pain in calling personally each of the 51 members so as to get their inputs. I think this is sufficient enough. We are liaising personally with all the 51 participants to come forward and give their inputs.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether she intends proposing that in certain specific cases, for example, in the case of victims of rapes and in incest cases, whether she intends ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, this does not arise from the question. It is about the outcome of consultations.

(Interruptions)

I am not allowing this question. Hon. Martin!

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is saying all the time that she is awaiting the 51 submissions? If she does not obtain the 51 submissions, has she, at least, stopped up to a time frame in order to be able to proceed further, otherwise, the question will not go forward as she understands?

Mrs Seebun: I have received 17 submissions so far and the time frame given was 31 May. I guess it is very improper to just stop all further inputs to come to my Ministry. It won't be elegant to do so I guess.

UNESCO OFFICE – STAFF – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/740) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the UNESCO Office of Mauritius in Paris, he will

- (a) give a list of the staff posted thereat, indicating their respective grades and terms and conditions of employment
- (b) state the amount of money spent on
 - (i) rent
 - (ii) telephone
 - (iii) transport/travelling
 - (iv) overtime
 - (v) ceremonials/receptions, since its coming into operation to date, and
- (c) state the name of the Ambassador posted thereat, indicating his/her present terms and conditions of appointment.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Office of the Permanent Delegate of Mauritius to UNESCO in Paris is operational as from April 2006 and the staff comprise one first Secretary and one second Secretary whose terms and conditions of employment are similar to other officers of the diplomatic cadre posted overseas and in accordance with PRB Report 2008. There

are also three local recruits employed as Confidential Secretary, Secretary/Administrative Assistant and Driver respectively. Their terms and conditions of employment are governed by the prevailing local legislation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am advised that as per records an amount of Rs17.4 m. has been spent up to 30 June 2009 on rent, telephone, travelling/transport, overtime and ceremonials/receptions since the coming into operation of the Office of the Permanent Delegation in April 2006.

As for part (c) of the question, Mrs Indira Savitree Thacoor-Sidaya is posted as Permanent Delegate at the Office of the Permanent Delegation, UNESCO since April 2006. She is still employed on a contract basis of three years which began as from 14 April 2006. Her contract has been extended up to the 35th UNESCO General Conference and the election of a new Director-General.

The terms and conditions of the staff and the Permanent Delegate and detailed expenses incurred are being tabled.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister lumped all the sums into one, that is, Rs17.4 m. Can we know from him the amount for rent, telephone, transport/travelling, overtime and ceremonials/receptions separately?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the relevant information will be circulated.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that the contract of Mrs Thacoor-Sidaya has been extended further till another UNESCO conference. During budget time, it was stated that with a view to reducing costs some ambassadors will be called back. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this matter, that is, the next UNESCO conference, cannot be dealt with by our Embassy in Paris?

Dr. Boolell: As I have stated, the Embassy in Paris will be accredited to UNESCO. When the time comes, we will designate a specific person to deal with the UNESCO.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister the time frame when these information will be circulated?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information will be made available and appropriate information will be circulated.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very often I hear from the hon. Minister that the information will be compiled. I know that he works like Dalton brothers, can I ask him for this case, whether he can act faster than Lucky Luke?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not in the habit of replying to nincompoops.

CREVE COEUR - ROADS – UPGRADING

(No. B/741) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether he is aware that several roads in Crève Coeur are in bad state and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to if consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that several roads in Crève Coeur have been damaged during heavy rainfall due to the topography of the region.

I am informed that the Council has earmarked patching works along the lane lying off Rivalland Road and a complete resurfacing of the Shrimati Indira Gandhi Road by August this year. However, I am informed that the National Development Unit is proposing to undertake the construction and resurfacing of Busgeet, Teeluck, Tamil Temple and Temple Lanes and Dookun Mahasay Road.

I wish to recall that at the request of hon. Mrs Juggoo several roads in that area have been tarred, partly tarred or about to be tarred.

QUATRE BORNES – CEMETRY – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/742) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the acquisition of land for the construction of a cemetery in the vicinity of Quatre Bornes, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a site of 10 arpents at Pierrefonds was initially identified for a cemetery in the region of Quatre Bornes. However, it was not found to be suitable as it lies in a very sensitive zone within an important aquifer system.

Another site has now been identified at Bassin, within the council area of Vacoas-Phoenix which is easily accessible from the Pierrefonds roundabout. The different stakeholders are being consulted as regards the suitability of the site.

Thereafter, action will be initiated for its acquisition from the Medine Sugar Estate Co. Ltd and its eventual vesting with the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands for the purpose of constructing a cemetery.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, further to the answer given by the hon. Minister, I would like to know whether he could indicate the size of the plot of land that has been identified and whether he is aware that in particular the Muslim community, the representatives of various Mosques are really eager to find that site because the situation is becoming very untenable in Quatre-Bornes?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very much aware of the constraints of people of Quatre-Bornes to have a cemetery and I have been doing my best, but in fact the whole process was delayed because we could not find the proper site. Every effort is being made and I am hoping that within the next two months the project will come to fruition.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that the hon. Minister is always very keen to collaborate and I thank him for that. May I ask him whether he would be agreeable to call all the representatives of the Mosque of Quatre-Bornes together with the Members of Parliament and the two vice- Prime Ministers with all the representatives to explain what the course of action is.

Dr. Kasenally: I shall Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

AVENUE PASTEUR, BEAU SEJOUR– DRAINS - CONSTRUCTION

(No.B/743) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the request made by the Beau Séjour Mosque for the construction of drains along Avenue Pasteur, in order to prevent the flooding of the Mosque during heavy rain falls, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that representations have indeed been made to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes regarding the accumulation of water along Pasteur Avenue near the Mosque.

I am advised by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that a drain over a length of 283 mts has to be constructed along Pasteur Avenue and Cassidy Avenue at an estimated cost of around Rs2 m. The NDU's Consultant will carry out a survey along both Avenues and submit its proposal for implementation by the National Development Unit.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in previous cases we have had sites visits by NDU people and they have been saying that they want to construct the drain on the right side of the road whereas the Mosque is on the other side and all the water flows into the Mosque when there is heavy rain. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he could organise a site visit with the appropriate NDU people together with the presence of the representatives of Beau Séjour Mosque so that we can ascertain where exactly that drain should be constructed?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I assure the hon. Member that I have only had a preliminary report whereby the drains would be constructed at the site that has been requested and along which the water would be drained into the irrigation canal near the Mosque, but nonetheless I shall be pleased to organise a visit with the consultant of the NDU.

MULTI-ANNUAL ADAPTATION STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/744) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the mid-term review of the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy, he will state if the –

(a) exercise has started and

(b) “cane cultivation agreement” suggesting that planters should sell

their standing cane, will be withdrawn, following the request of the small planters.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan covering the period 2006 -- 2015 provides that a mid-term review of the plan would be carried out in 2009. In fact, before the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan was implemented,

major changes have been brought thereto following the negotiations which the hon. Prime Minister had personally conducted with the MSPA which led to the conclusion of the deal on the sugar reform in December 2007.

Many measures contained in the MAAS have been and are being implemented. However a review of these measures is important to identify shortcomings and to take corrective measures. My Ministry will therefore initiate action for the review of the MAAS.

With regard to part (b) of the question, paragraph 94(viii) of the MAAS provides for the introduction of voluntary and negotiated cane cultivation agreements between the planters and the millers. I am informed by the Control Board that there has been no such agreement signed between the small planters and the millers so far. In any case, the agreement is supposed to be voluntary and there is therefore no obligation for small planters to sign any such an agreement. However, this matter will be reconsidered in the context of the mid-term review exercise.

Ms Deerpalsing: With regard to the cane cultivation agreement, it is true that it appears in paragraph 93(5), but there are five different paragraphs 93, 94, 96, 103, 105 at the same cane cultivation agreements which come up again and again and to culminate in paragraph 105 where it is said that the management of regrouped units will be best done by millers. This is why the small planters have protested against the fact that they themselves cannot do it. Although it is said that this particular cane cultivation agreement is voluntary here, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there will be a total review in the five different paragraphs so that it doesn't appear as if it is - although it is said that it is voluntary - forcing towards that way.

Mr Faugoo: As I said Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it will be reviewed.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not long ago, even a couple of people in the press have said that nothing has changed, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will make sure that the mass is reviewed in the sense that the six power plants that are earmarked there are reviewed because this has now been done with the agreement reached by the Prime Minister.

Mr Faugoo: This should be taken on board.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In the context of the review of the MAAS, can I ask the hon. Minister when consultations are starting, whether he proposes to ask for comments generally

from the planting community or whether he will convene only those groups in cooperatives or in certain associations?

Mr Faugoo: We will have to work out a mechanism Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is provision for the mass report to be reviewed, but there is no provision as to how we are going to proceed. We have to work out a mechanism.

Ms Deerpalsing: Actually in paragraph 37 - as the hon. Minister has said - it is for the mass to be reviewed in its implementation and relevance to market environment. Now that the sugar industry is selling refined sugar directly to the shelf in Europe, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will also envisage conducting a review of the whole operations of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate?

Mr Faugoo: In light of the new sector, that is, upgrading, shifting from sugarcane to cane, a sort of clustering we have to review the function of the syndicates.

PLAINE VERTE – JARDIN DE LA CONCORDE – SPORTS COMPLEX

(No. B/745) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a sport complex on the premises of the Jardin de la Concorde in Plaine Verte, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to where matters stand.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that there has been no proposal to construct a Sports Complex on the premises of the Jardin de la Concorde in Plaine Verte.

Mr Lauthan: I note that with satisfaction because I've got letters from a Federation of NGOs where mention is made that at a meeting with the Lord Mayor, it was said that it was the intention of the Municipal Council to erect a sports complex in the bazaar and that would be a catastrophe, it would be against Government policy, of *Maurice Ile Durable* because the Plaine Verte garden and the Companies Garden are the only two public gardens in the city of Port Louis.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we've done a lot *at jardin de la Plaine Verte*, a lot up to now. As I have said there has been no proposal - official or unofficial - from the Municipality of Port-Louis that a sports complex be constructed there.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

MERCHANT NAVY CLUB – PULLING DOWN

(No. B/746) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether he is aware that the Merchant Navy Club is being pulled down and if so, will he state if -

- (a) it forms part of the buffer zone of the Apravasi Ghat, and
- (b) any objection has been received in relation to the said pulling down.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was made aware of the pulling down of the Merchant Navy Club by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on 20 June 2009.

Following a site visit effected by officers of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund at the Merchant Navy Club on 20 June 2009, the reasons put forward by the Mauritius Sailors' Home Society, the managing body of the Merchant Navy Club, for this demolition, were that the building was in a derelict state and was on the verge of collapsing and had become a threat to the immediate neighbourhood and environment. Consequently, this situation had left them with no option but to demolish the structures that had already fallen apart, the more so as the building was not insured, as no insurance company was willing to provide a cover due to its derelict state.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has confirmed that the land on which stands the Merchant Navy Club forms part of the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is no.

However, on 11 June 2009, after having been verbally informed by a member of the Seafarers Welfare Fund of the sale and demolition of the Merchant Navy Club, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund informed my Ministry of same and lodged an objection to the Municipal

Council of Port Louis, through a letter dated 12 June 2009, expressing its deep concern thereto, and requested the Municipality to take action to prevent the demolition of that building in view of its historical value.

The Municipal Council of Port Louis, replying to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on 24 June 2009, informed that the Council had taken cognizance of the partial demolition of the Merchant Navy Club with much regret, and that the Council did not receive any request for demolition nor had it authorised same. The Council also indicated that it had no enforcing power to prevent any further demolition, and informed the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to apply to the Supreme Court for an injunction prohibiting any further demolition of the Club.

I am further informed that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has sought legal advice on the course of action to be followed. The legal advice obtained is to the effect that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has no *locus standi* to go for prohibition of demolition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as matters stand, it is most unfortunate that we have not been able to prevent the demolition of the historic building. This is due to the time taken for the preparation of the Planning Policy Guidance. As Minister responsible, I have given instructions for the speedy implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance for the management of the buffer zone.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is presently working on the Planning Policy Guidance for the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, with the support of a South African Heritage Consultant, Professor Karel Bakker. I am informed that about 80% of the works have been completed. Professor Bakker is expected in Mauritius on 19 July 2009 to finalise the document. During his visit, he will hold a consultative meeting with the stakeholders of the Buffer Zone to sensitise them on the very purpose of the Planning Policy Guidance. Upon finalisation of this document, the buffer zone will be declared a heritage area, and any development within that area will be controlled.

In the meantime, on 16 July 2009, a booklet on the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site will be launched to sensitise the stakeholders and the public in general about the Planning Policy Guidance applicable in the buffer zone.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Merchant Navy Club was set up as far back as 1857, when the Finance committee of the *conseil législatif de Maurice adopta cette recommandation et vota 5,000 piastres pour l'institution de la Mauritius Sailors Home Society* qui avait eu la responsabilité de tout mettre en place. Ce Merchant Navy Club fut créé par le gouvernement mauricien de l'époque, à travers le conseil législatif. Etant donné cette situation, pourrais-je savoir si le gouvernement n'a rien à dire par rapport à cette démolition qui est maintenant en cours, étant donné que c'est un projet qui fut mis en place par les autorités gouvernementales d'alors ?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is most unfortunate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I have tried to give all the information that I have concerning this sad incident. Of course, there is a void, because of this planning guidance not having been prepared yet, and we are doing our utmost best to go as quick as possible.

To reply to the question the hon. Member, I can inform the House that the Ministry is working in close collaboration with all the stakeholders, to see what is the best that we can do to try to do some sort of repair, if not, at least, for the memory to stay there.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has confirmed that the Merchant Navy Club falls within the buffer zone. Will the Minister agree with me that, obviously what should have been done a long way back after the UNESCO had approved this site and Le Morne would have been to produce regulations, prohibiting the action, demolition, whatever action within the buffer zone? Can we know why this was not done? Better late than never! Are we going to do that urgently, have regulations published in the Government Gazette to protect the buffer zone of Aapravasi Ghat and of Le Morne?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a very complicated matter because we have the guidelines set up by UNESCO. We have also to work on the document that I have just mentioned and we have had to take the consultancy of a foreign expert to help us. It is still not ready. I have said 80% of the work is done and we are expecting to finish it as soon as possible, but I do agree with the hon. Member that we have to do something urgently.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister, at least, give us an indication of the extent of the buffer zone around the Aapravasi Ghat?

Dr. Bunwaree: I cannot give an indication of the extent of the buffer zone offhand. But, I think it is approximately two kilometres around the Aapravasi Ghat.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the view of the fact that the hon. Minister said that the Aapravasi Ghat did not have the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of the monument, may we know who has the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of any national monument, so that such blunders do not happen in the future?

Dr. Bunwaree: I did not get the gist of the question.

The Deputy Speaker: Maybe, we could allow him to repeat it. Yes, hon. Bodha?

Mr Bodha: May we know who has the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of any national monument in the future?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Aapravasi Ghat? I cannot say who has got the responsibility. We are looking into all the aspects, not only for the Aapravasi Ghat, but for Le Morne and the other heritage sites as well.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Government see to it with the promoters or the owners, or even through the Municipality which is the local authority that insofar as reconstruction, at least, the architectural design be made in such a way as to make it - not as it was before, but at least to keep the architectural design - as it was originally as far as possible?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think I have replied already. I have said that we are trying to see what can be done to at least to keep the memory of the building.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that problems regarding demolition have to be - especially national monuments - urgently addressed. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the immediate measures that he is envisaging in order to prevent the recurrence of such happenings?

Dr. Bunwaree: Once the policy guidelines are obtained, then there will no difficulties. We are going to have regulations as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned and then there will be the implementation. We will make sure that we enforce whatever is in the guidelines.

Mr Lesjongard: In his reply, the hon. Minister stated that the building was pulled down and the reasons being the poor condition of the building and the danger it represented. Can we know whether there was an expert assessment regarding the condition of the building and whether when the Municipality of Port Louis was informed that the building was being demolished, the city engineer submitted a report to confirm the condition of the building?

Dr. Bunwaree: I do not think that they had time to do it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I mentioned the dates. In fact, the Aapravasi Ghat reacted immediately as they got the first verbal information and then the Municipality of Port Louis was informed. They tried - I believed - to do what they had to do but, unfortunately, it went so quickly and no permission was asked for. In fact, no permission is supposed to be asked for demolition of buildings, but it so happened.

Mrs Perrier: The hon. Minister mentioned the historical dimension of the building. Can he confirm whether the Heritage Trust Fund was aware of the pulling down and did they give their view on that demolition?

Dr. Bunwaree: No, I think in the main reply I have given already the reply to this question.

Mr Barbier: Is the hon. Minister aware that this institution, if I may say so, was set by the State, as far back as 1857, and that now since 2001/2003, there have been two attempts by some *gros requins* to try to take this site and to have some very important commercial buildings on this site? So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister state whether there is any project which has already been earmarked to be set on this site and, if so, by whom, and who are behind this project?

Dr. Bunwaree: We do not have all these details, but we have opened a line of communication with the stakeholders to see to it that whatever developments take place on the commercial aspects that there is some sort of corporate social responsibility, in fact, to keep the memory of this building.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when Le Nef was demolished, it was then built up again. Is there any possibility, in this particular case, to get the building rebuilt?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think that on three occasions I have replied to this question, but I can still say that we are trying to see in what way we can, at least, keep the memory of this building in the same place.

CLUBS/FEDERATIONS – NON-OLLYMPIC GAMES

(No. B/747) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the clubs and federations practicing non-Olympic or internationally recognized games, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof, indicating the respective disciplines, and
- (b) measures taken for the security of these sportspersons.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are actually 15 federations, recognised under the Sports Act, which are currently practicing non-Olympic games and these are as follows: billiards, bodybuilding, bridge, chess, french boxing, golf, Karate, kickboxing, motorcycling, petanque, squash, under water diving, rugby, wushu and sumo.

As regards part (b), each international sport governing body of each of the above sports federation has its own specific technical rules and regulations to ensure safe practice of the relevant sports. In addition, all federations are called upon to ensure compliance with all basic standard safety norms imposed by the international sports governing bodies.

Moreover, each participating team is led by a head of delegation and a *Chef de Mission* whose role, amongst others, is to ensure that our participants perform in a secure and safe environment. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we are speaking of measures taken for the security of athletes, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made last week to PQ No. B/682 regarding insurance cover for athletes.

Mrs Martin: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. I suppose he is aware that some of the sports disciplines that he mentioned are quite dangerous if they are not practised in the appropriate environment. Can he tell the House whether those who practice those sports disciplines are more or less exposed to dangerous situations? Can he also tell us whether all the instructors who dispense those courses have been supervised by the Federation and are habilitated to actually dispense those courses?

Mr Ritoo: Normally, anyone who practises a sport discipline should be affiliated with the Federation. It is the job of the Federation to see to it that certain norms are being respected. Even the coaches have got the guidelines how to practice these sports disciplines.

SMEs - SPECIALISED ZONE

(No. B/748) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the construction of buildings to house the small industries, he will state the number thereof which have been completed, indicating –

- (a) the beneficiaries thereof, and
- (b) the respective rental value.

The Minister of Information and Communication Technology (Mr A. Dulull): Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I thank the hon. Member for his question, giving us an opportunity to elaborate on the deliverable of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the policy of the Government, in line with its Programme 2005/2010, to set up specialised zone for the benefit of SMEs with appropriate support in each district.

I am advised by the BPML that all industrial buildings which had been undertaken by the BPML have been completed. As at date, 4 specialised zones have been constructed. The beneficiaries are as follow -

	SITE LOCATION	TENANT
1.	Argy Flacq (Block B)	Mechanical and Structural Engineering Co. Ltd.
		Island Wood
		G. Tech Ltd

2.	Bambous	Greensea Ltd
		Ducasse Mfg. Ltd
		Quote Ltee
		N. K. Textiles Co. Ltd

3.	Beau Vallon (Phase I)	MVP Openings Ltd
		Mrs. Ramessur
		Mr. Jay Beeharry
		Cie Kasser Ranzer Ltee
		S. Teetapoolay
4.	<u>Pamplemousses</u>	Chemlog Ltd
	(Block B)	
	(Block C)	Chicouleur Ltee
		Engine Mariniser Ltd
		Brightwater Ltd
		Kikim Investment Ltd

As regards part (b) of the question, the rental rate square foot per month for the four specialised zones varies from Rs 3.30 to Rs 4.59.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also been advised by the DBM Ltd that small industrial parks for SMEs with basic industrial infrastructure comprising 55 SME units ranging from 1000ft² to 2000ft² each are being constructed, out of which, 20 units at La Tour Koenig, 20 units at Terre-rouge and 15 units at Vacoas Phoenix.

The units at La Tour Koenig have been completed, while road works and other external works are in process and the units will be ready for use by mid of August 2009. As regards Terre Rouge unit, it will be completed by the end of this month and road works and other external works will be ready by the end of August 2009. The units at Vacoas/Phoenix will be completed by end of August this year.

The SME units will be rented solely to Small and Medium Entrepreneurs and Handicrafts Manufacturers. However, the rental rate has not been fixed yet. Moreover, I have been informed that it is proposed to rent the buildings below the commercial rate for industrial buildings.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as La Tour Koenig and Terre Rouge Project is concerned, it is not yet completed. May we know on what criteria the Ministry is going to select these SMEs for them to be able to have access to these industrial buildings?

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the selection will be made on long established criteria based on merits without fear and favour.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - VOLUNTARY HIV DETECTION TESTS

(No. B/749) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if Government will consider carrying out voluntary HIV detection tests in the educational institutions, with a view to determining the prevalence thereof amongst the students.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the prevalence of any disease cannot be determined through voluntary testing as voluntary participants are not considered as a representative sample of a target population. With regard to HIV and AIDS, it is still more difficult to use voluntary detection tests to determine its prevalence amongst any age group or any other sub population. This is so as on the one hand, the risk of transmission of the disease

differs significantly from one group to another and, on the other hand, people with risky behaviours are usually unwilling to do the test for fear of stigma.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to HIV tests on a voluntary basis being carried out in educational institutions; my Ministry is taking up the matter with the Ministry of Education. There is a need to fully sensitise the adult community in the first instance so that they are in a better position to understand the implications of such tests, the more so that parental consent is a prerequisite for many activities which are carried out for students. In fact, my Ministry has reinforced its education campaigns regarding HIV and AIDS in the community as well as in secondary, vocational and tertiary educational institutions.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources that actions geared towards prevention of AIDS among the student population have been taken and these include -

- (a) HIV and AIDS related information in the new curriculum for primary and secondary levels;
- (b) distribution of Health Information Education and Communication materials;
- (c) sensitisation through school health clubs as well as other school-based interventions, and
- (d) co and extra-curricular activities focusing on HIV and AIDS.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there is a lot of discrepancy between the figures given by the health institutions and by NGOs working with people living with AIDS? That is why my question was whether he does not consider it to be advisable to have such tests carried out by Government bodies in order to ensure that any problem, any hidden figures can be revealed this week so as to take necessary actions.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have two sets of figures. One is an estimate, that is, 1.8% of the adult population between 15 to 49 years that is equivalent to about 12,600 that are estimated to carry this disease and the number of reported cases, as at May 2009 - I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only the Ministry of Health that compiles these figures and the

figure I have here is 3,888. So, I don't see any discrepancy in any figure since I don't know of any other authority that has the capability and information to be able to gather.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is not aware that NGOs do collect samples for tests of HIV and AIDS?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as I am aware it is only our labs that do the tests for HIV and AIDS.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned sensitisation campaigns in our education sector. May I ask him whether in line with this sensitisation campaign, his Ministry will liaise with the Ministry of Education to accept the request of the students of University to have condom distributors on the campus?

Dr. Jeetah: Well, this is another matter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can certainly pass on the information to my colleague.

NTC – BUSES ACQUISITION - TENDER EXERCISE

(No. B/750) Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to if more than one tender exercise has been carried out for the proposed acquisition of buses and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the National Transport Corporation that only one tender exercise has been carried out for the proposed acquisition of new buses.

The NTC did not proceed with the award of the contract as approved by the Central Procurement Board because the price quoted in the best evaluated offer was much higher than the estimated price. Secondly, the award as approved by the CPB do not meet the requirements of NTC in terms of number of buses, given that approval had been received for the purchase of 40 buses instead of 85 buses. Besides, in the face of the present financial difficulties being encountered by the NTC, measures are being implemented to halt and reverse the decline. In this connection, the NTC is carrying out in consultation with the NTA, a complete revisit of its bus

route network. Thus, the requirements in terms of number of buses are bound to change. It is only then that the exact number of buses required will be known.

A decision, as appropriate, will be taken in due course.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister confirm that the Procurement Board had asked the NTC to go forward with the purchase of 40 buses instead of the required 85 buses as proposed by NTC?

Mr Bachoo: No, the information that I have got from NTC is that the bus evaluated offer came from one company but that particular supplier could only supply 40 buses within the time frame work set in the standard document. In fact, the exercise was launched targeting 85 buses. Hence, the spirit of exercise itself was disregarded and this is one of the reasons why we had not gone ahead with the procurement of the buses.

Mr Bachoo: No, the information that I have got from CNT is that the best evaluated offer came from one company, but that particular supplier could only supply 40 buses within a time framework set in a standard document. In fact, the exercise was launched, targeting 85 buses; hence the spirit of this exercise itself was disregarded and this is one of the reasons why we had not gone ahead with the procurement of the buses.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I know whether the selected company, as proposed by the National Procurement Board, was the lowest bidder in that particular exercise?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, I cannot say the lowest bidder, but I'll use the words 'successful bidder' according to the Central Procurement Office.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether in that particular case, negotiations were carried out between the Procurement Office and the public body itself and whether it has made the request to the company supplying the buses?

Mr Bachoo: I don't have that privileged information, in fact, because I only give directives of a general nature to the Board and I have not been informed of these.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not have any representative of his Ministry on the Board who could have informed him of such matters when such matters have arisen?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, I have got my representative on the Board. As I have just told the hon. Member, I don't look after the day-to-day internal matters of the company, I leave it to the Board and to the management of the company and this matter has not been brought to my notice, I'll inquire into it.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Wouldn't the hon. Minister consider this to be a serious matter in case negotiations have been carried out between the public body and the supplier and if this be the case, is he ready to look into the matter and to inquire into it?

Mr Bachoo: If negotiations had been carried out legally, I have got no problem because the law provides that negotiations can be carried out with the Central Procurement Office. But the end result is that the Board is not going ahead with the procurement of those buses. If the negotiations had been carried out legally, I have got no problem with that.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I just ask the hon. Minister to refer to the Public Procurement Act 2006 paragraph 40 subsection II where it is clearly stated that there shall be no negotiations between a public body and a selected bidder or bidders except in special circumstances? I have gone through the regulations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no such situation has arisen in this particular negotiation.

Mr Bachoo: As I have just mentioned, I don't have the privileged information which the hon. Member has, but, if legally, it is possible for them to go and negotiate, I don't find any problem and any difficulty in that because it is mentioned in exceptional circumstances. If CNT or the CPB can invoke this particular clause, then I don't have any problem for that.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the regulations, it is clear that when we talk about special circumstances, it is mentioned here which special circumstances. And, according to this particular document, the Public Procurement Regulations 2008, it is clear that special circumstances apply to - (i) lowest evaluated substantial irresponsive bid, if it is substantially above the updated estimated cost ; (ii) where direct procurement from a single source under subsection 25 of the Act is resorted to, which is not the case, and (iii) in the case of an emergency procurement under subsection 21, which again is not the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bachoo: The Central Procurement Body unfortunately is not within my jurisdiction, because normally it is they who invite the public bodies. That is not under my jurisdiction. I am not in a position to answer, but one thing, of course, I can say is that the Board has rejected it.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a final question. Since the Board has rejected it and since the Minister is now aware of certain special information, it seems, would he be ready then to look into the matter and query about what type of negotiations have gone on?

Mr Bachoo : Of course, whatever the law allows me to do, I am going to look into it.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister give the name of the successful bidder?

Mr Bachoo : I'll give the names. There are two similar names I can make a confusion. It is ABC Motors Company Limited because one is ABC Motors and the other one is ABC Coachwork.

Mr Bérenger : I was trying to follow the saga. Will the hon. Minister confirm that what had happened at CNT was CNT tendered for 80 or 85 or 65 buses. An offer came for 40 buses which apparently was the most successful, was the lowest bidder. So the CNT said : 'no, we want 85, you offer 40, that is not enough, so we don't take any ?'

Mr Bachoo : There are other reasons also. For example, the estimated cost originally of the STC was R1,760,000 per bus. Unfortunately, in fact, what was offered to us was Rs2.4 m., it means an increase of Rs600,000 per bus which could have been practically impossible for CNT to accept and secondly, knowing very well the economic situation of CNT, even the banks are not willing to provide us with any type of loans, that is another reason also which really....

(Interruptions)

It is supposed to be the lowest. I don't use the word 'lowest', I say 'successful bidder'. I know why.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask from the hon. Minister then, he has been saying that it is a successful bidder, on which ground is he saying that ABC Motors was the most successful bidder?

Mr Bachoo :The ground is so simple, I don't have anything to do with it. The Central Procurement Board has accepted it to be the successful bidder and I cannot pass any comment on whatever has been decided by the Central Procurement Board.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Will the hon. Minister tell me whether it is normal for an institution, which does not have the finance, to launch tenders and to expect bids from companies when it seems, from what the hon. Minister has just said, that the financial condition of the Corporation is not good?

Mr Bachoo: In the beginning, when CNT launched the tender, the company expected to get a loan from the banks, but, unfortunately, things went from bad to worse. It came on deteriorating at an accelerating speed and that is one of the reasons. We have decided to revisit the entire structure of CNT. We are giving away a few of the lines which were under CNT. I am trying to do the maximum to try to see to it that the company becomes once again better as it was in the past.

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Minister aware that in the communication between the CPB and the CNT even one of the specifications of the tenders, that is, the seating disposition of the bus has been altered or has been proposed to be altered which is, in fact, not in order at all?

Mr Bachoo : In fact, we had proposed two by two, if I am not mistaken. I don't know what the CPB had decided. But as I have just mentioned, as far as my Ministry is concerned, we don't poke our nose in the details, but I am aware that we had proposed two by two and probably they might have been proposing three by two, that is two seats on one side and three seats on the other side because there had been many problems in the past when we had three by two. We had proposed two by two. Most probably they might have recommended three by two.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I know from the hon. Minister how much money does CNT owe to the banks in terms of loans?

Mr Bachoo : The hon. Member has to come with a substantive question and then I can answer this.

SSS – QUALITY ASSURANCE/PEDAGOGICAL INSPECTION

(No. B/751) **Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the State Secondary Schools, he will state if any quality assurance or pedagogical inspection is carried out thereat, to ensure.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Quality Assurance is a priority concern for my Ministry and action had been initiated for the setting up of a Quality Assurance and Inspection Division in my Ministry. The PRB Report 2008 has supported this proposal and has recommended the establishment of a full-fledged Quality Assurance and Inspection Division. Following the PRB Report 2008 and the Errors and Omissions Report 2009, the schemes for the post of Director, Quality Assurance, Senior Quality Assurance Officer and Quality Assurance Officer are now being prescribed. In the meantime, in order to ensure that Quality Assurance Services are in place, my Ministry is currently recruiting, on contract, one (1) Project Manager, Quality Assurance, and 6 Quality Assurance Officers under the Capacity Building Programme.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my concern is about the teaching and learning process. May I ask from the hon. Minister whether he would look into the matter as it seems teachers, new recruits, need some guidance and they are operating on their own in a sort of vacuum without the necessary guidance? This is why I have put this question.

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, I understood the gist of the question and being given how it is in civil service, schemes of service, procedures and so on, this is why I have opted to go on contract to get the work going.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is prepared with the few officers that he has at hand on his establishment right now start off a new programme for pedagogical inspection?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is too few, but with the appointment, it is a question of weeks, we are going to start it.

AADICON BIOTECHNOLOGY LTD. BIOTECHNOLOGY PROJECT

(No. B/752) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production & Security whether he will state if meetings have been held with the representatives of Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd. of India and, if so, indicate –

- (a) if they were held in Mauritius or in India;
- (b) who were the Mauritian participants, and
- (c) the outcome thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to records available at my Ministry, no official meetings have been held with representatives of Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd either in Mauritius or in India with regard to its project for the manufacture of bovine semen for artificial insemination and bio-enzyme for the fruit juice industry and the production of bio-fertilizers.

The involvement of my Ministry in the biotechnology project of Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd was in relation to an application made by the company in April 2006 for the lease of 60 *Arpents* of State Land.

The request was favourably considered following views obtained from AREU that the project was suitable and very relevant to the development of a sustainable agricultural sector.

The approval of Government was obtained in September 2006 for the lease of 60A of State Land at Piton du Milieu to Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am surprised that the Minister is not aware that discussions have been going on with regard to the setting up of a multi- dimensional biotech project in Mauritius with Aadicon. We have just received in the National Assembly copy of year book 2008 where it is clearly mentioned that the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy has engaged into discussions and preparatory meetings have been held with delegates of Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd in India.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just said, I am aware that no official meeting has been held at the level of my Ministry. I cannot answer for meetings which have been held in other quarters.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: That was not what the Minister said. Can I know how the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy is concerned for the setting up of a multi-dimensional biotech project in Mauritius and the Ministry of Agriculture is not concerned, is not aware and is not involved?

Mr Faugoo: I never said we are not concerned. We are concerned with one aspect of the project, mainly the request for land, as I said. If there are other quarters, other institutions which are involved, the question should be put to those Ministries which are responsible and under whose purview it falls, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the Minister, at least, aware that in 2002 there was a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed with the Centre for Science and Technology in Delhi through the Government of India? Now that he is aware that there have been preparatory meetings with delegates of Aadicon Biotechnology Ltd. for the setting up of a multi-dimensional biotech project in Mauritius, will he go back to that Memorandum of Understanding, because it was a Memorandum of Understanding involving the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India?

Mr Faugoo: I will do that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but, as I said, the Government of Mauritius must have been involved. It is not my Ministry; we only look after the element of land.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if biotechnology does not concern the Ministry of Agriculture, which Ministry does it concern?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Faugoo: ... the issue at the level of my Ministry was one which concerned application for land. We also consulted AREU on the viability of the project. So, in a way, we are concerned. The question which has been asked is straightforward: whether there was any meeting held between my Ministry and Aadicon, to which I said 'no'.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: If I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that project concerning biotechnology is being dealt with by another body than that of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Faugoo: No...

(Interruptions)

If there are other institutions which are involved, I cannot answer. I say that we had consulted AREU on the technical aspect of the project. AREU followed the project and they replied that it is a viable project and relying on this, at this point of report of AREU, Government had approved the release of the land. But, as I said, I agree that this falls under the purview, but not the question which has been asked directly whether there was any meeting.

CHIKUNGUNYA – FOGGING PROGRAMMES

(No. B/753) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the fogging and other programmes related to the clearing of mosquitoes island wide, after the relapse of the chikungunya disease, he will state if a permanent unit had been created and, if so, indicate –

- (a) who was the officer in charge of the unit;
- (b) the number of officers attached thereto, and
- (c) the number of interventions carried out to date, and
- (d) the localities which have been covered and, if not, why not.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following the resurgence of the chikungunya disease at the beginning of 2006, a Special Emergency Response (Chikungunya) Unit was set up at my Ministry in March of that year, with, *inter alia*, the following terms of reference –

- (i) advise the Ministry on preventive strategies;
- (ii) carry out disease surveillance, that is, to follow the epidemiological trend of the disease, and
- (iii) monitor and evaluate vector control activities.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that the above mentioned Unit was headed by a retired public officer, who was recruited as an adviser, in view of his extensive experience in the malaria elimination programme.

As regards part (b) of the question, one Deputy Chief Health Inspector, two Public Health Inspectors and one Clerical Officer formed part of the Unit.

This Unit was supported by the already existing Communicable Disease Control Unit (CDCU), which is a permanent structure and which is, amongst others, responsible for the overall coordination of vector control programme at the national level.

The activities of the Chikungunya Unit were taken over in December 2007 by the CDCU at a point in time when the disease was eliminated.

Concerning part (c) of the question, larviciding, undertaken through the spraying of Temephos (Abate) on stagnant water, is an ongoing activity throughout the year and island-wide, in accordance with the programme established by the thirteen Health Offices across the country. During the period January 2006 and June 2009, 1,423,196 premises had been visited for larviciding.

Moreover, fogging operations were carried out mostly in the surroundings of chikungunya cases to reduce the population density of infected mosquitoes. All regions, where cases were detected, were covered by fogging operations.

These operations were coupled with the more efficient and sustained larviciding activities as mentioned above.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: May I ask the hon. Minister whether – correct me if I am wrong – he said that when Chikungunya was eliminated, the unit was dissolved?

Dr. Jeetah: The activities were taken over by the CDCU which is a permanent structure of my Ministry.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the Minister say whether his Ministry is in the presence of other report from World Health Organisation which states that there should be a permanent unit set up to avoid recurrence of the disease?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do have a permanent structure, that is, CDCU. In fact, after this recent outbreak that we had, we are meeting up again just to make sure that it is more agile and more effective in its purpose.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The Minister is in presence of that report of the World Health Organisation where it states that there should be a *quartier de groupes de surveillance au niveau de chaque quartier*. Can he say whether this has been done and how many *quartiers de surveillance* has been set up?

Dr. Jeetah: I must admit, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are so many reports and I am not sure which one the hon. lady is referring to, but I will have to look into. I can tell the hon. Member that the way the CDCU operates is attached with a number of other service providers, for example, the entomologists who go and detect the number of mosquitoes and the disease they carry, the labs, the hospitals where people are doing fever surveys, as well as people who are doing field work in the community.

Dr. Jeetah: Just like a network of organisations within my Ministry which has the responsibility of detecting as early as possible any new disease and act quickly so that we achieve the results that we have achieved in the case of the latest threat that we had.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister whether the collaboration of the private sector is still ongoing on the foregoing exercise, and whether it is being monitored and the collaboration is being sought?

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to the private sector, there are a few things with which we are collaborating. First, we have bought the fogging machines, and the hon. Member would agree with me that to get 400 or 500 fogging machines working day and night, we would need to service them. I am glad to say that we have the private sectors with us to do the servicing and make sure that they train the personnel. In this case we had to use the SMF. We also had the collaboration of the private sector with equipment in cleaning activities.

SHOP OWNERS – LA POLICE DU TOURISME - NOTICES

(No. B/754) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to if the Authority has set new rules as to how shop owners should display their goods and, if so, if the shop owners have been served with notices in relation thereto, indicating if the rules are applicable to all the shops.

Mr X.L.Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that “shops” are not listed as “tourist enterprises” and as such the regulation of their activities does not fall under the purview of the Tourism Authority.

I am advised, therefore, that the answer to the question is in the negative.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether *la Police du Tourisme* has been acting as enforcing agency to serve notice to shop owners in part of the island?

Mr X.L.Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *la Police du Tourisme* answers to the Commissioner of Police and to the PMO, but it is a fact that eyesores and other notices are served by the Police in general, but by *la Police du Tourisme* as well.

ALBION FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTRE – NURSERYMEN – SCHEME OF SERVICE

(No. B/755) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the nurserymen at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre, he will state if changes have been brought to their conditions of employment and, if so, indicate if they

- (a) are now called upon to work on 12 consecutive days, and
- (b) have not been paid overtime since January 2009 or less time off is being granted to them in lieu of cash compensation.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the grade of Nurseryman (Fisheries) of my Ministry has been classified on roster in accordance with paragraph 16.24.38 of the PRB Report 1998.

In line with the PRB recommendations, workers operating on a roster basis work according to a structured pattern of work specifying the starting times and finishing times of turn of duty which may or may not include night duty. They are required to work on a roster basis including Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. The PRB has further recommended that Sunday should be considered as a normal working day for workers working on a roster basis. This element has been taken into consideration in the determination of the PRB salary scale.

The Scheme of Service for the grade of Nurserymen (Fisheries) on roster, specifying these conditions became effective on 20 June 2003.

The Nurserymen operating at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry are thus required to operate between 8 h 00 and 16 h 00 with one hour lunch during weekdays and they put in 35 hours of work during the week. A skeleton staff is required to work on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays from 8 h 00 hrs to 16 h 00 against time off in lieu of overtime after completing 40 hours of work on a weekly basis. These conditions are effective since 20 June 2003.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, no change has been brought to the conditions of employment of Nurserymen since June 2003.

As regards part (a), according to the roster established at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre no Nurseryman is called upon to work on 12 consecutive days. However, a few cases have occurred where Nurserymen have worked for 12 days consecutively as a result of -

- (a) mutual agreement made between Nurserymen to exchange roster days off as recommended by PRB.
- (b) Nurserymen declining to take days off in the week following the weekend during which they were on roster.

As regards part (b) Nurserymen who put in only 35 hours during the week are not eligible for overtime. However, those who work on weekdays and also form part of the skeleton staff working on Saturdays, Sundays and Public holidays put in more than 40 hours and are being refunded days off accordingly in lieu of overtime. Nurserymen who have worked for 5 days, on Saturdays and Sundays covering a total of 35 hours plus 14 hours are entitled to and are granted one day off plus an additional two hours.

Nurserymen are usually granted days off for work performed beyond normal working hours. However, there are instances where the grant of days off is deferred due to the exigencies of the service. This situation occurs during peak season which extends from January to May and from September to December when the “Cameron Cycle” is ongoing and more manpower is needed. The excess hours put in by Nurserymen are carried forward to be granted as days off during the normal period from June to August when there is no pressure on manpower requirements.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been informed that the Albion Fisheries Research Centre has received representations from the Nurserymen after all these changes?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of any representation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

SAVOY CINEMA, VACOAS – NIGHT CLUB - PERMIT

(No. B/756) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if any permit has been granted to operate a night club at the previous Savoy Cinema at Vacoas and, if so, indicate

(a) when, and

(b) the conditions attached thereto.

(Withdrawn)

MOUNT ORY – DRAINS

(No. B/757) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that the flooding and the accumulation of sludge along the Mount Ory main road are causing undue hardships on the premises of the temple found thereat, and if so, will he state the urgent remedial measures that will be taken.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to this question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to the sloping topography of the adjoining lands (including temple premises) towards the Mt. Ory road (B46), mud water (sludge) from the adjoining lands flows into the road side drains during rainfall causing silting and obstruction of same. Frequent de-silting and mud removal operations are undertaken by RDA. However, due to the recurrent nature of the problem the Land Drainage Committee will be requested to propose a permanent solution to the problem with a view to alleviating the hardships of the inhabitants of the region.

Dr. Ramloll: I thank the hon. Minister for the very excellent tarring works of the road. But unfortunately, the level of the tarring work is just at the same level as the pavement. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the officials are aware that the drain is completely obstructed right over a long distance of about half a kilometer and that half a kilometer of the road is without any pavement and that is the reason why the sludge and the muddy water enters into that drain and has caused flooding? Can that be attended to as a priority for the hardships of the inhabitants and especially the temple around?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has drawn my attention to this problem. But as far as the footpaths are concerned, I will see to it that the RDA will look into the issue. I have just mentioned that the Land Drainage Committee is a specialised unit which has been set up to look into the drain problems. I would like to refer this issue to the Land Drainage Committee.

BOIS CHERI – DRAIN WORKS & PAVEMENTS

(No. B/758) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed carrying out of drain works and the installation of pavements along the Bois Chéri Road leading to the Pont Souillac and Mount Ory Road, he will state when works are expected to start.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to this question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Road Development Authority has provided footpath over a length of approximately 700 m along the Bois Cheri Road (B47) during financial year 2007/2008. A further extension of the footpath and drains over a distance of 300 m towards Pont Souillac and Mount Ory Road is being envisaged for implementation in the next financial year.

Dr. Ramloll: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister is very much aware about the topography and the geography of the area. In view of the heavy traffic and the number of inhabitants using that road, is he aware that there are already natural drains existing on either side of the road and if with minimal amount of infrastructural works, pavements and handrails can be installed as a matter of urgency for the safety of the inhabitants and for those vehicles?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member has to bear with me that we have got over 20 to 25 projects actually in Constituency No. 8, plus we have got other projects which are much more important, for example, the retaining wall at Mt. Ory. Let us give priority to those works which are more important than these ones. I have already mentioned that in the next financial year we are going to look into this issue.

Dr. Ramloll: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this is more a matter of safety of the inhabitants and I think this also should be given priority.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already answered this question.

BOIS CHERI ROAD/CHATEAU VAL ORY – CLEANING CAMPAIGN

(No. B/759) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 8, Quartier Militaire and Moka, particularly in the regions of Bois Chéri Road, Chateau Val Ory, he will state the urgent measures that will be taken to clean these areas, in view of the threat of the Dengue fever and in order to ensure the security of the inhabitants.

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

I am informed that a special cleaning campaign and embellishment works were carried out in the regions of Bois Chéri Road and Chateau Val Ory in collaboration with the Road Development Authority, Non Governmental Organisations and the Village Council of Moka on 30 May 2009 and 06 June 2009.

Furthermore, regular cleaning and scavenging services are being assured by the District Council throughout its council area.

Dr. Ramloll: I thank the Minister for the answer, but I think a fresh visit of the area will reveal that it is coming back to the original state. So, in view of the impending danger of Dengue fever, can that be attended to again?

Dr. David: Yes, I will pass on the message to the District Council.

JAMAL ROAD, VALETTA - DRAINS

(No. B/760) Dr P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he is aware that regular flooding occurs in the region of Jamal Road at Valetta, in Constituency No. 8, Quartier Militaire and Moka and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the urgent construction of drains thereat.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Moka-Flacq District Council that water accumulates adjacent to Jamal Road, Valetta.

The Consultant of the National Development Unit will be requested to carry out a survey to assess the cause of the problem and submit design and cost estimates.

Dr. Ramloll: I thank the Minister as usual. Around 31 March, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a flooding of the area and eight to 10 houses were involved, and my colleague, hon. Surendra Dayal, and I visited the area. I think the inhabitants made representations to the Ministry of Social Security also for the necessary help. The inhabitants are ready to provide bare land at the backyard for the construction of a drain of about 50 to 200 metres, which drains in a river nearby. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether that can be an immediate solution to solve this problem of regular flooding of the area?

Mr Bundhoo: I have to assure the hon. Member that, in PQ No. B/1234 of 27 November put to my colleague, hon. Bachoo, the then Minister, he assured us that the work has been done and necessary action is being taken to ensure that leeway is obtained. I am very happy that the hon. Member and hon. Dayal are now in a position to ensure that we negotiate with the private owners in order to be able to have leeway to transfer the water from where it is being logged to the nearby river.

Dr. Ramloll: I would like to inform the Minister that the inhabitants are ready to provide the land. I would like to ask whether that can be attended to, because only two days ago, there

was a flooding there.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I assure the hon. Member that hon. Dayal has already put this question, and the negotiation of way leave is already under way. We shall conduct a visit there with hon. Pravind Jugnauth if he would like so as to ensure that the work is done as it should be.

SANSKRIT LANGUAGE – TEACHING & LEARNING

(No. B/761) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether, in regard to the teaching and learning of the Sanskrit language, he will state the steps taken by Government to encourage same.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is an undeniable fact that Government is offering indiscriminate support for the propagation and fostering of our ancestral languages and to the upholding of cultural heritage. It is also a recognised fact that respect for all and understanding of each other's differences are essential in preserving social harmony and in the nation building process.

In line with our policy to promote Asian and Arabic languages, we are offering both at primary and secondary levels, courses in Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Urdu/Arabic and Modern Chinese. Furthermore, my Ministry is also consolidating the spread of such languages, their literature and cultural activities associated thereto in the evening schools. These activities are organised by socio-cultural organisations on Government-owned educational premises in private schools, baitkas, temples and madrassas.

As for Sanskrit, which is an ancestral language that lies at the root of numerous Indian and non-Indian languages, the Hindi Pracharini Sabha, the Arya Sabha and the Arya Ravived Pracharini Sabha have integrated modules on this language in Hindi. Sanskrit courses are also run by Hindu priests at various socio-cultural organisations, such as the Arya Sabha, Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation and the Mauritius Arya Ravived Pracharini Sabha.

Programmes in Sanskrit are equally being conducted from level I up to Diploma/Degree levels by the MGI and the Hindu Maha Sabha. The MGI currently runs such courses in the evening of weekdays, while those of the Hindu Maha Sabha are conducted on Saturdays. Mr

Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid we do not have enough resources not to say competences to do much in favour of this beautiful language known as mother of languages, but my Ministry remains open to consider other and further demands for the learning of Sanskrit in our institutions or NGO run establishments.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House how many colleges offer Sanskrit as a language at SC and HSC levels?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't have the reply, but I can give an indication to the House because I was myself a bit surprised. There are about 1,970 students studying Sanskrit in the country for the time being.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the problem of ratio, especially in the evening schools, causes lots of problems for the promotion of Sanskrit, just like for Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Marathi?

Dr. Bunwaree: I am aware of this, although it is not a question related directly to the main question. I am in favour of removing this question of ratio altogether.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House what examinations are held as regards Sanskrit language?

Dr. Bunwaree: I mentioned in my reply that there are even degrees, diplomas. But as to what exact examinations there are, I can look into it and inform the House.

SOLITUDE & DALIA – INHABITANTS - RELOCATION

(No. B/762) **Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to the extension of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will state if the inhabitants of Daila and Solitude in Plaine Magnien will be relocated and, if so, indicate if an alternative site has been identified.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Airport of Mauritius Company Ltd that the land occupied by the inhabitants of Dalia will be required in the future for the construction of a second runway. My Ministry, in collaboration with Airport of Mauritius Co.

Ltd, has initiated an exercise for the identification of a suitable site for the relocation of the inhabitants. Airport of Mauritius Co. Ltd will meet the costs of the buildings and identified land.

In respect of the region of Solitude, I am informed by Airport of Mauritius Ltd that no new residential construction should be allowed in the vicinity, due to safety and aircrafts and noise hazards. However, consideration is being given for the relocation of the inhabitants. My Ministry has already initiated an exercise in respect of occupation of land at Solitude. Once a suitable land will be identified for their relocation, Airport of Mauritius Company Ltd has undertaken a commitment to meet the costs of the buildings and acquisition of the identified land.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a time frame for the relocation of the inhabitants of both regions?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the region of Dalia is concerned, the land will not be required in the near future but perhaps in two or three years' time. However, the process of finding the land for relocation has already started. There are approximately ten buildings/site lessees on that site. As far as the inhabitants of Solitude is concerned, I think the process is already on, and my Ministry has already initiated an exercise regarding the details on the occupation of the land, name of owners and name of squatters, if any. So far, we have found 24 owners of private land and nine illegal occupiers of private land at Solitude.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether, pending the relocation, the leases will be renewed?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes. If they are on State land, it will certainly be renewed on a year-to-year basis if they have expired.

CAMP CAROL VILLAGE - CREATION

(No. B/763) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the creation of a new village council to cater for the villages of Des Places, Mon Trésor Mon Désert, Camp Carol, Le Bouchon and Carreau Accacia, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/337 in April 2009 on the proposal for the creation of an additional village at Camp Carol, and

wish to inform the House that the Local Government Bill is presently being finalised. However, the proposal for the creation of new Village Councils and the splitting of Village Councils has yet to be determined by the Electoral Commissioner's Office.

HIGH LEVEL SPORTS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

(No. B/764) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the High Level Athlete Scheme, he will state the -

- (a) various categories concerned;
- (b) criteria laid down, and
- (c) duration of the assistance.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to questions B/764 and B/765 together, as they are related.

High level athletes are being catered for by the High Level Sports Unit of my Ministry, with a view to providing financial assistance to athletes having already recorded an outstanding performance at regional level at least. Under this High Level Sports Financial Assistance Scheme, athletes are classified in four categories, namely -

- Category 1 - World level
- Category 2 - Intercontinental level
- Category 3 - Continental level
- Category 4 - Regional level

The Scheme covers individual sports disciplines only and each sports discipline has its own specific criteria. However, the main criterion, in all cases, is the performance and margin of progression of the individual athlete. A detailed list of the criteria is being tabled.

The duration of the assistance under this Scheme depends on the target set by the athlete, in consultation with his/her respective sports federation. It is not *ad infinitum*. If the performance of the athlete falls under the required level, he/she may be moved to a lower category.

As at now, there are four athletes benefitting from the world level assistance, namely; Stephan Buckland, Eric Milazar, Bruno Julie and Marine Giraud. The assistance, which was reviewed upwards in December 2008, became effective as from January 2009, and amounts to Rs20,000 monthly.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister at what frequency this assistance is reviewed?

Mr Ritoo: For categories of World level it is three months and at lower levels it is six months.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the athletes who benefit from the High Level Athlete Scheme are honouring the country at different occasions, be it at the national and international level. Can the hon. Minister, at least, see to it that at no time these athletes are penalized for petty decisions? We trust the hon. Minister. Sometimes, depending upon their performance, they get injured and their allowances are reduced. We all know that Mr Stephan Buckland and the others do perform and we are all honoured by their performance.

Mr Ritoo: This assistance is a financial assistance to achieve excellence in sports, it is not a salary. So, of course, it all depends upon the performance as well.

Mr Bhagwan: One more supplementary, Sir. We all know that it is not a salary, but the fact that they are honouring the country, there is no price on that, Sir. They are honouring the country by having gold medals at Olympic games and other international games. So, giving them Rs500 or Rs5,000 are, I would say, petty decisions taken, and this is not good for the moral of these athletes.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister will ensure that this does not happen.

Mr Ritoo: I will look into the matter, Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: When the hon. Minister mentioned about the criteria, especially at international level, doesn't he feel that there are disparities with regard to the performance those athletes in the various disciplines? For example, he has mentioned four athletes, two are in athletics, one is in boxing and the last one in tennis. What is required from those athletes is that they should be among the top 50 in the world for athletic track competition; with regard to boxing, they should be quarter finalist, for tennis, they should be among the first 200 best tennis

players in the world. Doesn't the hon. Minister think that he is asking a very high level of performance in certain disciplines as compared to others?

Mr Ritoo: There is a series of criteria laid down. We have got the High Level Sports Unit Board which deals with this issue. There is a series of criteria which I can lay on the Table of the Assembly. Depending upon their performance, they are being given the assistance. If the Member wants, I can lay the criteria on the Table and then we can discuss on it further.

Mr Lesjongard: The point that I am making, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that with regard to the various disciplines like in athletics it is very difficult to go up one place, because it is in term of a hundredth of a second, whereas in tennis or badminton, you can go up 10 to 15 places. That is why I am saying it is not a clear level playing field for the various disciplines.

Mr Ritoo: That is why I said that we have a Board deciding upon the criteria. The Board decides; I can't just impose that it should give preference to a certain type of discipline. Normally, sports are a very clear level playing field and no one is being gratified with any preference.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Minister to convey this message to the Board?

Mr Ritoo: Of course, I will.

HIGH LEVEL SPORTS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/765) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the High Level Athlete Scheme, he will state the names of the beneficiaries thereof who participate at the world level, indicating in each case –

- (a) the quantum of the assistance, and
- (b) when was the assistance last reviewed.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/764)

HIGH LEVEL SPORTS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME - MR A. C.

(No. B/766) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the financial assistance given to A. C., under the High Level Athlete Scheme, he will state if it has recently been decreased and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, the financial assistance granted to the Athlete under the High Level Sports Financial Assistance Scheme has been decreased, because he has been downgraded from Category 1, World Level to Category 2, Inter-Continental Level. The reasons are as follows -

- (a) he no longer satisfies the criteria for World Level athletes;
- (b) he has not participated in any international competition since May 2008;
- (c) his last best achievement was a Silver Medal (not even a Gold Medal) at the Indian Ocean Islands Games held in Madagascar in 2007.

Furthermore -

- (a) he has not been able to attain the minima of the World Championship to be held in Berlin next August, and
- (b) though his target for 2009 was the *Jeux de la Francophonie*, which is classified as an Intercontinental event, i.e, Category 2; he has not been selected by his Sports Federation for these Games, because of his low performance and his failure to reach the minima of the Games.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister for what reason he has not participated in any sport activities for the past one year?

Mr Ritoo: As per Medical Report, Mr Arnaud Casquette has been advised to avoid running and jumping till July 2009. He can only jog, swim and use a bicycle. He will be re-examined in July 2009. So, Mr Casquette will not be in form to attain his objectives set for the *Jeux de la Francophonie*. In addition, his main target set for this year, that is, the *Jeux de la Francophonie*, which is an Inter-Continental event and this only justifies his inclusion in this category.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this athlete has not been able to participate in any event, because of medical problems. Now, since we know that he is having such problems, why has that Unit reduced the assistance he was given to a level much below the World or the Inter-Continental level? The World Level Assistance is between Rs15,000 to Rs20,000, the inter-continental level is between Rs6,000 to Rs8,000 and the athlete is having an assistance of only Rs4,000 at a time when he really needs that money.

Mr Ritoo: That is why I say that there are criteria laid down. The Board will decide. I will just give you the example of Mr Oumanansing Cowlessur who was also a Mauritian champion, but he has been removed from the list of beneficiaries because we did not get any information on his performance.

Mr Lesjongard: Can't this be considered as a special case, because I understand that the athlete has undergone a very serious operation and that is why he has not been able to participate in any event? It has been the case for the past one year and he has already spent some Rs500,000 for that operation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ritoo: Well, I will try to see with the Board.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, convey to the Board the request of the hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: To add to what my colleague has said, I think we are being unfair. Whenever athletes receive gold medals, there is a lot of ceremony and we give them money and public relations because they have served the country in a way. But, when they have health problems, then we apply the criteria unilaterally depending, I would say, some officers. Can I ask the Minister, at least, to review those criteria in a sense of fairness?

Mr Ritoo: The same criteria is applied to everybody. No athlete is benefiting from anything better than the other one. I told the hon. Member that it is a clear level playing field, no one is benefit more, or less.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister if he has this information on whether that athlete has been submitting his Medical Certificates regularly to his Federation to be forwarded onward to that Unit?

Mr Ritoo: I will have to look into the matter and ask the Board, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if there is a decrease in performance following medical reason, whether the criteria which is being applied is the same for medical reasons and non-medical reasons?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the criteria is about the performance. Stephan Buckland was getting Rs20,000. Then, he was injured and downgraded and afterwards when he got back his form, it was increased. So, there are no criteria.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether we don't have some sort of insurance cover for such high-level athletes.

Mr Ritoo: Every Federation has its insurance cover and I think I answered this question from hon. Mrs Martin.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was coming to that hon. Minister. This is one clear example where the insurance is insufficient and I would again appeal to the Minister whether he can see and review all these criteria because very often, as hon. Bhagwan has said, these athletes have served the country and just because they are injured they find themselves in difficult situations. Can the hon. Minister engage into new reviews in order to help those people?

Mr Ritoo: The criteria are being reviewed regularly in consultation with the federation, with athletes as well. Because we have got the representative of athletes on that Board and it is reviewed regularly.

(Interruptions)

But we cannot change the criteria for one athlete only.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, quand il y a des athlètes qui font honneur au pays, tout le monde est content. Mais il faut aussi venir en aide quand ils sont dans des difficultés. En ce qui concerne les critères, surtout quand ils sont dans le *highest level*, il faut augmenter le barème. Au lieu de donner R 20,000, il faut l'augmenter. Quand ils seront dans des difficultés telles que la santé, ils peuvent avoir de l'argent pour pouvoir subventionner dans des moments difficiles. Il faut revoir cela.

Mr Ritoo: Well, the athlete is not benefitting only assistance from the high level Sports Unit. There are certain athletes who also benefit from Olympic Solidarity through the Mauritius

National Olympic Committee, from the *Fonds Francophone pour Préparation Olympique* through the CONFEGES and from *Appuis Techniques Nationaux*, again, from CONFEGES and the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports and the sponsorship as well.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House who are the persons who sit on that Board and whether it is a person from his Ministry who chairs that Board?

Mr Ritoo: Yes, it is a person from my Ministry who chairs the Board and we have got a list which I can table.

BANK OF MAURITIUS – GOVERNOR, FIRST DEPUTY GOVERNOR & SECOND DEPUTY GOVERNOR – MISSIONS OVERSEAS

(No. B/769) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether in regard to missions, annual meetings and conferences abroad, undertaken by the Governor, the first Deputy Governor and the second Deputy Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, since February 2007 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to the number thereof, indicating the –

- (a) respective departure and arrival dates;
- (b) composition of the delegations, and
- (c) amount of money spent in terms of airfares, *per diem* and other allowances.

(Withdrawn)

STC – GENERAL MANAGER & PRATIBHA SHIPPING COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES – VISIT TO SEYCHELLES

(No. B/770) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether in regard to the air tickets bought by the State Trading Corporation for its General Manager and two representatives of the Prathiba

Shipping Company of India who travelled to the Seychelles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to

(a) when;

(i) payment was effected, and

(ii) the Company refunded same, and

(b) if the Board was apprised that these persons would be effecting this visit and, if so, table copy of the notes of the meeting in relation thereto.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that payment of air tickets for the General Manager and the two representatives of Pratibha Shipping Company of India who travelled to Seychelles was effected on 12 May 2009. I am tabling a copy of the payment voucher, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

With regard to part (ii) of the question, the company refunded an amount of USD 2,215.37 on 26 May 2009 in the STC's foreign currency Account No. 151010944201 with SBI Mauritius. I am tabling a copy of letter from SBI certifying that the account is a foreign currency account.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as already indicated in my reply to PQ B/605 of 23 June, STC Board was apprised of the visit of the General Manager on 08 April and on 21 April, a brief of the outcome of the visit was approved. I am laying the extracts of the minutes of the relevant Board meetings.

As I said in my reply, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of PQ B/605, it would not be appropriate for the STC Board to approve the visit of the representatives of Pratibha Shipping Company to Seychelles.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that the Board approved the visit of the General Manager to Seychelles. But my question is whether the Board was made aware that the General Manager will be travelling together with two representatives of Prathiba Shipping to Seychelles.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said in PQ B/605, the STC Board is not entitled to know whether these people are travelling to Seychelles because they were going to India through Seychelles, Dubai and then Bombay. So, where do the matter stand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the STC has paid the air tickets for the two gentlemen. The two gentlemen were in Mauritius. Can the Minister confirm and can he state whether he does not find it that there is a conflict of interests, because I see in the same statement of account that the Minister submitted on the Table that the STC has dealing with Prathiba Shipping. On 21, for example, of May, there is an account of Prathiba Shipping with STC which has been debited by \$878,000 in favour of Prathiba Shipping. It means that the STC has dealing with Prathiba Shipping. Now, the General Manager is travelling together with the two gentlemen of Prathiba Shipping and the Minister wants us to believe that the Board must not be made aware that he is travelling with the two gentlemen!

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the Prathiba Shipping Corporation is working with STC, it should be in foreign currency account. That is why it is for another...

(Interruptions)

Yes, it should be in the foreign currency account. It is a debit account, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, we have to pay.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the Minister must listen to my question first. I am saying whether the Minister does not think that there is a conflict of interests because the STC has dealing with Prathiba Shipping and the statement of account shows clearly that STC has dealing with Prathiba Shipping. Therefore, why the Board must not be made aware that the General Manager is travelling together with two gentlemen of Prathiba Shipping?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Prathiba Shipping is working with STC since 2006-2007 for the transportation of petroleum products. So, they came to Mauritius for business issues in Mauritius and why the General Manager was travelling to Seychelles, both of them were interested to go to Seychelles and then to India. And then how a common air ticket was issued by the ITS, which I tabled last time on the Table of the Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker,

Sir. So, where is the conflict of interests? The transportation of Prathiba is one thing and this one is another thing.

Mr Guinness: Therefore, the Minister is willing to tell the House that anybody who wanted, at that particular point in time, to travel with the General Manager to Seychelles, the STC would have paid the air ticket and then get the refund later on?

Mr Gowressoo: I am not saying anybody, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is the case because he came to Mauritius for a business trip with STC, then they travelled to India through Seychelles and Dubai and then...

(Interruptions)

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Minister why the Prathiba Shipping took almost two months to refund the amount of USD2,215?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have replied, on 12 May we have paid the voucher and it was refunded on 26 May.

(Interruptions)

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to know from the hon. Minister whether there was any request from Prathiba Shipping Company to purchase those tickets or whether it was a decision by the STC to purchase that ticket?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, when they were here in Mauritius for the business trip with STC and when they happened to know that the General Manager was going to Seychelles, then they purchased the tickets, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Otherwise, there was no reason to go to Seychelles.

**SUGAR INDUSTRY PENSION FUND BOARD –PENSIONS & END OF THE
YEAR BONUS 2009**

(No. B/771) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and

GRSE) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she is aware that the Sugar Industry Pension Fund Board is not granting any increase in 2009 to the beneficiaries of pensions and that the end of the year bonus for 2009 will not be paid and, if so, state the reasons therefor.

Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

As the House may be aware, the Fund is governed by the Sugar Industry Pensions Fund Act 1955. It was established to provide certain financial benefits to the employees of the Sugar Industry or the heirs of such employees.

I am informed that the control and management of the Fund's assets is vested with a management company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Fund. Though as per the Act, it is required to carry out actuarial valuations at intervals of not more than five years, the Fund has been undertaking actuarial valuations of its liabilities every year and bonuses are distributed if there is a surplus in the Fund. It has thus been paying bonuses and increments in pensions with increases in the Fund's value.

I have, however, been informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Fund has notified its pensioners, by way of a circular letter, of its decision of not increasing pension for this year following the actuarial review carried out for the year ending 2008, and that the thirteenth month in December 2009 will also not be payable.

The reasons, I am advised are that –

1. There is a lot of uncertainty as to the performance of the Fund's assets over the next two years due to the financial crisis and that the Board needs to be prudent in taking decisions which could increase cost and jeopardise the long-term financial sustainability of the Fund.
2. The application of VRS has led to a significant increase in the amount of pensions paid by the Fund and that these pensions are being paid earlier than anticipated.
3. There has been a reduction in the number of contributors.
4. That the fair value of the Fund has decreased by nearly half a billion rupees.

I have also been advised that the Fund will be holding meetings round the island to explain to its pensioners the reasons for its prudential decisions.

Mr Bérenger: Could the hon. Minister say who chairs the Board and who are the actuaries?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have the annual report 2008. I think it's the same person up to now, it is Mr Eric Espitalier Noël. Concerning the actuaries, I don't have this information. I have to look into it.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether he tried to see if the Sugar Industry Pension Fund Board had to pay the increments and the *treizième mois*, how much money would have been needed for the fund to be able to meet that obligation?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have not personally looked into that, but I think this has been taken on board in the decision that has been taken.

Mr Bérenger: I know he is replacing his colleague, but if he can have the information. Is the Sugar Industry Pension Fund Board the only Pension Board that falls under the control of the Ministry of Finance that has stopped paying an increase in pension and end-of- the-year bonus?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have to look into that. This Fund was set up under an Act of Parliament and I can inform the House that there is a *flou* as under which Ministry it really falls. But I have replied to the question in any case.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that the Government has recently voted a Stimulus Package of nearly Rs10.4 billion. Now, for these pensioners, at least, the Government can try to find the necessary amount of money which is needed so that they can get their increments and end of year bonus. I think that if we can provide Stimulus Package for the private sector, why not for these poor pensioners?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a private Fund which, in fact, has been enacted in Parliament. I am giving the answers as far as I can, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

WINSTON CHURCHILL STADIUM, CUREPIPE – USE & BOOKING

(No. B/772) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Winston Churchill Stadium in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if it is meant for commercial or sporting purposes, indicating, since January 2005 to date -

(a) how and by whom it has been used;

(b) the use and booking till December 2009 and by whom, and

(c) the number of requests for use thereof which have been refused.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that the Winston Churchill Stadium in Curepipe is not meant for commercial purposes but for purely sporting activities. In this context, the stadium is being used since January 2005 to date for training purposes by the Curepipe Starlight Club, Curepipe Joachim, Centre de Préformation de Football, École d'Athlétisme, MFA Curepipe Region, clubs, colleges and primary schools of the region.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the stadium has been closed as from mid June 2009 for maintenance purposes and it will be re-opened by the end of September 2009. A list of the bookings made from October to December 2009 is being laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that many requests made by clubs and individuals for the use of the stadium have been refused due to overbooking.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether this stadium has not been rented to the Beachcomber group for the holding of a football tournament depriving the local football teams? Can he confirm that if he has the information?

Dr. David: No, I cannot confirm. I'll check.

UNITED BUS SERVICE – DRIVERS & CONDUCTORS - INSURANCE SCHEME

(No. B/773) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if representations have been received at his Ministry to the effect that the drivers and the conductors of the United Bus Service are not covered by any insurance scheme in case of accidents and, if so, indicate if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is no.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Next question, please!

LA BRASSERIE, CUREPIPE – COMMON ROAD - REPAIRS

(No. B/774) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the poor state of the common road at La Brasserie, Curepipe which serves as common access to the Civil Aviation Station, the Special Mobile Force explosive and munitions dépôt and Indian Research Office and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to the remedial actions that will be take.

(Withdrawn)

MISS L. M. R. – EMPLOYMENT SERVICE - REGISTRATION

(No. B/775) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if one Miss L. M. R. is registered at the Employment Service of his Ministry and, if so, since when, indicating if she has been referred for an employment.

(Withdrawn)

CEB - 2009 CALENDAR – QUOTATION EXERCISE

(No. B/776) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the printing of the 2009 calendar of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the cost thereof, indicating -

- (a) if any tender exercise was carried out;
- (b) if bids were received as per specifications;
- (c) the name of the printing company, and
- (d) the number of calendars printed.

The Deputy Prime Misnister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in December 2008, the CEB produced 375,000 Desk Calendars and 100,000 Pocket Calendars for the year 2009.

The total cost of production for both calendars amounted to Rs831,250 plus VAT.

As regard part (a) of the question, a request for quotation exercise - not tender - was carried on 26 December 2009 and the closing date was 30 December 2009.

Ten printing firms were invited to quote and at the closing date, eight bids were received. Six of them were as per specifications.

As for the name of the printing company, I am informed that the CEB awarded the contract for the production of Desks Calendars to Reshini Limited for the sum of Rs731,250 plus VAT and for the production of Pocket Calendars to Bahadoor Printing for the sum of Rs100,000 plus VAT. Both were the lowest responsive bidders.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has been aware of the efficiency and good governance of the CEB here? I can lay on the Table of the Assembly a calendar - nearly half a million rupees - without a year which has been given to consumers. Can we know what action – because if we have some problems and we don't pay the CEB, we have a 20% of surcharge; I know that the Minister is aware of that – has been recommended to the Board of the CEB to take and who is that person who has done the follow up? Was the General Manager or the Chairman involved? Can I lay on the Table for the information of the House a calendar without the year? It might be 2015.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was hoping the hon. Member would give both calendars, one with the 2009 and one without. The answer is that attention was brought from the press that this was the case and we have no information on how many have no year printed on the calendar, unfortunately. We have contacted the printing press and they have given 2000 extra copies free to make up for this deficiency. We are informed that maybe the vast majority – as I said, we have no figures for those who have no dates on them and we have made an inquiry and the information is as follows. When the award was given, it was checked, the printing was alright, the samples were alright, the deliveries were alright but, at a certain point, I gather that each and every delivery was not checked and distributed to the post without checking.

Mr Dayal: I have got one where by the year 2009 this is mentioned. I understand there is a mistake. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether this decision of promoting this selling of bulbs emanates from the Board?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am given to understand by management that the calendar is not the main issue. The main issue is the advertisement for low energy bulbs, the CFL and that the calendar was a side issue. I don't buy this, but I think also in a perverse way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has brought attention to the low energy bulb and I think it has attracted a lot of publicity.

Mr Jhugroo: May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many of these calendars have been distributed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: 375,000.

Mr Jhugroo: How many have been distributed to consumers?

The Deputy Prime Minister: We have no information about how many have been distributed.

Mr Jhugroo: What means have been used to distribute calendars to consumers?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Through the post.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that the CEB finance is in the red zone, do you think it is proper for the Central Electricity Board to spend millions on calendars at a time where their finance is in the red light?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not quite agree with the hon. Member. As stated, the idea was to promote low energy bulbs. I think it is a valid proposal except for the mistake in the calendar itself. The calendar is, as I was told, a side issue to convey the message about low energy bulbs.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my problem is not with the calendar. Somebody has not done his job properly and the Chairperson of the CEB, since he has assumed duty, has largely advertised, on several occasions, that he won't allow any *manquement*. Many manual workers – I am saying it without any hard feeling – had been taken to task on minor discrepancies or otherwise. Can the Deputy Prime Minister, at least, see to it that somebody be accountable for that, I would say, mismanagement of the whole issue?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Member. The difficulty has been, as I said, we don't know what number of calendars had gone

without a year printed on it and it is difficult therefore to know which batch and how many. We have gone through it and I can promise the hon. Member that we are not leaving it as it is.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, the CEB has spent about Rs851,250 for the printing of calendars. I asked a question regarding the inhabitants of Cité La Cure who have not been connected with electrical supply because of Rs800,000. Here they are printing calendars and the inhabitants at Cité La Cure do not have up to now the electrical supply. How do you explain this, hon. Deputy Prime Minister?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The hon. Member has to reply to this, I don't see the connection. As I said, low energy bulbs is a very important issue in this Government.

The Deputy Speaker : Thank you. The Table had been advised that PQ Nos. B/785 and B/786 have been withdrawn. Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.15 p.m. the sitting was suspended.