

Debate No. 6 of 28.04.09

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**MBC – LOCAL PRODUCTION - CONTRACTS**

**(No. B/339) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the award of contracts to private firms for local production of television programmes and films, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, a list thereof, since January 2006 to date, indicating -

- (a) the procedure followed for the award thereof and
- (b) the contract value of each contract.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the list is to be compiled from January 2006, the information is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been aware that many contracts for the production of films are given to a company owned by the Chairperson - once he was the owner of the company and then afterwards his son - and whether he has been made aware or he has received representations to the effect that the staff of the MBC/TV are allowed by the Chairperson to go and work during office hours in that company for the production of films for the MBC/TV itself? There is a question of *conflits d'intérêt*, using public funds, we are paying Rs100. These people go to work with the company during office hours and the MBC pays the company for the production of films. Has the hon. Prime Minister been made aware of that? Will he insist on the MBC to stop this practice?

**The Prime Minister:** There is a question which should come up. In fact, we have checked, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it is not true. This is not happening at all.

**Mr Barbier:** May we know, at least, from the hon. Prime Minister what is the total contract value from 2006 up to now for all contracts which have been given to these private companies.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a general rule, I understand the MBC does not actually pay a cash amount for the broadcast of privately produced programmes. I said, as a general rule. What they do, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that they make the airtime available, but they also compensate them by way of revenue from advertising generally.

### **MRS B. G. A. – HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – COMPLAINT**

**(No. B/341) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to a complaint made by one Mrs B. G. A., on behalf of her minor son J. W. A., at the Human Rights Commission against the Police, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to if any action has been initiated and, if so, where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Human Rights Commission that a complaint of police brutality on the person of minor J. W. A. aged 16, was lodged at the Commission by his mother, one Mrs B. G. A. on the 13 June 2007.

The Commission investigated the matter and came to the conclusion that there has been violation of the rights of the complainant. Thereafter, the matter was referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**Mr Ganoo:** Does the hon. Prime Minister have information whether the Police officers are being interdicted or suspended from duty?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, the Police has started an inquiry which is continuing. So far they have recorded the statements of five Policemen who have denied the allegation that has been put to them.

**Mr Varma:** Sir, I have a supplementary. Could the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the complainant was injured and a P.F. 58 was issued?

**The Prime Minister:** They took a P.F. 58 and attended hospital for treatment, but that is all the details that I have.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that he has suffered injuries?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot confirm that. I know that there are two versions. But as I said, the National Human Rights Commission has come to the conclusion that there has been violation of the rights of the complainant.

### **MCB/NPF CASE – PERSONS ARRESTED**

**(No. B/342) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the employees of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, on contractual or casual basis, including freelance, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the number thereof –

- (a) presently employed, indicating the number thereof who are above 60 years of age, and
- (b) who were in employment in June 2005.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, again this is a long list, the information requested is being compiled.

### **MBC – LICENCE FEES**

**(No. B/343) 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 MCB/NPF case, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of persons arrested in relation thereto, indicating in each case –

- (a) the charges lodged against them and
- (b) where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the MCB/NPF case was uncovered in February 2003 when a shortfall in the accounts of the National Pensions Fund (NPF) at the Mauritius Commercial Bank was discovered by the then Principal Accountant of the NPF. The case was referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in February 2003 by the Financial Intelligence Unit.

The Commissioner of Police has informed that the MCB/NPF case has been handled by ICAC and, according to information received from ICAC, eleven persons were arrested in relation to this case.

Five of them were provisionally charged with money laundering, two with corruption of agent, one with conspiracy to commit money laundering, one with failing to report a suspicious transaction, one with failing to comply with an order of the ICAC and one with corruption of agent and money laundering. Seven cases were struck out by Xourt.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the DPP has sought further clarifications from ICAC and that a final decision will be taken by the DPP soon.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why ICAC has taken more than six years to carry out an inquiry in this scandal?

**Mr Speaker:** Can I remind the hon. Member that if the inquiry is still on by ICAC, he is not allowed by the Act to put questions. If the inquiry has been completed - the hon. Member has to be very careful in asking questions – then the Prime Minister might perhaps give the information to the House.

**The Prime Minister:** As I explained, this case was started in February 2003, but as the hon. Speaker has pointed out, the inquiry is still ongoing. The DPP is now seeking clarification from ICAC and then a final decision will be taken.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, still concerning the MCB/NPF case, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House where matters stand concerning the extradition of Mr Teeren Appasamy?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, in fact, he is due to appear again for the case. He has claimed that he is not well like very often it happens in Mauritius. Everybody who is arrested says he is not well. But it is scheduled for continuation on 04 of June of this year.

**Mr Bodha:** The hon. Prime Minister said that seven cases have been struck out. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in the four other cases, the charge is still a provisional charge?

**The Prime Minister:** That is my understanding, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**MBC - FINANCIAL YEARS 2006-2007, 2007-2008 & 2008-2009 –  
PROFITS/LOSSES, TV LICENCE FEES**

**(No. B/344) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the financial years 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 as at to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the amount of profits or losses made, and
- (b) the amount of money collected as television licence fees, since January 2009 to date.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, for the financial years 2006-2007, the Corporation has registered a surplus of Rs26.9 m. and that for the financial year 2007-2008, the Corporation has registered a surplus of Rs16.9 m.

As regards the period 2008-2009 to date, the Director-General of the Corporation has informed that it can only be estimated, but he believes the surplus will be in the region of Rs10 m.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Director-General that a total amount of Rs107.9 m. has been collected as television licence fees for the period 01 January 2009 to 20 April 2009.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the MBC has contracted any loan recently and, if so, the amount thereof?

**The Prime Minister:** That does not relate directly to the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know a building is being built; we have had help from the Government of the Republic of China. But whether there are others, I am not aware of.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether his Ministry, which responsible for the MBC/TV, has received any request by the Board for the increase of Rs100 in licence fees?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, there has been that request, but it has not been entertained.

**Mr Jhugroo:** For the sake of transparency, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to ask the MBC to table a copy of the recent audited accounts?

**The Prime Minister:** I thought this was being done, but I will ask them to do it.

### **IRAKI REFUGEES - POLITICAL REFUGEE STATUS**

**(No. B/345) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the six Iraki refugees, he will state if –

- (a) he is aware that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has given to them the status of political refugee, and
- (b) Government has received any request from the Amnesty International (Mauritius) for any assistance to be extended to them.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that six foreigners arrived in Mauritius in November 2008 from France with alleged Danish passports. They were permitted to stay for a period of two weeks on holidays, as they were holders of passports issued by a member of the European Union and, therefore, there was no reason not to allow them to stay on holidays.

Prior to their departure on 24 November 2008, they were intercepted by the Duty Manager of Air Mauritius, because he had received information that they might be travelling on fake Danish passports.

Consequently, they were refused permission to board the flight and were referred to the Immigration Authorities for enquiry. They confessed that they were, in fact, nationals of Iraq and that they had obtained their passports by fraudulent means. They were arrested and kept under Police custody. A provisional charge of “making use of a forged document” under section 114 of the Criminal Code Act was lodged against them.

In January 2009, the Senior Regional Protection Officer from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) Regional Office in Pretoria came to Mauritius and interviewed the six Iraqis, in order to establish whether they deserved international protection. On 21 January 2009, this Regional Office in Pretoria concluded that the six Iraqis were likely to face persecution in Iraq because of their religious beliefs and were in need of international protection as refugees.

On 24 March 2009, the Regional Representation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Island States issued certificates of recognition for the six Iraqi nationals currently in Mauritius regarding their status as refugees.

UNHCR has confirmed that it would be responsible for the upkeep of the six Iraqis pending their departure to a third country. It also gave the assurance that all efforts were being made that their resettlement takes place as soon as possible.

As regards part (b) of the question, Amnesty International (Mauritius Section) on 25 March 2009 requested the immediate and unconditional release of the six Iraqis from Police custody following the issue of the refugee certificates by UNHCR.



On 26 March 2009, the Court was informed that the Director of Public Prosecutions would not appeal against the release of the six Iraqis. Court agreed to a request from the defence counsel for the quantum of the surety to be reduced from Rs50,000 to Rs10,000. The Iraqis were released on the same day and have been requested to appear before Court on 02 July 2009.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I understand, they came in to the country with fake Danish passports. Has an inquiry been carried out to find out how is it that they got through Police and Passport Authorities?

**The Prime Minister:** What is surprising, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that from Denmark, they went to another European country, and they managed to pass through that as well. It is here, as I said, when they were leaving, that information was received.

**Mr Bérenger:** From what I heard, I'm very surprised that somebody at Air Mauritius, God knows how, got to know that they were fake passports, get them stopped as they want to leave the country. Has an inquiry been carried out about who is this rare bird – *cet oiseau rare* – at Air Mauritius that has been able to do all this and whether he has gone to the Police once he had information to that effect, or whether he just waited for them to try and re-embark to have them stopped at the airport?

**The Prime Minister:** We should congratulate him in the first place. We do have some people who do their work in this country. In fact, it was at the last minute that he got the information and tried to double check, and then he stopped them.

**Mr Guimbeau:** I would like to table the certificate showing that the six refugees are recognised refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner.

*(Interruptions)*

I would just like to table it.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, le fait que le *United Nations High Commissioner for refugees* a accordé le statut de réfugié politique aux six réfugiés, n'est-il pas logique que les charges de possession de faux passeports contre les six réfugiés soient enlevées?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand there was this provisional charge. I mentioned earlier on that the DPP has made it known that he is not objecting for their release on bail. But, if you have done a criminal act, I think this is the law.

### **MOBILE PHONES – OBSCENE MATTERS**

**(No. B/346) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to reported cases of video clips of a sexual nature on mobile phones, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, since 2006 to date, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto, and the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, since 2006 to 23 April 2009, nine cases of obscene matters on mobile phone have been reported, and five cases have been established by the Police on their own initiative.

After police enquiry, 16 persons were arrested and have been released on bail or parole.

I am also informed that, out of the 14 cases -

- 11 cases are pending enquiry;
- one case has been classified, since the accused has not been able to be traced, and
- two cases have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice; and the latter has advised no further action in one case.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister in how many cases minors and students are involved?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't have the details. They have not given me the ages, but they are mostly students.

**(PQ No. B/347 – See written answers to questions)**

**SUBUTEX - CENTRAL PRISONS - JANUARY 2009**

**(No. B/348) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a stock of subutex was found at the Central Prisons in January 2009 and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that, on 08 January 2009, following a search carried out by officers of the Prisons Security Squad at the Central Prison, Beau Bassin, 70 Subutex pills were found in a cell in Block A, occupied by four detainees undergoing sentence for drug cases. The case was reported to the Rose Hill Police Station on the same day.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a provisional charge of "Unlawful Possession of Dangerous Drugs" was lodged against the four detainees before the Rose Hill District Court. They were remanded to prison. They have appeared before the Bail and Remand Court on several occasions, and the next appearance before the same Court is on 29 April 2009. Police inquiry has been

completed and the case file is being forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, some time back the hon. Prime Minister said that there is an Intelligence Unit which has been set up at the Prisons Department. Can he say whether any case of introduction of drugs within the premises of the prisons has been detected since the establishment of that Intelligence Unit?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, that Intelligence Unit works very closely with the Prisons Security Squad, and this is precisely how this case has taken place.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it's the second time I hear the hon. Prime Minister refer to the Ag. Commissioner of Prisons. Is the Commissioner of Prisons on leave or has his contract ended?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe he has gone abroad and I don't know whether he is back. Probably, he is still abroad.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, some time back I think it was hon. Mungur who suggested that a random structured exit interview from prisoners coming out of the prison be carried out to reinforce the Intelligence Service and the hon. Prime Minister said that he is going to pass on this information to the Commissioner of Prisons. Can we know whether there has been any development in the matter since?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** That's what I was going to say. It is not for the prisoners when they are leaving the prisons. It is for the others who are coming in. Once they leave the prisons we don't ...

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether these persons are consumers or dealers? And regarding consumers of drugs who

have been arrested, may I know whether treatment or medication is being proposed to these persons?

**The Prime Minister:** This is being done. In fact, since the last meeting I had, we have increased the number of persons who will get the treatment.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister state whether Government is envisaging to introduce what we call the harm reduction activities like is being done in the most conservative country of the Islamic Republic of Iran where you have measures ...

**Mr Speaker:** I am sorry. This question is specific about one specific case of stock subutex found and also if an enquiry has been carried out and the outcome thereof. I won't allow this question.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is in relation to subutex and we are trying to bring to the ...

**Mr Speaker:** It is not a general question on subutex, it is a specific question. Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether at the level of the Prison services and the Intelligence Unit, there is a follow-up regarding people coming to visit people who are on remand for the cases of subutex at the prison - I would say high profile convicts in these matters - and whether there is any enquiry on their *fréquentation* and how these things get in prisons?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to strike a balance again. We do a follow-up but, at the same time, there are the civil liberties of people who go and visit people. We don't want to spy on them day in day out, but, there is a follow-up.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Martin!

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question has nearly been asked by hon. Bhagwan.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister what has happened to the stock that has been seized? Has it been destroyed or has it been kept somewhere?

**The Prime Minister:** This is a case that is ongoing now/. We are seeking the advice of the DPP. We don't destroy them until ...

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Prime Minister think that there is a case of installing CCTV in the prisons?

**The Prime Minister:** I think this is something that we have also mentioned. I think we are making provisions for this.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring again to the question I asked the hon. Prime Minister on the exit interview. I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister got me right. But the question of exit interview is important, because then when the prisoners are being released they can, at least, say what happens within the premises of the prisons.

**The Prime Minister:** Very often, they don't want to speak to anyone who wants to interview them, but we do try to follow up wherever we can.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the Intelligence Unit, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether since the setting-up of that Unit, we have had other cases where drugs have been found? And may I also ask him whether body searches are carried out on a regular basis in the prisons?

**The Prime Minister:** The answer is yes to both questions of the hon. Member.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a supplementary question. Could the Prime Minister inform the House whether any of the convicts who have been charged in this particular case, had attended court prior to the seizure of these drugs?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, they have, Mr Speaker, Sir.

### **INDIAN OCEAN – VESSELS - SOMALIA PIRATES**

**(No. B/349) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he is aware that vessels entering Mauritius are being attacked by Somalia pirates and, if so, will he state if the international authorities have been approached to address the issue.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both PQ Nos. B/349 and B/354 together as they both relate to the same issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that as at to date, there is no report of any act of piracy on vessels calling at Port Louis Harbour or transiting in Mauritian waters.

Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has had bilateral discussions with both the US and French Ambassadors based in Mauritius to convey to their respective countries our concerns on the increasing acts of piracy in the South West Indian Ocean region which is actually moving even further. During the discussions, the hon. Minister urged for a common and unified approach to sea piracy by the international community in collaboration with coastal member States.

Furthermore, in view of the potentially negative impact of piracy on the economies of the South West Indian Ocean RIM countries, including Mauritius, the Government has already taken a number of measures which include the following -

- (i) The assistance of friendly countries like India, USA and France has been solicited in capacity building for a more stringent surveillance of the zone from the Horn of Africa to the South Western part of the Indian Ocean where we have seen an upsurge in sea piracy.
- (ii) At the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission held on 04 April 2009 in Comoros, which was attended by the hon. Dr. David, Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues and Outer Islands, the issue of sea piracy was again discussed from a regional viewpoint and the IOC adopted a resolution on piracy in the Indian Ocean region and the Gulf of Aden. In the resolution, Member States collectively called upon the international community to pursue and reinforce its actions against piracy, especially in the maritime zones of the Member States of the IOC.
- (iii) The IOC also called upon the United Nations and the African Union to collaborate with the Somali Government to restore internal peace and security which is an important first step in the fight against piracy.
- (iv) Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding, prepared by the International Maritime Organisation, concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean.



- (v) At the last Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Meeting held in Bali from 30 March to 03 April 2009, a statement on piracy in Western Indian Ocean was adopted and, on a proposal made by Mauritius, a specific provision was included in the statement calling on the international community to give all its support to ensure the safety of all fishing vessels in the region from acts of piracy.
- (vi) The position of all Mauritian fishing vessels are tracked through the Vessel Monitoring System based at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre and their position are received every two hours – they are also required to have a satellite phone and a radio on board for communication.
- (vii) The National Coast Guard (NCG) personnel based at St. Brandon and Agalega have been requested to be on alert regarding the piracy.
- (viii) I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that an NGC Commando Team has been set up to counteract any sea-ward attack, including piracy and terrorism. They will have the capability to undertake anti-piracy operations and tough rescue operations at sea or near the coast and counter other maritime security threats.
- (ix) I should also say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I dispatched, again as a precautionary measure, a small contingent of the SMF to Agalega since 14 April 2009 because of what is happening.

There is now a consensus, Mr Speaker, Sir, among the international community that the long-term solution to the problem lies within Somalia itself, which is torn by rival warring factions. Tackling the problem on sea alone will not be enough. It is a fact that piracy has worsened recently despite the increasing presence of naval forces of the major powers. Restoring security and stability in Somalia is, therefore, vital in combating the scourge of sea piracy.

The House may be aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that on 23 April of this year, the United Nation, African Union and the European Union along with the newly-elected President of Somalia met in Brussels to discuss an Action Plan aimed both at stabilising Somalia and at combating pirate attacks on foreign vessels. We, therefore, welcome this initiative which we are confident will help address the piracy problem at sea in the region because this can only be done through multilateral collaborative efforts.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether some insurance companies are asking for more money to some vessels coming to Mauritius through this region?

**The Prime Minister:** Not specifically to Mauritius, but I suppose if they are traveling in that region that would be expected.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Prime Minister has rightly stated, that issue of Somalia pirates is well linked with the unstable situation in Somalia. The other issue that I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to is that these pirates are getting training from Eritrea. Could that issue also be raised at the next summit that is coming up to see that neighbouring countries do not give proper training to these people for them to engage in such piracy acts?

**The Prime Minister:** It is a question of training, I don't want to go into details, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I can tell the hon. Member that the United States are very well aware of who is training who.

## **MBC/VIDITECH AND DIGIPRO – CONTRACTS**

**(No. B/350) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the number of contracts entered into between the Corporation and Viditech and DIGIPRO since July 2005 to date, indicating the -

- (a) total amount of money paid out, and
- (b) details of each contract.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, this was referring to the previous question that the hon. Member asked.

I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Corporation has not entered into any contract with Viditech and DIGIPRO since July 2005 to date.

Therefore parts (a) and (b) of the question do not arise.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the MBC hires equipment to DIGIPRO and whether the staff of the MBC works at the same time for DIGIPRO?

**The Prime Minister:** No, in fact, I did say it earlier, hon. Bhagwan asked me the question. That is not the case.

**MBC – SALES AND ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT - INQUIRY**

**(No. B/351) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Sales and Advertising department of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if an inquiry is being carried out into its affairs by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the reply is in the affirmative.

It would, therefore, neither be proper nor appropriate for me to reveal details of the said enquiry at this stage in view of the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want the hon. Prime Minister to disclose the inquiry, but he can, at least, tell us what are the reasons for which ICAC is....

**Mr Speaker:** I must inform the hon. Member that the law is clear. Once a matter has been reported to the ICAC, there is no question that can be answered.

*(Interruptions)*

I am sorry, the law is the law!

**SALE BY LEVY – PERSONS - ARREST**

**(No. B/352) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether in regard to a group of persons who was observing a hunger strike in relation to the Sale by Levy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if they were arrested on Monday 20 April 2009 and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 20 April 2009, a group of 36 persons was arrested at Pope Hennessy Street for the offence of “Remaining in an Unlawful Assembly After Warning”. Out of these 36 persons, 16 were members of the “*Mouvement Victimes Sales by Levy*” who had been on hunger strike since 14 April 2009.

According to information obtained from the Police, on 15 April 2009, one Mr H.B., representative of the “*Mouvement Victimes Sales by Levy*” made an application to the Commissioner of Police for authorisation to hold a march on Monday 20 April from Jardin de la Compagnie to corner Sir Virgil Naz and Pope Hennessy Streets. The request from Mr H.B. was for the march to start at 15 00 hrs and to end with a public meeting at corner Sir Virgil Naz and Pope Hennessy Streets at 16 00 hrs. The Commissioner of Police approved the holding of both the march and the public meeting, but imposed conditions on the itinerary and timing. The march was to start at 17 00 hrs and the public meeting at 17 30 hrs. Mr H. B. was informed of the decision of the Commissioner of Police in a letter dated 18 April 2009.

Nevertheless, on 20 April, he gathered some 100 persons, including the hunger strikers, at Jardin de la Compagnie at about 15 00 hours and proceeded towards corner Sir Virgil Naz/Pope Hennessy Streets along the route approved by

the Commissioner of Police. The public meeting was held at 16 10 hrs in spite of the change that he was informed about.

I am further informed that at about 16 55 hrs, he incited the crowd through a public address system, to march towards a Police Barrier erected across Pope Hennessy Street in front of the Supreme Court premises. He then ordered the people gathered to lie down on the road surface and some 36 persons did so.

The Police warned the demonstrators against the unlawful nature of their demonstration and ordered them to disperse peacefully failing which action would be taken against them. As the crowd ignored the warning of the Police, the latter ordered their arrest at 17 30 hrs. All the 36 persons were arrested and brought to Line Barracks Police Station for enquiry.

Out of the 36 persons arrested, one was admitted to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital for treatment on 20 April. As for the 35 others, a provisional charge of "Remaining in an Unlawful Assembly After Warning" was lodged against them on 21 April before the District Court of Port Louis. 34 of them were bailed out after furnishing a surety of Rs 1,000 and a recognizance of Rs 5,000.

The person who had been admitted to hospital on 20 April, appeared before the District Court of Port Louis on 22 April, and was bailed out on the same day.

As for Mr H.B., he was also granted bail on 21 April, but he refused to furnish the surety of Rs 1,000 and the recognizance of Rs 5,000. He was, therefore, remanded to jail up to 11 May 2009.

I am also informed that on 23 April, one Mr R. G. paid the bail of Mr H. B. A Court Order was issued for the latter's appearance in Court for his bail formalities. However, Mr H. B. refused to be bailed out as he was not agreeable to Mr R. G. providing the surety for him. Consequently, the Magistrate remanded Mr H. B. to jail again, and ordered him to appear in Court on 27 April for a ruling on the bail issue.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Commissioner of Police that on 27 April, the Magistrate asked Mr H. B. to reappear in Court on 12 May regarding the motion to strike out the provisional charge against him. He has in the meantime been unconditionally released on humanitarian grounds.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he asked the Commissioner of Police what reason was given to change the time from 15 00 hrs to 17 00 hrs?

**The Prime Minister:** It was office hours, the offices were closing. Already we have a congestion problem in Port Louis, we don't want to add on this.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister tell the House on what ground was Mr H. B. released from jail?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, I am sorry.

### **INDIAN OCEAN - PIRACY**

**(No.B/354) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to acts of piracy in the Indian Ocean, he will state if he has raised the issue with the neighbouring countries and, if so, indicate the measures taken by Government?

*(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/349)*

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Mrs. Labelle!

## **DAY CARE CENTRES/SPECIALISED SCHOOLS – NUMBER**

**(No. B/355) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether in regard to the Day Care Centres/specialised schools for disabled children, she will state the number thereof, indicating the criteria laid down by Government for the opening and operation thereof.

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

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, a Day Care Centre or specialised school means an institution registered with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources for the purpose of providing special care and education to children who have severe learning difficulties due to their disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, mental, psychological, emotional, social essentially). On registration they benefit from a grant on the part of my Ministry for the purpose of providing specialised education to those children. Such institutions are normally Non-Government Organisations registered with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at to date, I am informed that the number of Day Care Centres/specialised schools which are registered with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources is as follows -

Day Care Centre	:	7
Specialised Schools	:	<u>38</u>
Total	:	<u>45</u>

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the criteria laid down for their opening and operation, registration should comply with the mandatory norms relating to -



- i. the building, yard and playground;
- ii. sanitary conditions of premises;
- iii. furniture, play equipment and educational toys/materials;
- iv. health and safety norms as defined by the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life;
- v. developmentally appropriate practice;
- vi. needs-based curriculum;
- vii. child-centered programme in line with the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- viii. the qualifications of staff, experience in special education needs and eligibility of staff to work in SEN Schools/Day Care Centres;
- ix. teacher:pupil ratio 1:7;
- x. space/child ratio 1 mt sq per child, and
- xi. environment norms as defined by the Ministry of Environment

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/132 on 07 April last, I did inform the House of this Government's commitment to give all the children of Mauritius equal opportunities for quality education - on the basis of their right to education, as well as the Government's moral and ethical obligation to protect our children who are more at risk of being excluded and marginalised.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Policy and Strategy Document on the special educational needs of children with disabilities published by my Ministry in 2006 provides for several measures for the inclusion of these children in our educational system through appropriate services, in partnership with relevant Ministries and Non-Government Organisations. Several affirmative actions for this sector to bring children with disabilities at par with their peers in mainstream are accordingly being taken. These, *inter-alia*, include a regulatory framework under the Education Act as well as a manual detailing the general conditions and the norms and

standards to be fulfilled before the registration of Day Care Centres and Specialized Schools.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of special needs school is a complex one and I am of opinion that we need appropriate-expertise in the domain. My Ministry is, however, leaving no stone unturned to seek assistance from friend countries or overseas organizations to build up the required capacity for Mauritius so that all special education needs children in Mauritius enjoy access to relevant high quality education.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a particular mechanism to ensure the standard of these schools and what is being implemented right now for them?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** We have a mechanism and if the hon. Member had tried to get the gist of my reply, I am not fully satisfied. There is a mechanism which is working satisfactorily well in a certain measure, but we need expert advice. I am of opinion that we lack expertise and we have to look seriously at it. There is a unit at the level of the Ministry which takes care of it.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether visits are being effected to these centres, and on what frequency these visits are being effected and by whom?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, there are visits. There is an inspectorate. The inspector goes to visit all these schools and centres. Well, on what regularity - I need notice of this question, but it is quite often, I must say, and I am taking a very special attention to that.

**Mrs Martin :** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister - I don't know if he has the figures - what is the average capacity of accommodation of these Day Care Centres and specialized schools and how this compares to the number of children who are not enrolled in these schools?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** It varies according to the schools. If the hon. Member is interested I can give her a list of schools and centres in the country, which I have already given, but for each school the number of children who are admitted.

**Mr Gunness:** Can I know from the Minister whether friendly countries or the UNESCO, international organisations, have been approached by his Ministry in order to get the services of such experts to come and help in this field?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned it in my main reply; in fact, this is in line with what we want to do.

**Mr Barbier:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Since the Minister stated himself that this is a very complex issue and there are various types of disabilities that children have, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a policy from his Ministry to see to it that these specialised schools and care centres have the appropriate trained personnel to attend to these disabilities and if not, is the Minister envisaging to have appropriate training for the personnel?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned that. Before registration, the qualifications of the staff, experience in special education needs, eligibility of staff to work in these schools are seriously considered. And, of course, there is the inspectorate which goes there to see that these conditions are adhered to. There is also the possibility for teachers who have got experience at the level of the Ministry who sometimes are delegated to help there.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dowarkasing!

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Minister - I mean having Day Care Centres and specialized schools is a very good thing - what are the efforts that are being done for the handicapped and disabled children to enter the mainstream?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** There is a whole strategy, as I have mentioned. I did not go into details, but we are working actively on that and we are going to publish very shortly the implementation path to allow the strategy. It had already been defined in 2006 by my predecessor. We are trying to fine tune, to polish and then to work with experts from abroad to be able to give the best we can.

**Mrs Martin:** Can the Minister say how many children are actually not going to those Day Care Centres and specialised schools? Does the hon. Minister has the number at his Ministry?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, we are, in fact, conducting a survey, I must say, at this present point in time. The survey is not over, but we have to liase with the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Women Affairs also to be able to give the right figures.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, it is a very complex question. Very often there is so much confusion between the motor impairment and the different levels of impairment. With regard to motor impairment, do we have particular Day Care Centres actually registered with his Ministry?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Of course we don't have all that we would have wished. But I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all those people who are involved in that type of special education needs. They are doing their utmost best and we are trying to help as much as we can at the level of the Ministry. I expect that, in the months to come, with the work that is being done at the level of the Ministry, with all other stakeholders, we will find a better way out for these children.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree with the Minister that, in fact, these people working with these disabled children are doing a marvellous work. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether any organization or the MIE actually provides any sort of ongoing training in Mauritius for the personnel working in these disabled schools and, if not, whether the Minister can approach at least the MIE to work out a training programme for these teachers?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This has already been taken care of. In fact, there is a specialised curriculum for these children which is taken over at the level of my Ministry.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leopold!

**Mr Leopold:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I know from the hon. Minister what is the qualification or, at least, the minimum experience that is required for someone to teach in these institutions?

**Dr Bunwaree:** It depends on the type of invalidity, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I can give the assurance to the hon. Member and to the House that we do whatever best we can at the level of the country.

*At 12.57 p.m, the sitting was suspended.*

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

### **COMPANIES - BAILING OUT – PUBLIC FUNDS**

**(No. B/356) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the companies for which public funds will be committed for their bailing out, especially in the textile sector, he will state if audit trails thereof will be carried out over a minimum of a period of ten years, with a view to ascertaining if there has been any siphoning off, and/or mismanagement, of funds by the directors thereof.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has put in place the MTSP to help firms facing financial difficulty in the context of the world's economic crisis; the main aim behind Government intervention being to protect jobs.

As at date, 20 firms have submitted formal applications for assistance under the scheme, representing employment for over 6,700 persons. Term sheets have already been signed with three firms. Two more firms will be signing their term sheets shortly. Altogether, these five firms represent an amount of Rs137m. as Government contribution in terms of equity, debentures, working capital, guarantee and acquisition of building. More than 2,700 jobs have already been salvaged. Nine other applications are under consideration, potentially involving some further 1,000 jobs that could be saved.

The MTSP, Mr Speaker, Sir, operates according to clear guidelines and procedures, which have in-built adequate controls to ensure that only genuine cases are supported.

First, financial support is only provided to an enterprise, which is considered to have had a viable past track record and will have a viable future once the difficulties of the moment are over. In this connection, financial analysts prepare a high level report covering the previous three years and indicating why the enterprise should be supported.

Second, all financial support is guided by the principles of 'risk sharing' as well as 'burden sharing' on the part of the companies, financial institutions and Government. In the event of a bail out, shareholders contribute between 20-33% of additional funding required. The balance is equally shared by banks and Government, often through the SIC. This ensures that due diligence is done at the level of the financial institutions, which have their money also at stake. Moreover, a contribution from the companies themselves also confirms their commitment to the rescue programme.

Third, each case is assessed on its own merits and based on the submission of a credible restructuring plan by the relevant enterprise, including independent scrutiny of the enterprise by a firm of accountants, approved by the banks, and scope of work defined by the banks. The cost of the firm of accountants is to be borne by the enterprise itself.

In addition, funds would be provided through the SIC to the enterprises needing financial support. The engagement of SIC is guided on the basis of the following -

- (i) an effort is required by the shareholders and management in the form of any combination of equity injection, asset sales and cuts in operating costs, particularly management pay, benefits and perks;
- (ii) there must also be a commitment to preserve employment either within the firm or by redeployment;

- (iii) there can be no dividend payments until all preference shares held by SIC are redeemed;
- (iv) the preference shares still held by SIC after five years will be automatically converted into ordinary shares, based on an independent valuation with an agreed time frame for exit, and the methodology for valuing the exit must be determined upfront;
- (v) SIC may appoint a representative to the Board where it deems this helpful to ensure that the restructuring funds are well spent, and
- (vi) there will also be an obligation for regular reporting of the Committee overseeing the system.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Vice-Prime Minister ascertain to the House that the money obtained from the Stimulus Package be not used to pay existing debts, which will defeat the purpose fixed by Government to protect employment?

**Dr. Sithanen:** That's basically the objective, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, one of the reasons why we didn't agree to support an ailing enterprise is that one of the participating financial institutions wanted Government to buy back some of the debts of that particular company. Obviously, we did not agree.

**Mr Dayal:** Will the Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what are the mechanisms that have been set up at the level of his Ministry to ensure that the conditionalities on which public funds have been given to bailing out companies are strictly observed?



**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we are very early in the implementation of this scheme. In fact, the evaluation is carried out by independent consultant, and we have put conditions. There is going to be a reporting mechanism. They are going to report, on a quarterly basis, on progress that is being made, and to make sure also that the conditions which have been proposed have been strictly adhered to.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Vice-Prime Minister agree that it is of absolute necessity that a Government official be appointed in each and every company or organisation, so as to exercise strict control in order that the public funds provided in bailing out companies be used judiciously and for the purpose it has been given?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no obligation to do it. In cases where we believe that there is an absolute necessity to have a Board representative, I think Government will do it. In many cases, the work has already been done; we have laid conditions, and the banks also are very concerned about the use of the money. The shareholders are also very concerned, and we are equally. But, if there are cases where we believe that there is an absolute necessity to appoint someone on the Board, obviously, this will be done.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister & Minister of Finance - I don't know whether he has answered this question already – whether, when we are talking about funds that are being earmarked for these enterprises, we will follow the example of the UK and USA, where complete audit is done, for example, in terms of cars that are purchased on the name of company by the directors and other fat cats of the company? I would like to know whether strict audit is performed before these funds are allocated.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Sithanen:** We will certainly look at these fat cats, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, again, let me be very fair. Very often, we have the tendency to exaggerate. There are some firms that are really in difficulties, and there are two areas where we asked them to do an effort. One is to review all this excessive expenditure and, as for the other one, we asked them to make a contribution also. That's why Mr Speaker, Sir, the menu is quite flexible; there is no set menu; it's *à la carte* to some extent. I gave the five possibilities where intervention is possible in terms of equity, debenture, guarantee, working capital, and also in terms of an asset swap. So, obviously, it is in the interest of everybody that we make sure that this happens. Let me also tell my hon. Friend that the prime objective is not to save the enterprise; the prime objective is to preserve jobs, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say how he is going to ascertain that jobs are not lost, when funds have already been committed to the company and, thereafter, the company wishes to lay off employees?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard my hon. friend say that we have to legislate to prevent companies from laying off people. It is impossible to do that, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me explain very clearly. Assuming we are giving them Rs20 m. and, after three months, the recession *est plus profonde et plus longue* and they believe they are going to lose Rs200 m. So, even, the Rs20 m. that we have given them will not be enough. Nobody can do this! What we have told them, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that if they have obtained public funds, before they make a decision, they need to consult, they need to engage in a dialogue with Government, so that we collectively decide what is the best course of action. We have told other companies that even don't obtain public funds that, as part of their corporate social responsibility, they should do everything possible to keep jobs and that job losses

should be used only as a measure of last resort, as they will need these people when the economy picks up again.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the hon. Minister said that Government has requested the companies to review their lifestyle or expenditure. My question would be with respect to that. Once we have requested them that, what mechanism has been put in place or will be put in place to monitor that they actually do what they are being requested to do or being requested to review in terms of their lifestyle or expenditure in the company, as is the best practice for the stimulus packages adopted in the US and in the UK? I'm sure that the hon. Minister will know that, in the US and in the UK, best practices and monitoring mechanisms have been put into place for big companies that have obtain public funds.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, there are no big companies. In fact, some of them came to complain to me and asked why I did not mention their names. I said no! These are facts of life! Rogers, IBL or Beachcomber, the big ones, have not applied for this. We are talking about small and medium enterprises. 1,000 people is a small company hon. Deerpalsing! We have put conditions, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are going to monitor them. Again, the Speaker, Sir, we should not give the impression that all of them are out there to cheat. Many of these people are honest entrepreneurs who are trying their best to save jobs. We should not give the impression that all of them are likely to cheat. Obviously, we need to monitor, to review, and there is a reporting mechanism. As I said, I will come to this House on a three/six monthly basis, to make sure that public funds are being well utilised.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can confirm if any of these companies, which have applied for the Stimulus Package, are not sub-companies of the large groups he has mentioned?

**Dr. Sithanen:** With regard to the one that we have up to now, no, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, there are four or five that have benefited, and there are about 36 in all, but at different stages of consideration. But, if they are in difficulty, they are a subset, they can also apply. We are not going to discriminate on the basis of A, B, C, D. The basis for providing assistance if you are in a difficulty is that you accept some conditions that had been laid down by Government.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Vice-Prime Minister whether there are any companies in the tourism sector, which have applied for the support.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Yes, application has been submitted. But, again, as I said, there are different levels of negotiations. Some concluded; some almost concluded; some processed and agreed; some under consideration; some applications submitted. As I can see here, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is, at least one, in the tourism sector. There is another one in what I would call the para-tourism sector.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask hon. Vice-Prime Minister to lay on the Table of Assembly a comprehensive list of all the conditionalities that are required for a firm or a company to qualify to obtain public funds under the Stimulus Package? And, also, in case any audit has been carried out, I would like to ask him whether this can be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already laid a copy of the conditions. With regard to giving the audit of each company, Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to preserve their confidentiality also. There are competition forces at play. We cannot divulge the ins and outs, every detail of what the company has done. The job is being done by independent consultant. Then, there is a committee that reviews it, and they have to make a judgment as to whether they give money or not.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister & Minister Finance whether, in the one case he has talked about, which he has qualified as not a big company, he will verify if two of the directors of that company have recently, after having obtained public funds, purchased cars of double digit million rupees?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** In view of the fact that it is public money that is used, and in the name of transparency, can the hon. Minister give the names of all the companies that have applied and all those that have received help from the Stimulus Package?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said that I will come to this House on a regular basis, and will say exactly what are the firms that have received, what is the amount they have received, what conditions have been accepted, and what progress report has been made. We have just started it.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** I'm sorry Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know if I missed it, but I didn't hear the hon. Minister answer my question as to whether he will verify if two directors of one of the companies which have received funds have purchased very expensive cars while they have been receiving public funds.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't know! If the hon. Member has any information, she can give it to me.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker Sir, in this very Assembly, the hon. Minister had mentioned that, wherever public funds have been put in use, we need to be transparent and accountable to the National Assembly. I would think that, even in the case of the Stimulus Package, we should follow the same logic. Following the same logic, I would ask the Minister whether he doesn't think that such information should be tabled, at least, in the National Assembly.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I said that it would be tabled.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I am talking about the audit trail.

**Dr Sithanen:** We cannot give strictly confidential information to people, Mr Speaker, Sir. On the one hand, they are saying that the situation is deteriorating, and when we are helping, they are trying to put conditions that will kill these companies.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that every three months he would give us the names. But, now, there is a specific question. We would like to have information about how many companies, their names, and the amount that has been given to them up to now.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I said it last week. The hon. Member should listen. Everybody knows which companies have benefited, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have said it. The one that has received most money is World Knits.

*(Interruptions)*

I have said that I will come to the House and give all the details. But, before we have started to help, Members are trying to put conditions. Members know that this will kill these enterprises. Then, they will go and say we should have listened to them!

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just listened to the hon. Minister of Finance who stated that he cannot table the audit trail in Parliament. Then, how will this House ascertain that this Stimulus Package is being used judiciously and is going where it should be?

**Dr. Sithanen:** The Director of Audit will submit a report, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the use of public funds. The hon. Member cannot apply the policy of: head you win, and tail I lose. I have told the hon. Member that last week - we are not that stupid.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, very often, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister talks of transparency. For the sake of transparency, even if the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has only one name, he can give it.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I have given the most important one. I thought I was speaking a very simple, plain English. How many times should I say it?

**Mr Bodha:** May I ask the Vice-Prime Minister whether, among the companies which have applied for a package, some have already laid off workers before applying?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't know.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member is asking about 'laid off workers before applying'.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't know. But again, it is only when they receive money!

*(Interruptions)*

Members can't complain. Basically, Members are saying that we are not helping and, at the same time, when we help, they say that we are putting conditions that will not help them. They have to be logical.

**PRB REPORT 2008 - ERRORS AND OMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

**(No. B/357) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the Errors and Omissions arising out of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2008, he will state if the Committee set up to look thereinto has completed the exercise and if so, when will the report be published.

**Dr. Hookoom:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Pay Research Bureau, which is an independent body, that it is in the process of finalising its Report on Errors and Omissions arising out of the 2008 PRB Report.

The Report is expected to be published by the end of May 2009.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister the number of representations received at his Ministry following the publication of the 2008 PRB Report, and the number of requests dealt with at the level of his Ministry?

**Dr. Hookoom:** Mr Speaker, Sir, 368 representations were received at my Ministry following the publication of the 2008 PRB Report. The number of requests that have been dealt with at my Ministry is 64.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, following the circulation of an option form, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider the advisability of keeping it in abeyance until the Errors and Omissions Committee Report is published? I raised this question a week ago.

**Dr. Hookoom:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the request made by the hon. Member has already been dealt with.

**Mr Varma:** Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether the 64 requests dealt with at his Ministry have been transmitted to the PRB?

**Dr. Hookoom:** It is after obtaining clarifications from the PRB that the 64 requests were dealt with at my Ministry.



**MAURITIUS - MEDICAL HUB**

**(No. B/358) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to making Mauritius become a medical hub, he will state the –

- (a) measures Government proposes to take to encourage doctors, especially those who have benefited from Government scholarships, to come back and serve the country;
- (b) measures taken to palliate the shortage of specialists in scarcity fields, and
- (c) number of applications for work permit in different fields of specialisation received by Government from private clinics, since 2005 to date, and table copy thereof.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in line with the policy of the Government to transform Mauritius into a medical hub for the region, all efforts are being made to attain this objective. We need, amongst others, to have a pool of highly qualified and dedicated medical and paramedical staff, including doctors and specialists.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that there are two categories of scholarships –

- (i) nomination under Open Scholarship, offered through the Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture and Human Resources, wherein all the nominees, including public officers, are bonded and are required to come back and serve the country after a certain period of time;
- (ii) nominees under an approved Training Scheme of my Ministry, whereby selected candidates are sent for postgraduate studies to University of Bordeaux II, University of Montpellier and Banaras

Hindu University. These officers are also bonded, and are required to come back and serve the Ministry.

- Furthermore, the conditions of the offer of scholarships by the donor countries require that the recipients should return back to their country;
- on successful completion of their postgraduate studies, doctors are absorbed in the public service at specialist level, and
- specialists are also granted the privilege of private practice.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the following measures have been taken to palliate the shortage of specialists in scarcity fields –

- (i) the PRB Report 2008 has significantly improved the salary and conditions of service of specialists;
- (ii) Consultants/Specialists who retire are allowed to continue working within our service on sessional or contract basis;
- (iii) the services of a number of specialists from abroad who express interest to serve in Mauritius are retained on a contract basis, and
- (iv) action has been initiated for the recruitment of specialists in scarcity fields from abroad.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed that 23 applications for work permit in the different fields of specialisation have been received from private clinics since 2005 to date. Work permits were granted to only 14 specialists.

**Dr. Ramloll:** I thank the hon. Minister for the answer. I would like to get confirmation from the hon. Minister whether there is a specific monetary amount, like a bond, which these doctors sign before they leave for a scholarship abroad?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have replied, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is a bond that the successful candidates have to agree upon with the Ministry.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, has the Ministry surveyed that, in the next five to ten years, which are the scarcity areas in the different specialities?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, we do have a list of areas where we have specialists. In fact, I can give some more information, if the hon. Member will bear with me. Out of a total of 222 posts, there are 40 which have not been recruited as yet. These would be fields such as general medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, and so on.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the work permits, will the hon. Minister inform the House about the number issued in the different private clinics and hospitals?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I thought I had replied, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did mention that there were 23 applications for work permits in different fields since 2005, and that 14 work permits have been granted.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Can the hon. Minister confirm how many work permits were awarded to each clinic?

**Dr. Jeetah:** First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether it would be ethical to come and display which clinic has been applying for what specialisation. But, in any case, the hon. Member would have to refer to the substantive Ministry.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, one last question on this issue. Will the hon. Minister reassure the House that no work permit is issued in areas where the competence is already available in Mauritius?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have answered, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't see any problem with regard to having an excess capacity. The hon. Member might wish to know that 22% of the population of this country suffer from diabetes, 30% suffer from

hypertension and 45% suffer from cholesterol. So, the more skills we get in this country, the better it would be.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can give the conditions found in the bond which the doctors sign before leaving the country?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I can certainly table the document. It is not with me at the moment.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether we can have an idea of the amount that those who have obtained the scholarships have to sign in the bond and how many of them have actually been paid and not come back to Mauritius.

**Dr. Jeetah:** With regard to the first part of the question, this is what hon. Jhugroo asked for, and I shall table the document. With regard to the number of specialists who have not returned, as far as my Ministry is concerned, everybody has come back.

### **PPP PROJECTS - MEDICAL CARE**

**(No. B/359) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical care, he will state if Government proposes to enter into Public Private Partnership projects with a view to offering quality medical care.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the public sector provides free health care services to around 90% of the Mauritian population, whereas the private sector caters for the remaining 10%.

I wish to inform the House that, to date, there are no major Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects in the health sector in line with the philosophy of the PPP concept, which calls for contractual agreements between the public and private sectors to deliver public infrastructure based services.

In line with the policy of Government to promote a knowledge and medical hub, Government is encouraging the setting-up of private medical and nursing schools with a view to enhancing the quality of health care through the provision of nursing and medical education at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. So far, four applications for medical schools and three for nursing schools for the provision of clinical training facilities in our hospitals have been approved. The Clinical Training Framework, *inter alia*, provides for investment by the promoters in health infrastructure and also a transfer of technical expertise which would be beneficial to our service delivery.

Moreover, with a view to providing quality medical care in the field of ophthalmic services and also promoting the transfer of technology in this specialised area, my Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sankara Nethralaya Medical Research Foundation of Chennai, India, for the setting-up of an eye hospital at Souillac Hospital.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that such a project as the Nurses School was supposed to be put in place in Dubreuil, an area of my constituency. Can the hon. Minister say where matters stand with regard to the school?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have the information with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, but should the hon. Member put a substantive question, I shall answer.

**MALINGA, ST PIERRE – LANDSCAPING WORKS**

**(No. B/360) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether he will state if Government will consider carrying out landscaping works at Malinga, St Pierre, and putting up a view point thereat.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will consider the request and a site visit will soon be effected by our consultant and, subsequently, we shall decide on the course of action.

**Mr Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that the Verdun-Terre Rouge route will soon be a reality in that area. I don't know whether many of us have visited this particular area. Probably, it is the most beautiful view that we have for the north area. Can I press upon the Minister to start working on this project as soon as possible, and make this area become a tourist viewpoint?

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I assure the hon. Member that I once had the opportunity to serve this constituency. I am fully aware of the beauty of this viewpoint of La Laura/Malinga. If I am not mistaken, hon. Dayal, at a point in time, asked me to look at this specific area, which I had, at this time. But, quite unfortunately, we did not have a consultant then. Now that the hon. Member has reminded me that the Verdun Trunk Road will be going through Malinga, I will kindly pass on the request to hon. Minister Bachoo to look at the Trunk Road with the viewpoint altogether.

**ST PIERRE/QUARTIER MILITAIRE – DISTRICT HOSPITAL**

**(No. B/361) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will state if Government will consider putting up a district hospital in the region of St Pierre and Quartier Militaire to provide for a 24-hour health care service.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the policy of my Ministry is to strengthen the primary health care system, and to consolidate and upgrade the existing hospitals. The aim is to bring about a more equitable distribution of health resources with greater accessibility to primary health care and its supporting services to the community. Equity of access is ensured by a comprehensive package of primary health care programmes and provision of promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to the community at the peripheral level.

There are five Health Regions in Mauritius and services are delivered through, *inter alia*, a network of five regional hospitals, 23 Area Health Centres, and 116 Community Health Centres.

The region of St. Pierre and Quartier Militaire, which falls under the Health Region No. 1, that is, Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, is served by two Area Health Centres and nine Community Health Centres, covering a population of 40,842 for St. Pierre and 17,139 for Quartier Militaire. The opening hours of the Health Centres are from 0800 a.m to 0600 p.m on weekdays, 0800 a.m to 1200 a.m on Saturdays, and 0800 a.m to 1100 a.m on Sundays and public holidays.

Moreover, the S. Bharati Eye Hospital also provides a casualty service for general purposes during the night. Cases requiring admission/referral are sent to Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital or to other specialised hospitals, and transport facilities are provided to such patients.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have the impression that I got the same answer from the previous Minister of Health regarding the same question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence, please!

**Dr. Ramloll:** My point is the following: one particular area of the constituency namely, Providence, goes to Flacq; adjacent to it, at one kilometre, Quartier Militaire has to go to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and, as for the rest, some have to go to Candos. So, it's time consuming in cases of dire emergency. Sometimes, when they go to Flacq, very often, they are referred to SSRN Hospital. Being given that Constituency No. 08 and No. 10 are presently having a larger population, will the hon. Minister now consider to have a district hospital? The project has been underway, but probably this could be speeded up, so that there is a hospital between these two constituencies, because there is land available.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad that the hon. Member testifies that there is continuity in this Government, and that the reply he obtained is the same. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have limited resources, as everybody knows. At the moment, Government is investing massively in infrastructure. There is about Rs2 billion for the constituency of my hon. friend, and we have already started the first phase of construction of the new Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. Over and above that, we are creating a lot of specialised units in our existing hospitals. We are also putting a lot of emphasis on preventive aspects of health care. The hon. Member will have to bear with the current policy.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the second time that the hon. Member is asking the same question. Does not the hon. Minister think that he should conduct a study before the implementation of a district hospital in this region? He should not come with a project, and then...



*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Is the hon. Member asking whether a study has been carried out?

**Mr Jhugroo:** Exactly!

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have technicians in our Ministry who know. I can give a whole range of areas. For example, in the service point at Dr. Bouloux Area Health Centre, there are 19,522 potential patients. So, we have got the whole history here.

### **BEAU BASSIN AND PETITE RIVIERE – FLOOD PRONE AREAS**

**(No. B/362) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the flood prone areas in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will state if Government proposes to take remedial measures, indicating the time frame therefor.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am hereby submitting a list of flood-prone areas visited by the Consultant of the National Development Unit in Constituency No. 20 on 17 March 2009. Also is being tabled a list of other drain projects, some of which have already been completed, some are ongoing and some are to be awarded soon. However, the list of flood-prone areas is not complete and we are presently compiling a comprehensive one which will be tabled in due course.

**AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – AIRBUS A319 - BREAKDOWN**

**(No. B/363) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to -

- (a) if the airbus 319, flight MK 0535, broke down on 11 April 2009 and, if so, indicate -
  - (i) the reasons therefor;
  - (ii) the measures taken in respect of the passengers and
- (b) the number of times the airbus has broken down since being in operation and which resulted in the cancellation of the flights.

**Mr Duval:** Mr Speaker Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by Air Mauritius that the airbus A319 flight MK 535 from Nairobi to Mauritius of 11 April 2009 experienced a technical problem caused by a malfunction of a valve in the aircraft's fuel system. The aircraft was grounded at Nairobi and the flight was cancelled. Thereupon, all passengers were provided with hotel accommodation and rerouted via Johannesburg on Sunday 12 April 2009.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by Air Mauritius that, according to records available as from the year 2003, the aircraft has encountered five technical problems resulting in cancellation of flights.

I am also given to understand that the Airbus A319 is considered as a reliable aircraft and that the overall performance of this particular aircraft over the past 6 years of operation is rated at above average level.

**Mr Naidu:** I was on that flight, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I heard some very nasty comments concerning my beloved country and my beloved airline and unfortunately there was not any *préposé* from Air Mauritius available there at that time, which caused much inconvenience to all the passengers. This is where all the nervousness came round.

**Mr Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir the question is on the reliability of the aircraft, not on the treatment of the passengers thereon, but I will pass on the comments of the hon. Member as to how the passengers were treated.

**Mr Guimbeau:** The hon. Minister just stated that the aircraft has had five breakdowns. Can the Minister give us some details as to what kind of breakdowns, just to make sure if we can take Air Mauritius again?

**Mr Duval:** I don't have any clue Mr Speaker, but what is very clear is that there had been five breakdowns over six years and this is considered above average for that type of aircraft.

### **APPOLO/BRAMMER HOSPITAL – VAT EXEMPTION**

**(No. B/364) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Appolo/Brammer Hospital, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of Value Added Tax exemption granted thereto, giving details thereof.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in our drive to encourage private investment in the vital sectors of the economy namely Health and Education, amendments were brought to the 9<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the VAT Act to enable companies investing in such sectors to recover the VAT paid on construction of a purpose built building.

As such, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the British American Hospital Enterprises Co Ltd., operating under the trade name Apollo-Bramwell Hospital is exempted from payment of VAT on the building constructed for the provision of Health Services under section 66 of the VAT Act and item 13 of the 9<sup>th</sup> schedule of the VAT Act.

I am informed that Apollo-Bramwell Hospital had up to February 2009 benefitted from VAT exemption totaling Rs136 m. out of which Rs121m. was for the construction of the building and Rs14 m. for the imported materials used for the construction of the building and on medical equipment.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance whether there is any other company that has benefited from same?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I asked this question at 11.30 hours when I was rushing to come to answer the PNQ. I will try to get the answer - I don't have the answer with me, I will check. This is available to all companies, let me cite column 1-

" Any company registered with the Board of Investment established under the Investment Promotion Act, as a company engaged in the provision of health services and construction of a purposely building for the provision of health services"

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is a standard practice?

**Dr. Sithanen:** As I said, it is in line with the provision of VAT. Mr Speaker, Sir, we want to encourage Mauritius to become a knowledge and medical centre. Obviously, we have to do it and this is one of the best hospitals that has been constructed in this part of the world. It is going to provide excellent services not only to Mauritians, but also to the entire region. If other medical facilities would ask such treatment they will get it.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Apollo-Bramwell Hospital is located on State land, and if so, give the area and the rental per year?

**Mr Speaker:** That question does not arise from this one!

**Mrs Labelle:** May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister the date on which this amendment was brought to the regulation he just mentioned to include the medical services?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I have to check. But again Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Members are trying to impute motives...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** On a point of order, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister cannot say that. I ask for your ruling, Mr Speaker. He should withdraw what he has just said.

**Dr. Sithanen:** Yes, I withdraw. Mr Speaker, Sir, we want Mauritius to become a knowledge and medical centre

**Mr Speaker:** The question is simple when was the regulation amended? Either the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has the information or he does not have it! The hon. Vice-Prime Minister should ask the hon. Member to put a substantive question, he will reply to the question.

### **PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - VIOLENCE**

**(No. B/365) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to acts of violence in primary and secondary schools, he will state the number of reported cases thereof, since January 2007 to date, indicating the remedial measures he proposes to take to avert same.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that from January 2007 to date, my Ministry has registered 200 cases of acts of violence at schools, 19 at primary level and 181 at secondary level. Cases of acts of violence in schools can be categorized mainly as follows –

- (1) those among students which can be of daily occurrence mostly in boys schools but which are minor in nature;
- (2) those between students on the one hand and teaching or non-teaching staff on the other which can occur from time to time but which remain isolated and rarely serious;
- (3) aggressions involving PTA members, members of the staff and students which may or may not be serious; and finally,
- (4) aggressions on either students or members of the staff by members of the public.

The hon. Member would agree that violence in schools is a world-wide phenomenon and our country is no exception. Such acts vary from verbal violence to physical violence and are in the first instance addressed by the Head of school concerned who carries out an investigation and imposes sanctions, as appropriate, which vary from a mere warning to rustication. Further, a special report on the student is kept at the level of the school and his/her behavior is monitored regularly to ensure that there is no recurrence of a similar unacceptable behaviour. The parents of the students concerned are informed in writing of the misbehavior of their wards and action being taken.

The support of the Pastoral Care Committee of the school and the Educational Psychologists/Social Workers of my Ministry are also enlisted in such cases. Furthermore, the Police Family Protection Unit and “*Brigade pour la protection de Mineurs*” also provide support in dealing with students involved in

cases of violence. These units also carry out, as a preventive measure, sensitization campaigns with children and parents on a regular basis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to stepping up measures to address violence and indiscipline, in schools, a Committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry and has had consultations with various stakeholders and made recommendations which are presently being finalized for implementation. These concern mainly -

- (1) the drawing up of a Code of Conduct and Rules and Regulations for student behaviour;
- (2) setting up Disciplinary Committees to be mandatory in all schools;
- (3) greater emphasis to be put on co- and extra-curricular activities for the overall development of the child;
- (4) empowering students to assume greater responsibilities for the development of positive behavior;
- (5) greater involvement of parents, PTAs and NGOs;
- (6) formulation of a School Charter of “Do’s” and “Don’ts” in collaboration with the students, and
- (7) the setting up of Anti-Violence (Civic) clubs in schools.

My Ministry is committed, Mr Speaker, Sir, to implement the recommendations of the Report and to continue to explore new ways to achieve a zero-tolerance with regard to violence and indiscipline in schools. In this respect, problem schools have already been identified and the profiling of difficult students is being carried out. Such students are being provided with necessary psychological support.

Furthermore, a 30-minute daily activity period has been introduced since the beginning of this year, in the secondary school time-table during which students engage themselves in a series of co- and extra-curricular activities for their overall

development. Schools have been encouraged to set up students clubs on various areas of interest so as to create a platform for students to interact among themselves and therefore promote and inculcate a self-development and self-enrichment culture among the student population. With a view to providing support to the schools towards this end, my Ministry is in the process of recruiting Project Coordinators for coordinating and organizing such activities in secondary schools.

I have recently, Mr Speaker, Sir, personally chaired two meetings with relevant stakeholders, including the Police Department, the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Probation and After Care Service to discuss the problems of indiscipline and violence in schools and come up with measures to deal with the problems. Discussions are on-going between officials of my Ministry and the various stakeholders with a view to coming up with appropriate mechanisms firstly to address these issues and with an action plan for early implementation with priority given to schools where, according to a profiling exercise, acts of violence are frequent and secondly to strengthen preventive measures in view of moving towards achieving zero tolerance towards violence and indiscipline at school.

We rely, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the collaboration of educators, parents, students and the society at large to raise the standard of behavior and learning in our schools.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned a lot of measures, but I don't know whether they are actually implemented in schools or he intends to implement them. My question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is whether some students have been diagnosed with some particular disorders following the intervention of psychologists?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.



**Mrs Labelle:** May I know from the hon. Minister what has been done with these students and the number of students who have been diagnosed with such disorders?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Concerning the number, I may not give offhand, but if the hon. Member reads the answer properly- maybe she was being astray for some time - she will get all the reply in what I have mentioned.

**Mrs Labelle:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir. But I have not heard the hon. Minister mention one single disorder in his answer and if it is the case maybe he can repeat which disorder has been diagnosed?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have said there are cases which are being seen and good care is being taken of them. What care - I have already mentioned.

**Mr Varma:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House, out of the acts of violence which he just mentioned, how many have resulted in Police action and subsequent prosecution?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, as far as possible Police action is avoided, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether any student has been found in possession of a cutter or knife within the school premises?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** There are exceptional cases, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lauthan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, je voudrais retourner à la question concernant les cas de dépression. J'avais posé une question similaire il y a quinze jours et ce matin le Premier ministre a déposé les réponses. On a vu que pour le *teenage violence* il y a eu, en l'espace de ces dernières années, 1618 cas et parmi 1399 cas commis individuellement par un enfant et 219 cas en groupe – *gang*

*violence* – ce qui a résulté en 9 cas de mort d’homme. Le ministre a raison de dire que c’est un *world wide phenomenon and it is on the increase*.

*(Interruptions)*

La question est très souvent liée à la question de dépression chez l’enfant. Alors si on ne fait pas attention, on risque de référer l’enfant au système judiciaire alors qu’il a besoin d’un bon encadrement.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** We are talking here of violence at schools, that is, in school premises and just immediately in the vicinity of schools. But what the hon. Prime Minister was replying to was in the country at large. But this question of depression is, of course, something which is important, but I have said, there are some measures - and, in fact, to reply to hon. Mrs Labelle at the same time - there are certain actions which have already been taken. But there is lot of actions that are going to come, but I have said that we are meeting the stakeholders and working on an implementation plan.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Martin!

**Mrs Martin :** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Minister just mentioned that there is report and there have been recommendations, I believe, which have been made in order to help improving the situation. Can we know from the hon. Minister what is the time frame which has been set up or if there is any time frame which has been set up in order to put in place those recommendations so that in the shortest period possible this situation improves?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Of course! I will not be able to put a date, but I can say in the days to come. Mr Speaker Sir, because, in fact, as I mentioned, I have myself personally chaired two meetings. After having obtained the report - I have my own input to put in it; in fact, one or two actions have already been taken. But we are going to see to it, because this is important and it is of paramount

importance and I rely on all stakeholders including Members of the Assembly to help so that we can put order in this matter.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bodha!

**Mr Bodha:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will agree that one of the major reasons is peer pressure from other students. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the specific measures taken to adjust this issue?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** There are many measures that are taken. I can't mention all of them but, in fact, we are looking into it in that angle also and disciplinary committees are taking this into consideration at the level of all schools.

**Mrs Perrier:** The Minister informs the House that these students are having psychological assistance. Can we know the number of psychologists working in these specific schools, and is he satisfied that there are sufficient psychologists working there?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I am sure I am not satisfied of the number of psychologists working there; there are about a dozen and some other social workers, NGOs also are asked to bring their competence wherever possible. But the main issue concerning psychologists is that, at the level of the Ministry of Education, all our psychologists are educational psychologists, but I believe we need also clinical psychologist and for the time being we have these psychologists, but they are attached to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. We are trying to use their competence for the time being, but we are on the process of getting clinical psychologists to join the team of educational psychologists at the level of the Ministry itself to be able to do a better job.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply stated that the problem at the schools have already been identified. Can we have a breakdown in terms of primary and secondary schools and regionwise?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I can, in fact, inform the hon. Member that these schools have been identified, but I would not like to go and mention the name of the schools for obvious reasons. But I can give him the information that he requires whenever we meet.

**Mr Speaker:** hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just mentioned that they avoid police case. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that not later than yesterday there was a case of violence in one school and the case was referred to the Police?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Is it the case of a little girl that the hon. Member is mentioning? I don't know whether it is the same case, but there are cases which are referred and we look into them; in fact, in some cases even the Ombudsperson for children takes the matter and we worked together in close collaboration to see the best way of settling the problem.

**Mrs Labelle:** It was a case in a Secondary State School not later than yesterday. Last week it was a case of a boy being aggressed maybe sexually in a class of a school in the East, and yesterday there was another case of aggression in a school in the Plaines Wilhems region. I was talking about this case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr Bunwaree:** All cases are reported to the Ministry.

**Mr Leopold:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister, in these cases of violence, how far are parents involved in order to help solve same?

**Dr Bunwaree:** This is a very difficult question to reply to, Mr Speaker, Sir. In many cases parents come to help, but in some cases tension exists. The Police Department, the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Ministry of Education are working hand in hand to use preventive measures

and to educate wherever necessary, even the parents, so that they can understand the situation properly and help us to solve the problem.

**Mrs Perrier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that he will use the service of the psychologists at the Ministry of Women Affairs. He should know that they are already in insufficient number at the Ministry of Women Affairs. Can I suggest the Minister instead of using these psychologists to recruit new ones as it is a very important issue?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** As we know, it is a time-consuming procedure. In the meantime, they are trying to help us the best they can.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question hon. Sayed-Hossen!

### **SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE - NATIONAL PENSION FUND – CONTRIBUTIONS**

**(No. B/366) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Pension Fund, information as to if it is regularly settling its contributions on behalf of its employees and, if not, the actions that will be taken.

**Mrs Bappoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the SSR Medical College is not regularly settling its contributions to the National Pension Fund in respect of its employees.

Several visits were effected by the officers of my Ministry to ascertain that the employer was complying with the National Pension Scheme legislation and paying the correct contributions in respect of the employees. As the employer was

reluctant to produce wage records, a summon was served upon him and that was on 30 July 2004 to obtain the relevant documents.

It was only then, that he started producing wage records on a very piecemeal basis following which the officers carried out several assessments of contributions payable. Claims and reminders were regularly issued, but he still failed to settle the amount due for the periods under assessment.

In June 2007, legal action was initiated to recover the amount due. On 26 June 2007, when the case was to be heard in court, the employer settled the outstanding contributions and the surcharges, amounting to Rs1,857,172. He also promised to produce wage records for the missing periods and to pay current contributions on time.

My officers effected, thereafter, several visits at the employer's place on 12 November 2007, 17 January 2008, 25 February 2008 and 11 March 2008, to verify the wage records for period July 2007 onwards. As he failed to produce same again, fresh summons were again served upon him on 08 September 2008 and 25 September 2008. Subsequently, the wage records were produced, and my officers are presently carrying out an assessment of contributions due for period July 2007 to date. During that exercise, they have to examine, Mr Speaker, Sir, the monthly wage records of each and every employee, assess the contributions payable to the National Pensions Fund, the National Savings Fund and the levy payable to the Human Resource Development Council.

This exercise is very time consuming and officers from other sections have been involved in order to speed up matters.

As soon as these assessments of contributions due are over, the relevant claims will be issued to the employer. We are expecting that he will settle all outstanding amounts once the claims are forwarded.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the Minister why in the future we have to wait for a one-year period? We know that the employer whom we are dealing with has not been regular in the payment. Can we, at least, see in the future that we monitor such employer on a quarterly basis?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I have already given the dates, monthly, about the close monitoring that the officers of the Ministry are carrying out. But because he has promised that he is going to settle the amount due and once this is settled, again, it will be close monitoring, or if action is to be taken, it will be done.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just stated that regularly the officers of her Ministry check the way it is recorded. Is the hon. Minister aware that many of the employees of the SSR Medical School are not on that wage records? They are being employed unofficially. Could she look into the matter also?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I need to check it exactly so that I can give the exact answer. But I know that for several months, among different years, there are records that have not yet been submitted.

**Mr Varma:** Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. Could the hon. Minister inform the House how many employees are concerned?

**Mrs Bappoo:** I am informed that the total number of employees as at to date is 77, out of which 39 are non-teaching staff and 38 are lecturers. But among the 38, there are 34 who are expatriates.

## **DEBARCADERE , TROU D'EAU DOUCE - UPGRADING**

**(No. B/367) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he is aware of the bad state of the place called Débarcadère through which the visitors pass by on their way to Ile aux Cerfs and, if so, will he state if Government will consider carrying out upgrading and embellishment works thereat and in the vicinity thereof, in view of the high tourist potential value of the Trou d'Eau Douce region and, if so, indicate when.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Speaker Sir, my Ministry has a programme of tourism product improvement, which comprises, *inter-alia*, projects relating to the construction and upgrading of touristic infrastructure and embellishment works in touristic zones and sites.

For Trou D' Eau Douce region, the programme provides for the implementation of infrastructure projects which comprises various components including upgrading and embellishment works at the *Débarcadère*.

The objective of the project is to embellish the physical setting of the region and to make it more attractive, distinctive, enjoyable and safe for the benefit of both tourists and the local community.

It is planned to implement the project in two phases as follows -

### Phase I

- a) Coastal trail;
- b) Construction of a new jetty at Le Maho;
- c) Rehabilitation of the jetty at the Fish Landing Station;
- d) Upgrading of the Public beach;
- e) New parking facilities along the main road, and
- f) Townscape and landscape improvement.



Phase II

- a) Environmental improvements to Bassin Belle Isle area, and
- b) The creation of a protected harbour for fishing boats and pleasure crafts.

Mr Speaker Sir, my Ministry has already launched a tender for the recruitment of a Consultant and is expected to award the contract shortly.

Under the first phase of the project, the works are expected to start by July 2009 and will take around two years to be completed.

**HIGHLANDS – SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE VILLAGE –  
SETTING UP**

**(No. B/368) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a Small and Medium Enterprise village at Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., information as to where matters stand.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, this has been a long saga. I thank my hon. friend for this question.

I am now informed by the DBM that -

- The site reconnaissance and topographical survey carried out by the DBM Consultant indicated that the basic industrial infrastructure such as 3-phase electricity, sewerage disposal system was not available and that it would take several months to provide these facilities on the site identified for the Village, before construction could be started.

- In the meantime, 25,000ft<sup>2</sup> of factory space leased from the Bank by two companies at Vacoas Phoenix Industrial Estate, not far from the previous site earmarked, have become available. This is the unintended consequences of the downturn, Mr Speaker, Sir.
- DBM Ltd has started procedures to partition the space surrendered into 15 units of 1,500ft<sup>2</sup> each to accommodate SME's. I am informed all infrastructural services including roadworks, large parking space, water supply, 3-phase electrical supply and sewer network are already available and dedicated to the surrendered building.
- I am further informed that the converted units are expected to be ready within two months to accommodate SMEs.

**Dr. Hawoldar:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I first of all thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for his answer. *C'est un accouchement difficile, M. le président, mais, si c'est nécessaire, on va procéder avec une césarienne.* Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer to the answer given by the Vice-Prime Minister on 16 December 2008, where he said that a total of 7,800 sq metres have been purchased, and that consultants have been appointed to work on the details, topography and all the rest of it. Do I understand that, at the time DBM purchased the land, nobody visited the site to find out whether there were roads, electricity and water supply on a plot of land, which was supposed to be developed for commercial purposes?

**Dr. Sithanen:** There are two ways of answering this question. One is that they have done a bad job, and that is why we have got rid of both of them. The second one is that they have not said it is not possible. What is stated in the reply they have sent to me is that it will take a long time to provide such facilities.

**Dr. Hawoldar:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am happy about the first answer of the Vice-Prime Minister. May I ask him how much was paid to the consultant by the DBM before he came out with a bright idea, with the genius finding that there was no 3-phase electricity in that region?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I have absolutely no clue, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I will ask the DBM to provide the figures with regard to the question that the hon. Member has asked.

**Mr Barbier:** May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is already aware of the rental value of the building? He talked about 1,500 sq ft for the SMEs. What is going to be the rental value of each unit?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't have the figures Mr Speaker, Sir. I am sure it is going to be a concessionary rental, in order to give a helping hand to SMEs that are starting business in a new physical environment.

#### **HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS – RECRUITMENT – JANUARY 2009- APRIL 2009**

**(No. B/369) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Health Care Assistants, he will table a list thereof who have been recruited, since January 2009 to date, indicating their respective addresses.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs Nos. B/369, B/402, B/403 and B/404 together, as they relate to the same subject.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that, in accordance with established practice, a staff list is published officially on a regular basis, providing information to the general public on senior officers in the public service.

I do not wish to depart from this standing practice in relation to information concerning lower grade officers.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether, in the past, such lists have not been laid on the Table of the Assembly?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just replied that there is an established practice. The last time there was a publication was in 2002 and 2006. There was a staff list published, which is available on the website of the Ministry of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister, for the sake of transparency - *nous savons tous qu'une élection a été anulée à cause des recrutements au niveau des Health Care Assistants, et je pense que le peuple a le droit de savoir* - whether he will table the list of those who have been recruited as Health Care Assistants and Hospital Servants?

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we, at least, know from the hon. Minister the total number of Health Care Assistants and Hospital Servants that have been recruited?

**Dr. Jeetah:** This is extra information, which is being sought, Mr Speaker, Sir. From memory, I recall there were 310 posts of Health Care Assistant, and I don't have the exact figures with regard to the recruitment.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't think it's fair. We have been using public money, tax payers' money...

**Mr Speaker:** Let me say one thing. If the Minister has given an answer, which is not to the hon. Member's satisfaction, I'm sorry, but I can't help it. This is the rules.

**Mr Guimbeau:** What about equal opportunities, good governance, and transparency?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Let me change from the current practice, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Guimbeau:** I think it is the duty of the Minister to inform the House and the public at large who has been appointed as Health Care Assistant in the Ministry! I think it is the duty of the Minister.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I can understand the hon. Member's frustration, but there has not been any change in the policy. The hon. Member was then in Government, and this is what actually happened.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether, among the Health Care Assistants recruited, some 52 come from Constituency No. 5, and that there are two members of the same family?

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

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the Minister give us, at least, a breakdown of the number that has been recruited constituency wise?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have replied to that, Mr Speaker, Sir. He is wasting the time of the House.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Guimbeau, next question, please!

### **ILE AUX BENITIERS – RENTAL VALUE**

**(No. B/370) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to Ile aux Bénitiers, he will state if the actual rental value thereof reflects the actual market value and, if not, why not, indicating –

(a) the actual rental yearly per *arpent*;

- (b) the number of *arpent* leased, and
- (c) the value of the project that will be implemented thereat.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the annual rental value of Ile aux Bénitiers for plantation of coconuts and any other agricultural production has been assessed by the Valuation Department at the time of the grant of the lease in 1990. As indicated by my colleague, the former Minister of Housing & Lands, in reply to PQ B/996 of 2007, the annual rental payable was Rs10,000 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, Rs20,000 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Rs30,000 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year and Rs40,000 for the 4<sup>th</sup> and remaining years. Therefore, as at date, the annual rental payable is Rs40,000.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the site leased is of an extent of 155A00.

In regard to part (c) of the question, according to figures provided by the promoter, the proposed hotel development project would cost around Rs3.4 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in case an industrial site lease for hotel development is granted to Soolaman Nubheebucus Company Limited over Ile aux Bénitiers, the rental will be as per the provision of the Finance Act 2008.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know what is the provision of the Finance Act?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I answered that question last time.

**Mr Speaker:** According to the Standing Orders, it is an official document. The hon. Member can go and consult.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker Sir, in reply to PQ B/996, the Minister said it is Rs40,000 for the remaining years, which brings you up to the year 2052. Actually, he is paying Rs258 per *arpent* per year, which is Rs21 per *arpent* per month. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a private investment of Rs3.4 billion on State land. As a matter of urgency, the Minister should review the lease granted to Ile aux Bénitiers.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member had listened to me carefully, he would have known that, if you are going to build a hotel, it is going to be an industrial lease, and the rental will be as per provision of the Finance Act 2008. It may run into millions of rupees, but I don't know the exact figures. We have to compute it.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can the hon. Minister tell the House when it is going to be transferred to an industrial lease?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Once the project is approved and all the conditions are met, and if the project is approved by Cabinet, then construction started. Once the hotel is built, the industrial rate will come into force.

**Mrs Perrier:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is aware that in the same region, at La Gaulette to Côteau Raffin, for a small lease of 6 to 7 *perches*, people are paying up to Rs10,000 per year? Doesn't the hon. Minister think that there is a *politique* of *deux poids, deux mesures*? Can he review this?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Absolutely not, Mr Speaker, Sir! This was a coconut list and I have explained over and over again that ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Dr. Kasenally:** ...when an industrial lease is issued, then the rate is totally different.

**Mr Speaker:** Last Question!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Can the hon. Minister state if a proposed project would concentrate on the State land of the island or will it impede on the public domain, such as the lagoon and the beach?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I have answered that question last time, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't intend to come back over it again.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether we have reached EIA stage with that project?

**Dr. Kasenally:** As I answered in my last question, an EIA has been issued with certain conditions already.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Did the hon. Minister say that an EIA has been issued?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister has said yes. Next Question, hon. Guimbeau!

### **LA BRASSERIE TRANSFER STATION – TENDER EXERCISE**

**(No. B/371) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the La Brasserie Transfer Station, he will state if works are being carried out thereat and, if so, indicate if a tender exercise was carried out and, if so –

- (a) when;
- (b) the name of the different bidders;
- (c) the value of each bid received;
- (d) the name of the successful bidder, and
- (e) the contract value.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that a contract for the upgrading of La Brasserie Transfer Station, operation and maintenance of the station and transportation of wastes to Mare Chicose landfill was awarded on 04 April 2008.

As regards parts (a) to (e), I am informed that –

- (i) tenders were launched on 15 October 2007;



- (ii) by the closing date on 05 December 2007, three bids were received at the Central Tender Board from Joint Venture CRSE/Sotravic, Maxi Clean Co. Ltd. and Securiclean (Mtius) Ltd.;
- (iii) only two bidders, namely Maxi Clean Co. Ltd. and Securiclean (Mtius) Ltd. passed the technical evaluation and the value of their bids were as follows –
  - (a) Maxi Clean Co. Ltd. - Rs206,663,050
  - (b) Securiclean (Mtius) Ltd. - Rs200,722,955
- (iv) the successful bidder was Securiclean (Mtius) Ltd., the lowest best evaluated bid, and
- (v) the contract value was Rs200,722,955, out of which Rs72,458,855 was for upgrading works.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell the House if he has received any petition from the inhabitants of Cité La Brasserie to have the said station removed?

**Dr. David:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Guimbeau, the question is strictly based on the contract. Now, you are asking a question that does relate to the main question. You should put question on the main part.

**Mr Guimbeau:** It has something to do with La Brasserie station. I would like to table a petition sent to the Ministry by the inhabitants.

**Mr Speaker:** This is the second time, exceptionally, I am allowing the hon. Member to put a question which does not relate to the main question. Whenever you draft your question, put that bit also in it so that the Minister can come with the information.

**Mr Guimbeau:** I appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir. But what I want to tell the Minister is that we are living the same situation as that of Mare Chicose.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member cannot tell the Minister! He said that he is going to lay the petition on the Table of the Assembly, please lay it! Next Question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

### **NTC – ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE**

**(No. B/372) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether he will state if Government proposes to grant financial support to the National Transport Corporation under the Additional Stimulus Package

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, in April 2008, Government decided to have recourse to a firm of consultants to have a full and comprehensive picture of the financial situation of the NTC and also its organisational structure. Deloitte & Touche was selected after tender process and the firm submitted its final report this month.

The report concluded that the NTC is indeed in a very powerless financial situation. It made a loss of Rs78 m. in Financial Year 2007/2008 and this loss is projected to increase to Rs205 m. in Financial Year 2008/2009.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, the NTC has outstanding debts to Government totalling Rs346 m. that they are not repaying. It is clear that the present financial situation at the NTC is the result of the structural factors and is not linked to the international financial crisis.

I am informed that a Committee has been set up at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping to come up with a turn-around plan based on the findings and recommendations of the Deloitte's Report. I understand that a set of cost cutting and revenue raising measures aimed at immediate remedial actions is already being implemented.

A financial assistance of Rs40 m. was requested by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping to meet NTC's immediate and urgent financial obligations. In view of the critical situation of the NTC, my Ministry has agreed to advance these funds pending the implementation of the turn-around plan and in the context of ongoing efforts to reform public enterprises.

This financial support is not part of the Additional Stimulus Package but will follow the same principles underlying support, namely, presentation of a credible Re-engineering Plan on burden sharing. Thus, the NTC will have to come up with a credible Re-engineering Plan with implementable measures which should be measurable, properly costed and time bound. This will be undertaken in close consultation with the parent Ministry.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether such financial support or support final package has been given to the NTC in the past or whether it was proposed to give it to the NTC in the past?

**Dr. Sithanen:** As I said, they are being given so much money - Rs346 m. and they are not even servicing their debt. In fact, very often, this is what happens, this is the trick: they ask for an advance and then they don't pay, this is capitalised, and when it is capitalised, they don't pay the principal, they don't pay the interest.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Since the hon. Minister is stating that the NTC owed the Ministry, may I know on which items the NTC was owing the Ministry and can he give us a break-up of these different items and amounts?

**Dr. Sithanen:** It is essentially for purchases of buses. It is a line of credit from India and a line of credit from China. Basically, what happens they don't pay, but we have to pay, because we have given the guarantee. We have to honour the contractual obligations with the Government of China and the Government of India.

**Mr Bérenger:** I have two questions if you will allow me. Can we have the quantum, what volume of financial assistance is being offered by Government, by the Ministry of Finance to the CNT?

**Dr. Sithanen:** They have just requested Rs40 m. My own feeling is that this is not going to be sufficient.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister has made - comparison might not be the word – but has referred to the private firms receiving assistance under the Stimulus Package and said that the same conditions would be imposed and so on. Is the hon. Minister and Government keeping in mind that, unlike these companies that are registered under the Companies Act, we are dealing here with an entity that has been set up by a legislation passed by this House, with social responsibilities well spelt out? Is this being kept in mind?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Of course! This is the reason why they owe us Rs346 m. and we are still giving them Rs40 m., hon. Leader of the Opposition! If they were a private firm, we would already have taken action a long time ago. But there is a limit to what we can do, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The hon. Minister is stating that the money was advanced to the NTC for the purchase of buses. May I ask from the hon. Minister whether the purchase of buses was approved by the Ministry?

**Dr. Sithanen:** The hon. Minister should come with a substantive question. I presume it is approved by the Board subsequent to a tender.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I also ask the hon. Minister whether such support package has been previously provided to other companies which are not para-statal companies ?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I am not sure about that, but one thing is very clear. I don't see any case where we have advanced money to a private company and they have not paid for over such a long time and we continue *à alimenter leur caisse*.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, at a time when the financial situation of the NTC, its loan is *plus qu'au rouge*, does the hon. Minister of Finance, who is responsible for the good management of the finance of the country, finds it normal that while overtime of workers are being reduced and the night service will be reduced, the chairperson of that public organisation is given a Jaguar car worth million of rupees?

*(Interruptions)*

This is relevant, Sir! We are talking about the finance of this company which is nearly going bankrupt because of bad management.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I agree with the hon. Member that they should avoid such over expenditures and such excesses. I will pass the information to make sure that this does not happen.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm whether the NTA ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please! Order, order!

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm whether the NTA owes money to NTC as subsidies for traveling grants?

**Dr. Sithanen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, look at this question! I volunteer to answer many questions that are outside the scope of this question. This one, even in my ...

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister opened the Pandora's box?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I did not! I do not know this answer. You will have to ask the hon. Member.

**Mr Naidu:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm rumours that the newly constructed quarters at Ebène are being sold?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I have absolutely no idea.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that a sum of Rs193 m. was dedicated to come to support bus companies and that this amount was given to Triolet Bus Service and to United Bus Service, but denied to the NTC?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I did not get the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I repeat the question, Mr Speaker, Sir?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I am sorry, I was listening to...

**Mr Speaker:** No, the previous Triolet Bus Service and UBS have been given the same package.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I'll repeat the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I was trying to say is that support package was previously proposed to the three companies: the NTC, the UBS and the Triolet Bus Service. The amount that had been allocated to UBS and to Triolet Bus Service had been given, but the amount that was supposed to be given to the NTC was not given.

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't know, but my good friend on my right is telling me that the NTC got it.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Since the hon. Minister mentioned that the NTC owes the Ministry a large amount of money, may I ask him whether he would confirm the fact that the amount paid to NTC for school buses and the amount of subsidy given on diesel and other petroleum products is less for NTC as compared to other private companies?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I have no idea, but I am told again by my good friend on my right that the MAB is conducting an enquiry into this. But let me tell the hon. Member that these are different issues. We should not mix apple with banana, Mr Speaker, Sir. The apple is basically that they owe debt that they have not paid and the Ministry of Finance has to refund. The banana is basically whether they are being underpaid for their bus recovery loan.

*(Interruptions)*

Does the hon. Member want coconut also? Is he confused with coconut?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I am sorry. Question time is a very important time in the life of Parliaments.

*(Interruptions)*

There are so many Members of Parliament who have put questions and the questions will not be reached. It is most unfair to the Members of Parliament.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm whether there is a perception in the public that some people with a hidden agenda want to close NTC?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** This question is not allowed.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS TRUST – COURSES & FEES**

**(No. B/373) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius Trust, information as to –

- (a) the courses being presently dispensed by the Trust, indicating those run in collaboration with the Mauritius Employees Federation, and
- (b) the amount of fees payable for each course annually.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), the following three programmes at undergraduate level and four programmes at postgraduate level are currently being run by the Trust -

- (i) Bachelor in Business Management;
- (ii) BSc (Hons) International Financial Services & Compliance;
- (iii) BSc (Hons) Banking & Investment;
- (iv) MBA International Business;
- (v) MSc International Tourism Management;
- (vi) MA Global Financial Services, and
- (vii) Post Graduate Diploma in Software Engineering.

With the exception of the MA Global Financial Services and the Post Graduate Diploma in Software Engineering, all the other programmes are run in collaboration with the Mauritius Employers' Federation in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the UoM Trust and the MEF in September 2007.

With regard to part (b), I am arranging for circulating details about fees charged for the various courses.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the investment that the MEF has made in view of the dispensing of these courses?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** If a proper question is put, we will give further details, but it depends on the courses and for each one of them it may not be the same.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Is the hon. Minister aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the MEF has not invested a single rupee in that project and they are going to benefit from the fees payable for each one of these courses?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I will look into what is being raised by the hon. Member; then I will come with a statement to the House.



**TERTIARY ACADEMIC AND TERTIARY VOCATIONAL –  
STUDENTS - FORM IV LEVEL**

**(No. B/374) 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 budgetary decision to set up a pathway to tertiary academic and tertiary vocational for students leaving schools at Form IV level, he will state where matters stand.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with the Government Programme 2005-2010 and the Budget Speech 2008/09, my Ministry is committed to implement technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reforms including the provision of pathways for students who have reached Form IV level.

As such, the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) already enrolls students as from Form IV level to follow courses with appropriate pathways as detailed hereunder –

- (i) The National Trade Certificate (NTC) level 3 and competency based short courses. After successfully completing any one of these, they may opt to join the world of work. Those completing the NTC 3 may also choose to follow the IVTB's National Trade Certificate Level 2 (NTC 2) courses which are also open to those with School Certificate (with a pass in Mathematics);
- (ii) After completing the NTC2, they can either join the world of work or still continue their training by joining the Applied Diploma Courses at the IVTB. These Applied Diploma Courses are also open to students having completed their Higher School Certificate, and also to those having completed the School Certificate with

pass in Mathematics after they have completed a one-year Foundation Course;

- (iii) Students completing their Diplomas and/or Higher National Diploma can continue their studies for a degree either overseas, or at the University of Mauritius or the University of Technology (Mauritius).

I wish to point out that access to vocational courses has been increased through -

- (i) the setting up of the Knowledge Based Training Centre in Port Louis;
- (ii) increase in the number of trades under the Apprenticeship Scheme;
- (iii) Increased intake at Diploma and Higher National Diploma;
- (iv) New Diploma Courses;
- (v) Courses in emerging fields, and
- (vi) Top up Degree in Hospitality, Leisure and Recreational Activities.

In parallel, my Ministry is working on a rationalisation of the TVET sector with the new Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) which will take over the functions of the IVTB and the Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF). This new set up will take leverage from the expanded base in the TVET sector to come up with more programmes from NTC level 2, then to HND and consequently pathways to degree programmes both in the academic system and in the TVET system.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I just heard the hon. Minister stating that the NTC 2 is opened to both students having completed NTC 1 and students who have completed their SC and HSC. Wouldn't the hon. Minister agree with me that it is going to be hard for students who have dropped out at level of Form IV to compete with students who have completed SC and HSC to get a seat in these institutions?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't agree with the hon. Member but, in fact, these students are doing very well indeed. I can consider the point that is being raised, but we will see to it that there is no injustice.

### **QUARTIER MILITAIRE ROAD (B6) – UPGRADING**

**(No. B/375) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the road linking the Wooton roundabout to Curepipe, commonly known as the Convent Street, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if there is any project for the upgrading thereof.

**Mr Bachoo:** Sir, the Road Development Authority has already included upgrading of the Quartier Militaire Road (B6) from Wooton roundabout up to Curepipe in its programme of works for the next financial year.

The works will consist of the resurfacing of the road and upgrading of the existing footpath and drains over a length of about 1 km.

**Mr Dowarkasing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister convey to the RDA to also look into the matter of constructing the drains properly along that road? The major problem is the drains.

**Mr Bachoo:** The programme includes the construction of drains as well. I will see to it that it is properly done.

**CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - STAND**

**(No. B/376) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked he Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether he is aware of the recent stand taken by the European Parliament in regard to the issue of the Chagos Archipelago and, if so, will he state if Government proposes to follow up the matter.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, the European Parliament has, on 25 March 2009, adopted a Resolution in the context of establishing a framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement between Eastern and Southern Africa States on the one part and the European Community and its member states, on the other part.

The specific paragraph (41) of the Resolution relating to the plight of the people of the Chagos Archipelago, in particular their resettlement, was included by British Member of European Parliament, Mr Glyn Ford. It is to be noted that Lady Kinnock, in 2005, was in contact with Mr Richard Gifford, a UK Lawyer, who was working on the case of the Chagos Island and who was looking into the possibility of accessing European Development Fund resources for the benefit of the Chagos people.

The paragraph, Mr Speaker, Sir, recognises the plight of the people of the Chagos Archipelago, who have been forcibly removed from their homelands by the United Kingdom and brought to Mauritius without any plan for their resettlement.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in principle, we welcome paragraph (41) of the Resolution. As the House is aware, Government is committed to pursue discussion with the UK to find a satisfactory solution through dialogue at bilateral level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the near future, I propose to meet with the relevant Chairperson of the European Parliament Committees to discuss this issue.

Government also proposes to take up the matter with Mr Glyn Ford, through our High Commission in London, in order to apprise him on the position of Mauritius on the Chagos Archipelago.

As the House may be aware, the European Parliament will hold elections on 07 June 2009 and, as such, the current Parliament term will end in May 2009. It will take some time to put in place its Committees. As soon as this is done, I shall explore the possibility for meetings with the relevant bodies.

**Mr Bhoda:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can inform the House how this can impact on the ongoing discussions between the United Kingdom and Mauritius on the issue?

**Dr. Boolell:** If my hon. friend had paid heed to what I have said, in fact, we are pursuing discussion through dialogue at bilateral level. In principle, we welcome this paragraph of the Resolution but, under no circumstances, we do put into question our legitimate claim.

**Mr Bhoda:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with this paragraph, may I ask hon. Minister whether the Government can consider the possibility of the issue being raised at the European Court of Justice?

**Dr. Boolell:** We will consider it.

**Mr Bérenger:** I listened to the hon. Minister carefully. It is clear that the initiative came from a UK Member of the European Parliament. Although I am sure all of us want everything to be done to help the Chagossians, clearly the innuendo is that we are dealing with the UK territory. This is clearly the innuendo behind that. Can I put it to the Minister that, instead of waiting for elections to come and then asking for an appointment with the relevant people who will be elected, there should have already been a written communication from Mauritius to the people concerned in the European Parliament - whatever committee, Head or Chairperson of the European Parliament - making it clear that we approve

everything that is done for the Chagossians, but stating clearly, firmly our sovereignty claim?

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Speaker Sir, this was done. But, let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this is not the first time that this issue has been raised. Under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, there is provision for financing of projects in OCT countries. But, with the revision of the Cotonou Agreement, which is due to come into force by next year, we can take certain action because there is no provision for reservation. So, we can come with a unilateral declaration. I have stated that this is not the first time but, nevertheless, every time, we make it a point to state very firmly as to our legitimate claim to what belongs to Mauritius.

### **CERVICAL CANCER - VACCINE**

**(No. B/377) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to cervical cancer, he will state if he is aware of the availability of a vaccine therefor and, if so, indicate if Government proposes to introduce same in the public health service.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ. No. B/724 of 2006 by my predecessor on the treatment and prevention of cervical cancer. In fact, a vaccine, which protects against Human Papilloma viruses (HPV), known to cause cervical cancer, is now available.

My Ministry is finalising the preparation of a National Cancer Control Programme, which is aimed at reducing the incidence and mortality due to cancer. In this context, it is examining the technical and financial implications for the introduction of the vaccine against cervical cancer in our public hospitals.

I wish to reassure the House that, at present, the control of cervical cancer rests on the standard accepted protocol of effective screening, cytological diagnosis and surgery plus adjuvant radiotherapy.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of cervical cancer cases over the years? In view of the fact that the treatment costs enormously, I would like to know whether it would not be a very good thing, in fact, to introduce the vaccine in Mauritius at an early stage.

**Dr. Jeetah:** With regard to the first part of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, between 2005 and 2007, just as an indicative figure, we have had 261 cases diagnosed and reported to the National Cancer Registry, out of which 12 cases were from Rodrigues. Mr Speaker, Sir, a simple calculation shows that, if one was to invest in a vaccine, for the age group of 10 to 35, that is, about nearly 250,000 patients or clients, it would have cost us Rs2.2 billion, which is about half the size of the Ministry of Health's project. That is why I said we are looking into the matter to see what best course of action to take.

### **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR – GROWTH RATE**

**(No. B/378) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the construction industry, he will state

- (a) the estimated rate of growth in the sector for the year 2009;
- (b) if foreign construction companies need to have a local partner to be able to bid, and
- (c) the measures Government proposes to take to help the small construction contractors.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the estimated growth in the construction sector for the year 2009 is estimated at 2%, as indicated in the National Accounts Estimates, March 2009 issue of the Central Statistics Office. However, with measures taken in the Additional Stimulus Package, the rate of growth in the sector is expected to be much higher.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that, with a view to encourage competition and input of foreign technology and know-how in the sector, a foreign building company does not need to have a local partner to be able to bid for the procurement of construction projects. Foreign companies may bid on a stand-alone basis or in joint venture with local companies.

As regards part (c) of the question, the reply is as follows -

- (i) Small and medium contractors are given a margin of preference of 7.5% for national bidding and 10% for international bidding.
- (ii) Under the Additional Stimulus Package (ASP), Government is injecting another Rs487 m. in the economy for infrastructure development in local authorities across the country. Each municipality and district council will be allocated Rs50 m. Government will make sure that these Rs487 m. worth of contracts are awarded in priority to small and medium sized contractors.
- (iii) My Ministry, in collaboration with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), will carry out workshops to discuss the key challenges facing the small and medium enterprises in the construction sector. Appropriate strategies will then be formulated to ensure the proper development of that segment of the industry.
- (iv) The CIDB will also develop training programmes, in collaboration with relevant authorities, such as the IVTB, to help small contractors to improve their quality of works and also to ensure that they fully understand the tendering process.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister indicate to the House whether he has received representations from local contractors, contracting companies, to the effect that international construction firms should tie up with them in major infrastructural projects?



**Mr Bachoo:** In fact, I received representations from the local companies and, as a matter of principle, we have decided to not only encourage but, at least, compel the international companies which are working in our country to tie up with the local companies as well.

### **FOOTBALL BETTING LICENCES - NUMBER**

**(No. B/379) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue )** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to football betting licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the number thereof issued as at to date, indicating in each case -

- (a) the date on which it was issued and,
- (b) the names of the licensees.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information requested.

**Mr Lesjongard:** The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has replied to a question earlier, and he said that he would verify. Can he confirm that, at the time the licences were issued, one of the companies had, as shareholder, an adviser from the Prime Minister's Office?

**Dr. Sithanen:** I don't think this is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have the name of the company. What the hon. Member is saying is not according to the information I have.

**Mr Speaker:** I'm sorry again, hon. Lesjongard, with due respect. The question that you have put does not arise from this question. There is no question of shareholding. The question is simple: the date on which it was issued, and the name of the licensees. It's not about the shareholding.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the house whether, despite objections made, a licence has been granted in Plaine Magnien?

**Mr Speaker:** I'm sorry. That also does not arise. It is a general question.

### **MAURITIUS TELECOM – TRADE UNIONISTS - REINTEGRATION**

**(No.B/380) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Information & Communication Technology whether, in regard to the two Trade Unionists of the Mauritius Telecom, he will state if there is any Government decision in support of their reintegration, indicating if it is with or without condition.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is, indeed, a Government decision in support of the reintegration of the two employees of Mauritius Telecom, which is solely responsible, in its own deliberate judgement, for a decision both on the reintegration itself and on any conditions attached thereto.

This decision of Government regarding reintegration indicates in no uncertain terms Government's ongoing concern for workers in general, and in particular for workers' trade unions representatives, in that, as far as it is possible, practical, and just in an *Etat de Droit*, which is also, I may say, un *Etat de Responsabilités*, Government would not wish to see them laid off, against established procedures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government, while continuing to have in sight and in mind the rights of workers and of their trade unions representatives, does not also overlook the fact that they too have obligations, duties, and responsibilities.

Further, I am sure that all law-abiding and law-respecting citizens, putting a premium on the principles, practice, and strict observance of good governance, would certainly not wish, would certainly not like to see Government interfering in the management and decision-making process of institutions. However, Government can, in specific circumstances, express its wish, as it has expressed in the case of these two employees, that they be reintegrated, without in any way intending to flout the very principles and practice of good governance by attaching to or imposing conditions on that reintegration.

**Mr Guinness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether, the ministerial committee in which he himself is, and which the Ministry of Labour is chairing, did not publicly announce, on several occasions, that Cabinet has taken a decision to reintegrate these two trade unionists without any condition?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it has never been the intention or pretension of the inter-ministerial committee to substitute to the Board of MT.

**Mr Ganoo:** I thought I was listening to Mr Jacques de Navacelle.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Can I listen to the question? Please keep quiet!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that, in fact, over the radio and, even in this very House, the hon. Minister has spoken in the name of Government and pledged that these two employees would be reintegrated without any condition?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know this gentleman, Mr Jacques de Navacelle.

**Mr Ganoo:** My question was not about Mr Jacques de Navacelle. I had just made a remark that I thought I heard Mr de Navacelle. My question was whether, over the radio and even here, the hon. Minister has pledged in the name of Government that the two employees would be reintegrated without any condition.

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned that it has never been the intention or pretension of the inter-ministerial committee to substitute to the decision of the Board of MT.

**Mr Guinness:** Can I know from the Minister whether the tune of the Minister himself, the Minister of Labour, the ministerial committee has changed as from the date the Prime Minister stated on a private radio that these people are not going to be reintegrated without condition?

**Mr Dulull:** The Prime Minister has expressed the opinion, in line with the Cabinet decision.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the Minister inform the House whether the Board of MT was made aware of the decision of Cabinet?

**Mr Dulull:** The Board of MT is constituted of representatives of Government from different Ministries, amongst which the Ministry of ICT, the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Finance. They were briefed of the Cabinet decision.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the Minister inform the House whether, in the different meetings that the Minister of Labour as well as other Members of Government have had with the employees concerned, they have been given clear assurance that Government would make sure that they be integrated in their original post? It was the case even in the press conference of the Labour Party!

**Mr Dulull:** as I said at the very outset, it is not for Government or the ministerial committee to substitute to the decision of the Board of MT.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! I have to inform the House that PQ. Nos. B/381, B/382, B/386 and B/396 have been withdrawn.

**MOTION**

**SUSPENSION OF SO 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.

**Mr rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*At 4.29 p.m the sitting was suspended*