

Debate No. 10 of 30.05.06**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****AIRPORT BUILDING - SECURITY SYSTEM**

(No. B/627) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms, Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to security measures within the airport building, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to –

- (a) if all staff members undergo security checks everyday, and
- (b) the measures that are being taken to ensure that there is no tampering with passenger luggage after the security checks.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications): With regard to part (a), there are clearly defined security measures which every organisation operating at the airport has to comply with and that a two tiers security control is exercised on every staff entering the airport building. The airport Police checks all staff members at all primary accesses to ascertain that only authorised persons wearing the Airport Security Identification Card (ASIC) enter the airport security zone.

Furthermore, all the personnel of AML, irrespective of rank or grade, are subjected to X-ray security screening and body search each time they proceed to the restricted security zones. There are separate screening areas for both female and male officers.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the following measures are being taken to ensure that there is no tampering with passenger luggage after security checks -

- (i) at check-in, the airline representative verifies the integrity of the security stickers on the hold luggage before accepting them for carriage by the aircraft;

- (ii) the baggage make up area, where checked-in baggage is sent, is a restricted zone where only dedicated ground handling personnel of Air Mauritius or Servisair are allowed access,
- (iii) the hold luggage are tagged and properly identified by airlines before being escorted to the hold of the aircraft, and
- (iv) the whole operation is carried out under the surveillance of the airport Police.

AML is also taking a number of measures to enhance security supervision in the check-in hall. These include –

- (i) installation of signage requesting passengers not to leave their baggage unattended, coupled with public announcements at an interval of 30 minutes during aircraft movements;
- (ii) private security patrol, and
- (iii) implementation of a CCTV surveillance system.

All these measures will go a long way towards reinforcing the security system at the airport.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. - INTER-ISLAND/REGIONAL OPERATIONS

(No. B/633) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms, Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., the following information –

- (a) the composition of its inter-island and regional air fleet, and
- (b) if the Company has recently advertised for the leasing of an ATR 72 aircraft in the specialised aviation press and the outcome thereof.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications): With regard to part (a), Air Mauritius does not have any dedicated aircraft to carry out either inter-island or regional operations. Indeed, all the aircraft in the Air Mauritius fleet operate to nearby islands depending on the capacity demand, except for Rodrigues where only ATR42 and ATR72 are used. The current fleet is composed of five A-340, two A-319, two Boeing 767, one ATR 72-500 and two ATR42-500. Two additional A-340E aircraft will join the fleet by the end of this year.

With regard to part (b) of the question, matters pertaining to leasing of aircraft relate to the day to day management and internal operations of Air Mauritius. As such, it would not be proper, in the commercial interest of the company, to disclose the nature of any lease arrangement it has entered into.

BERTHAUD AVENUE/RAJKOOMAR, QUATRE BORNES - BUS STOPS & PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

(No. B/682) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he will consider sending a team from the Traffic Management Unit to review –

- (a) the location of the bus stops on both sides of Berthaud Avenue, Quatre Bornes in the vicinity of the intersection between Berthaud Avenue and Rajkoomar, and
- (b) the location of the pedestrian crossing in the same area.

Reply: I am informed that a joint site visit will be effected by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the NTA by the end of this week with a view to assessing the situation from a road safety point of view about the location of both the bus stops and the pedestrian crossing along Berthaud Avenue, Quatre Bornes and come forward with proposals accordingly.

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (1983) - REDUNDANT

(No. B/683) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if Government proposes in the near future to engage discussions with the group of “Redundant Teachers of 1983” so that an acceptable agreement be reached.

Reply: I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the secondary school teachers who became redundant after the closure of several private secondary schools in 1983. This issue is a long standing one and discussions with UPSEE are ongoing.

In fact, following the abrupt and arbitrary closure of several private secondary schools in 1983, an agreement was signed between the Government and UPSEE whereby it was agreed to redeploy these teachers in pre-vocational schools after the MIE has given them the necessary training.

However, as a result of practical problems encountered by many redundant teachers like denial of yearly increment, the non refund of sick leave not taken and more importantly the refusal of private Managers to employ them, another agreement was signed in May 2000 between the Government and UPSEE to reaffirm the commitment of the Government to safeguard the employment of redundant staff from private secondary schools. Following this agreement, the Government redeploys the redundant staff in Government and parastatal bodies, including MEDCO, in suitable posts and on no less favourable terms.

However, since 2004, UPSEE has been requesting that the redundant employees of 1983 be compensated for loss of increments and their salaries be adjusted with an award representing four increments. In view of the far reaching financial implications, the matter is still being discussed. If in the light of the discussions, it is felt that there is need for a new agreement, consideration will be given thereto.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/LISTED COMPANIES – ENERGY AUDIT

(No. B/684) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will state if he will consider including in the upcoming National Energy Policy, the practice of requiring all Government agencies as well as all publicly listed companies to perform a mandatory energy audit to be published in their annual reports.

Reply: The National Energy Policy is in the process of finalisation and the whole policy framework for energy auditing in Mauritius is being addressed.

In that context, all possible instruments for the promotion of energy efficiency through energy audits are being examined. Currently, there is no legislation which makes energy auditing of buildings compulsory. But I am considering the introduction of an Energy Efficiency Bill to provide, *inter alia*, the necessary framework for energy efficiency in buildings. In the first instance, all energy intensive buildings, including those of Government agencies, may be targeted and subsequently extended to other buildings. The proper reporting of results achieved will also be considered and the proposal of the hon. Member for the publication of the results of such audits in the annual reports will also be favourably considered.

Notwithstanding the proposed course of action, the House may wish to note that, following the launching of the Energy Savings Campaign last year, energy auditing is already being carried out in some of the main Government buildings, including hospitals. This has led to a noticeable decrease in the energy consumption in these buildings, the best example today being the Treasury Building.

Energy auditing should not be limited to large buildings. Energy can also be saved at household level. In this regard, the booklet which is presently being distributed to all CEB customers in the context of the Energy Savings Campaign provides useful tips/guidance on how to save energy at

domestic level. Through this means, we are also assisting the public at large in carrying out energy audits on their own premises.

**MAURITIUS FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION –
EMPLOYEES - DISMISSAL**

(No. B/685) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Film Development Corporation, information as to whether on Monday 15 May 2006, the Chairperson verbally prevented eight employees from attending duty requesting them to remove their personal effects and to come back on the next day to collect their pay and dismissal letter and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

**CITY AND GUILDS INTERNATIONAL
– EXAMINATION FEES – 2002 TO 2005**

(No. B/686) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to whether examination fees for the period 2002 to 2005 are still due to the City and Guilds London and, if so, will he give the reasons therefor and state the arrangements that have been made for the payment thereof.

Reply: May I, at the very outset, inform the House that the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate conducts examinations on behalf of City and Guilds International and not City and Guilds London. Examinations on behalf of City and Guilds are conducted in two sessions per year; June and December and fees for each examination session are transferred to City and Guilds International in two instalments.

This being said, according to the records of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, the total examination fees for June and December examinations for the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 due to the City and Guilds International have already been settled in full by the Syndicate.

As for the year 2005, examination fees for June have been settled. For the December examinations, a part settlement of £20,000 has already been effected and the remaining balance of £5,180 will be settled upon receipt of all the outstanding invoices and credit notes from City and Guilds International.

FOOTBALL DISCIPLINE – GOVERNMENT POLICY

(No. B/687) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state Government policy in regard to the revamping of the football discipline.

Reply: I would like to point out that Government has at heart the development of football, which is the most popular sport in Mauritius.

With a view to revamping football and giving a new impetus to sports in general, a Ministerial Committee was instituted in October 2005. The Committee had several meetings with all the stakeholders and the actions that could contribute to give a new impetus to our football have been identified.

The following areas are being targeted in collaboration with the Mauritius Football Association to redress the situation:

- (a) review of the operation of *Ecoles de football*;
- (b) setting up of Regional Technical Centres with a view to providing opportunity to a greater number of players. Three such centres are already operational;
- (c) setting up of National Teams in different categories including football *féminin* which will also undergo regular training;
- (d) encouraging *football de masse* in collaboration with the local authorities by organising football matches at community and village levels and providing necessary equipment and maintenance of football grounds;
- (e) upgrading of football grounds for the holding of league matches at regional level; (St. François Xavier, Barkly, Rivière des Anguilles, Solferino, Petit Raffray and Rose Belle football grounds)

- (f) boosting the attendance of spectators during football matches by:
- (i) decentralising 1st and 2nd Division Leagues matches in order to pull more spectators;
 - (ii) keeping the tariff of tickets as low as possible to attract a larger number of spectators;
 - (iii) setting up of fans' clubs to ensure support in a more structured manner;
 - (iv) inviting renowned foreign teams and players to Mauritius to play friendly matches;
 - (v) ensuring more coverage of football activities by the television and radio;
- (g)relaunching of inter-college football;
- (h)capacity building in terms of coaches, referees and other officials;
- (i) launching of other related activities such as beach soccer and street football tournaments to boost up interest in football.

POUDRE D'OR VILLAGE - SPORTS COMPLEX

(No. B/688) Mr G. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the sports complex of the Poudre d'Or Village, he will state where matters stand, indicating when it will become operational.

Reply: I am informed that the practical handing over of the Sport Complex comprising a handball cum basket ball/volleyball pitch, and a *pétanque* court with changing rooms and lighting facilities which is a community based project implemented by the NDU, was done on the 14 December 2005.

However, defects relating to water ponding on the volleyball and *pétanque* pitches and in the main switch of the lighting facilities of the *pétanque* pitch have been observed.

The contractor has been requested to take remedial action as the contractual maintenance period will expire at the end of October 2006.

PETIT RAFFRAY FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTING FACILITIES

(No. B/689) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Petit Raffray football ground, he will state the amount that has to be disbursed per hour for lighting by teams using the football ground.

Reply: My Ministry charges a nominal rate of Rs175 per hour for lighting facilities from teams training at Petit Raffray football ground.

Being given that most teams apply for use of the football ground under floodlights for a session of around two hours, an average amount of Rs325 is charged from them.

I am further informed that this hourly rate is applicable since 2003 when at that time electricity consumption was estimated to cost Rs165 per hour, while overtime costs related to the operation of the lighting system was an average of Rs150.

CITE LA CURE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – SERVICES

(No. B/690) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware of the serious problems encountered by the inhabitants of Cité La Cure, attending the health centre thereat and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that are envisaged.

Reply: I am informed that in view of the exiguity of the Cité La Cure Community Health Centre, the existing facilities provided thereat are not adequate to cater for the needs of the inhabitants of that locality.

In this regard, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping was requested to initiate action to extend the building with a

view to improving the existing services as well as accommodating additional services.

I am also informed that the consultant has already finalized the architectural drawings. Appropriate clearances are being sought and the project for the extension of the building will be implemented as from the end of this year.

VALMICKY STREET, CHITRAKOOT – ACCIDENT – JANUARY 2005

(No. B/691) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware of an accident which occurred around January 2005 at the Valmicky Street, Chitrakoot, Vallée des Prêtres, in front of the Goswami Tulsidas Sabha in the course of which a child got drowned in the nearby stream and, if so, what action has been or will be taken to avoid the recurrence of such incidents.

Reply: I am informed by the Police and the Municipal Council of Port Louis that they were not aware of the accident which occurred around January 2005 at Valmicky Street, Chitrakoot. However, during a site visit effected by the officers of the Municipality on 26 May 2006, it was noted that a parapet already exists on the site.

Nevertheless, the Municipal Council will soon be providing the following additional measures for the security of pedestrians –

- (i) raising the level of the footpath, and
- (ii) construction of handrails over a distance of 20 metres.

POWDER MILL, PAMPLEMOUSSES – VECTOR BIOLOGY CONTROL DIVISION

(No. B/692) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will

consider the advisability of re-establishing the technical operation of the Vector Biology Control Division at Powder Mill, Pamplémousses.

Reply: The Vector Biology and Control Division at Powder Mill, Pamplémousses, is operational since April 2001. The staff posted there comprises six Health Surveillance Officers and one Senior Health Surveillance Officer. They have the necessary logistics for field work.

The staff is mainly involved in the collection of entomological specimens including adult mosquitoes and mosquito larvae. These specimens are sent to the Central Division at Réduit for processing.

In view of the staffing structure of the Vector Biology Division which comprises 5 technical officers, namely the Head Vector Biology Division, one Scientific Officer, one Principal Vector Biology Laboratory Technician, one Senior Vector Biology Laboratory Technician and one Vector Biology Laboratory Technician, a decision was taken in 2004 to centralise the processing of specimens at the Central Laboratory in Réduit. It was not cost effective to operate two laboratories, one at Réduit and one at Powder Mill, Pamplémousses with the limited technical staff available.

The operation of the laboratory at Powder Mill, Pamplémousses is not envisaged.

EX-CHA HOUSES – STATE LANDS - SALE

(No. B/693) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposal for selling at a nominal price the land on which stand the ex-CHA houses with a view to enabling the residents thereof to become owners of their respective properties, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ No. IB/395 of 25 October 2005, whereby I indicated that my Ministry was consulting the Attorney General's Office for the preparation of a draft Bill to give effect to Government's decision to sell State lands on which stand the ex-CHA houses.

This decision is in line with Government's firm commitment to empower people to democratise the economy through easier access to capital at cheaper cost and is in line with the philosophy of this Government of putting people first.

Following discussions held with the Attorney General's Office, it has been noted that the implementation of the proposed policy decision would have legal, financial, and administrative implications. These are being addressed and, it has further been decided that the sale of State lands on which stands the ex-CHA houses be implemented in phases. Procedures for the survey of the 177 housing estates have been initiated as the exact delimitations of each of the 177 housing estates would need to be ascertained for inclusion in a schedule to the proposed Bill. Concurrently the drafting instructions are being finalised to enable the Attorney General's Office to prepare the enabling legislation.

RENGANADEN SEENEVASSEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL, CASSIS – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/694) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School at Cassis, he will state if he is aware that the iron-sheeting roof need to be replaced and, if so, will he state if renovation works will be carried out, indicating when the tendering exercise will be launched and the estimated cost thereof.

Reply: A formal request was made by the Head Teacher to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in August 2004 for re-roofing works at the school. However, nothing was undertaken up to July 2005 with regard to these works in spite of the fact that Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School was, and still is considered to be a ZEP school.

Just after my assumption of office in July 2005, various representations were made by parents to me regarding the bad state of the school particularly the roof and the old toilet block.

On 20 March 2006, I personally took the initiative of chairing a meeting whereby technicians of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping were, *inter-alia* present to discuss the matter. As a result of that initiative, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping urgently entrusted the re-roofing works at the school to its District Contractor (Deeya Construction Ltd) on 10 April 2006 for a contract sum of Rs3m.

These works will be completed by tomorrow and the associated electrical works will, on their part, be completed by the end of June 2006.

As regards the old toilet block, it is to be noted that in March 2002, the Head Teacher of the school made a request to the Ministry of Education for the pulling down of the latter but the request fell in deaf ears. Another request was made by the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life as a result of a sanitary inspection of the school in September 2004 but it suffered the same fate.

It was only after July 2005 that the matter was revived and these works were undertaken and completed by the field unit of the Ministry of Local Government in April 2006.

I am tabling photographs of the poor state of the building prior to the renovation works and thereafter. The photographs speak for themselves.

DEBT SERVICING - CASH/ACCRUAL BASIS

(No. B/695) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the provisions for debt servicing in the next budget, he will state whether they will be earmarked on a cash basis or on an accrual basis.

Reply: I understand the concern of the hon. Member as cash accounting does not reflect all the liabilities of Government at a particular point in time and also does not give a true picture of the overall deficit during a particular year. This is exactly what happened when interest payments due on the Treasury Bills in 2004/05 for an amount of Rs1.76 billion were postponed through the issue of three year Treasury

Notes, allowing for the conversion of interest payments on Treasury Bills. As I indicated in my reply to PQ B/614 last week, the interests on these three year notes are payable at maturity in 2007/08 and are estimated to exceed Rs3 billion. Had accrual accounting been adopted, the budget deficit in 2004/05 would have been higher than that computed on a cash basis.

Regarding provision for debt servicing in the next budget, it will be made on a cash basis as in the preceding years.

As the House is aware, Government budgets and accounts are prepared on a cash basis. This basis of accounting provides users with information about the sources of cash during the financial year and the uses to which those funds are applied during the course of the same financial year.

The annual report of the Accountant General for the year ending 30 June 2005, contains a statement of cash receipts and payments for the years ended 30 June 2004 and 30 June 2005. The format of the statement is in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard “Financial Reporting under the Cash Basis of Accounting” issued by the International Federation of Accountants – Public Sector Committee.

Proposals have been made in the past to change the Government accounting system from cash basis to accrual basis and to replace the present traditional accounting and reporting system by a resource-based financial management system, which provides information on how resources have been used to meet the objectives of the Ministries/Departments. Resource based financial management is in line with the philosophy of Medium Term Expenditure Framework which we are implementing in various Ministries.

As regards moving to an accrual basis in Government, it will imply carrying out a survey and valuation of all Government assets and liabilities. This will be quite time consuming and costly. I am given to understand that even on a cash basis there is presently a statement of assets and liabilities. However, this statement does not include fixed assets, pension and passage benefits liabilities. Furthermore, the Finance and Audit Act already makes provision for the preparation and submission to the Director of Audit of a series of financial statements that give all the necessary information concerning Government assets and liabilities except for fixed assets and pension and passage benefits liabilities.

Due consideration will be given to move to accrual based accounting and budgeting after analysing the costs and benefits.

RESERVOIRS & AQUIFERS - WATER LEVEL

(No. B/696) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the level of water in our reservoirs and aquifers,
- (b) if the Authority is having recourse to frequent interruptions of water supply in various localities of the country, and
- (c) the measures that will be taken in case of insufficient

Reply: I am informed that the level of water in our reservoirs and aquifers is considered normal for the season.

The storage levels in the major reservoirs as at 26 May 2006 are as follows -

Reservoirs	Maximum Capacity (Mm3)	Actual Capacity (Mm3)	Actual %
Mare aux Vacoas	25.89	20.20	78.0
La Nicolière	5.26	3.20	60.8
Piton du Milieu	2.99	2.22	74.2
La Ferme	11.52	10.16	88.2
Midlands	25.50	23.85	93.5
Mare Longue	6.28	2.61	41.6

As regards the aquifers, the water level in the boreholes is being constantly and regularly monitored by the CWA. A decrease in water level

(5-10%) is being observed in general. However, some marked decrease has been observed at Holyrood Pumping Station where production is about 15,000 cubic metres daily compared to its normal yield of 20,000 cubic metres daily.

River flows are also decreasing.

On the basis of what the observations reveal, the abstractions from boreholes will be adjusted.

As regards part (b), despite the gradual decrease in river flow and groundwater, the CWA is generally maintaining the same production level across the island without causing any major disruption in the water supply. However, in the Mare aux Vacoas Water Supply System, the hours of supply in Quatre Bornes (Bassin/Palma), Belle Rose, Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Coromandel and in certain areas in Curepipe have been reduced from 24 hours to around 14 hours owing to the decrease in production at Holyrood and at La Marie treatment works.

Regarding part (c) of the question, in order to cope with insufficient rainfall and to ensure a minimum supply to the population, the CWA will implement a series of measures which include *inter alia* -

(i) mobilisation of additional resources, wherever available as follows
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Port Louis

- (a) operation of 5 standby boreholes, and
- (b) transfer of more water from the Nicolière system

South

Operation of two boreholes and tap river source at La Forêt/Beevarangue Rivers.

East

Operation of two surface water sources.

Mare aux Vacoas-lower

Operation of a borehole at Bambous

- (ii) a gradual rationing and water cuts throughout the island depending on the severity of the drought;
- (iii) reinforcement of tanker service, through the hiring of private water tankers;
- (iv) weekly meeting with representatives of sugar estates - Medine, Highlands and Mon Desert Alma for sharing of river water in the GRNW system - Port Louis supply;
- (v) weekly meetings between CWA and WRU for monitoring of ground water and water quality;
- (vi) weekly meetings of Dry Season Co-ordination Committee involving all sectors concerned to constantly review water supply, and
- (vii) reinforcement of Leakage Control Programmes - immediate repairs of all visible leaks.

It is to be pointed out that, in the event of prolonged dry season, domestic water supply will be given priority over other users, irrigation in particular.

BEEF - SELLING PRICE

(No. B/697) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the selling price of beef on the local market, he will state if there has been any increase recently and, if so, will he give the reasons therefor, indicating the percentage thereof and the number of increases since July 2005.

Reply: I am informed by the Consumer Protection Unit of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection that the prices of fresh beef is not a controlled item. I am informed that the retail price has increased by 10% in December 2005. This was due to an increase in the wholesale price, which moved from

Rs120.00 to Rs145.00 per kg. This increase in wholesale price was itself due to a price increase at source, both local and imported.

I am further informed that the price of frozen meat from Brazil and India has increased in the range of 10 to 15% during the period September to November 2005, whereas the price of frozen meat from Australia has remained stable.

I am also informed that the increase in the price is due to the appreciation of the dollar, increase in insurance and freight. This applies to other commodities as well. With regard to the number of increases since July 2005, the House may wish to note that beef is not a controlled product, as such the information sought is not available.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - SUPPLY

(No. B/698) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will table copy of the agreement signed between the State Trading Corporation and the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., in respect of the supply of petroleum products for the year 2006-2007.

Reply: The House may wish to note that, in the past, even when the STC used to float international tender for the purchase of petroleum products, the agreement entered between STC and the successful tenderer or tenderers was never disclosed. Except, regarding the price of premium, which was made public when this was commercially and administratively possible.

I am informed that as a responsible organisation that deals with the import of products of national interest, the STC cannot treat MRPL with less regard than the one enjoyed by other suppliers of STC in the past.

In this regard, I am sorry to say that I cannot accede to the request of the hon. Member. However, I must emphasize that the main part of the agreement reached in April last, between STC and MRPL, will allow the country to make a savings of Rs350 m.

The hon. Member may also wish to note that the specifications contained in Tender Documents for the purchase of petroleum products for last year and the years before would be taken into consideration for the purchase of petroleum products from MRPL.

The House would recall that the Power Purchase Agreement between CEB and power producers was never made public.

BEL AIR IVTB TRAINING CENTRE - COURSES

(No. B/699) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the IVTB Training Centre at Bel Air, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board information as to whether the centre will be modernised and, if so, when.

Reply: I am informed that IVTB is not proposing to modernise its Training Centre at Bel Air. The training centre will be closed in December this year as its location does not provide a conducive environment for training. There is a problem of accessibility for trainees and staff particularly on market days. Moreover, running courses at the centre is not cost-effective. In view of the low response, since 2005 only 2 full-time courses, namely Electrical Installation Work and Mechanical Engineering Craft Practice are being dispensed at the Centre. No part-time courses are being run. During this academic year, only 32 trainees are following the full-time courses.

As from next year, students willing to enrol on courses presently being dispensed at the Centre will be directed to other IVTB training centres. The staff will be redeployed to other centres of the IVTB.

KEWAL NAGAR (BELLE RIVE) – ROADS - HANDRAILS

(No. B/700) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he will consider the

advisability of installing handrails along the main road of the village of Kewal Nagar (Belle Rive) and, if so, when.

Reply: I am informed that handrails will be installed in the village of Kewal Nagar from SSR Memorial Park up to the temple along the main road. The work will be undertaken under the ongoing South Eastern Highway Project.

Presently, construction of footpaths, drains, bus lay-bys and resurfacing works are in progress. Once these are completed, the handrails will be placed. The contractual completion date of the South Eastern Highway Project is 12 November 2006.