

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**RODRIGUES - REDCO & STATE LANDS**

(No. B/353) Mr P. Bérenger (First Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if matters pertaining to the Redco and State lands which were entrusted to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are now being handled by the central Government and, if so, will he give the reasons for the review of this policy.

Reply: The answer is no, there has been no change in policy.

Matters pertaining to REDCO and State Lands, which were entrusted to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, are still being handled by the latter.

CIVIL SERVICE - EARLY RETIREMENT PLAN

(No. B/354) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if Government intends to introduce an early retirement plan in the civil service to create vacancies for the job seekers.

Reply: Government does not propose to introduce an early retirement plan in the civil service.

In fact the Pensions Act was amended in 2003 to give effect to a recommendation of the 2003 PRB Report, to allow an officer aged 50 or more who is willing to retire voluntarily, and whom management would wish to part with, to do so with enhanced retirement benefits.

In its 2003 Report the PRB has also recommended that the existing provision regarding retiring age be maintained for public officers in post, pending the outcome of the study on Pensions Reforms. In this connection, a Task Force under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Finance and

Economic Development is currently examining the whole issue, including the advisability of extending retiring age of public officers and its impact on public service pensions.

TI VEGAS GAMING HOUSE VICINITY - QUATRE BORNES - ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

(No.B/355) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware that there is a proliferation of drugs and prostitution in the vicinity of Ti Vegas on St Jean Road at Quatre Bornes and, if so, will he use his good offices to impress upon the Commissioner of Police the need to take remedial measures to address these issues.

Reply: Complaints have been received from inhabitants of Quatre-Bornes to the fact that they have noticed certain social problems, and disruptive behaviour in the area surrounding the Ti Vegas gaming house.

The Municipal Council of Quatre-Bornes has also, on two occasions, requested the Police to effect regular patrols with a view to discouraging illicit activities in the vicinity of the Municipal yard, particularly at the corner of Osman Avenue and St Jean Road.

Being given that, this area of Quatre-Bornes is emerging as a highly commercial one with increasing night activities, I have impressed on the Commissioner of Police to step up vigilance thereat with a view to enhancing policing strategies to remedy the situation. This has started to show results, and on 21 April 2006 following a crack down operation two persons were booked for rogue and vagabond.

STATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION – BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

(No. B/356) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state the names of the representatives of the Prime Minister's Office on the Board of the State

Investment Corporation from September 2000 to April 2006, together with their respective dates of appointment.

Reply: As the House is aware, the State Investment Corporation Ltd. is a public company registered and operating under the Companies Act.

It is managed by a Board of Directors which itself is appointed by the shareholders of the Company.

There is no representative of the Prime Minister's Office as such on the Board of the State Investment Corporation Ltd. However, the Government, as majority shareholder can designate public officers to be appointed as Director by the shareholders of the Corporation.

The officers of the Prime Minister's Office who were so designated for appointment as Director of the Board of the State Investment Corporation from September 2000 to April 2006 are as follows -

- (i) Mr Loganarden Ramsamy, former Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, who served as Director from 06 November 2000 to 28 February 2002;
- (ii) Mr Harry Ganoo, former Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, who succeeded Mr Ramsamy on 28 February 2002 and is still serving on the Board.

A recommendation has been made to the State Investment Corporation for Mr Ganoo, who retired recently, to be replaced as from this month by Mr S. C. Seeballuck, the present Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

DOORGACHAND HURRY GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – LARCENY BREAKING

(No. B/357) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether thefts have been committed on or about 04 April 2006 at –

- (a) the Sharma Jugdambi State Secondary School, and

(b) the Doorgachand Hurry Government School and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no theft has been reported at the Sharma Jugdambi State Secondary School.

As regards Doorgachand Hurry Government School, a case of 'larceny breaking' was reported at Goodlands Police Station on 04 April 2006. On the same day, the local Crime Investigation Department (CID) and the Scene of Crime Office (SOCO) attended to the case.

The value of goods and money stolen is estimated at Rs42,900 and damage caused to furniture is Rs31,500.

On 20 April 2006, Police arrested a suspect residing in Goodlands. The investigation is still underway.

Since Doorgachurn Hurry Government School and Sharma Jugdambi SSS are found in the vicinity of a Police station, they are covered mostly by foot patrol. Likewise, mobile patrols are provided by personnel of the Divisional Support Unit, ERS and CID.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources that with a view to strengthening security in our primary and secondary schools, security services (watchmanship) have been contracted out.

SPECIAL MOBILE POLICE – RECRUITS - RESIGNATION

(No. B/358) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, the number of recruits who, during the last five years, have left the Special Mobile Force within their initial period of training.

(Withdrawn)

**MAURITIUS EMPLOYERS FEDERATION -
ANNUAL BUSINESS TREND SURVEY**

(No. B/359) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware of the reference made on the low degree of confidence of businessmen and investors in the economic situation of the country and the fact that public administration is the biggest deterrent to business in Mauritius made in the Annual Business Trend Survey rendered public by the Mauritius Employers Federation recently, and if so, will he state the measures, if any, that will be taken to address these issues.

Reply: Public sector organisations worldwide are facing problems to keep pace with the shifting economic landscape and to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. This is precisely why Government has committed itself in the Government Programme 2005-2010 to improve procedures in the Government Machinery with a view to providing more efficient, effective, excellent and seamless public services.

Immediately after Government assumed office, a Ministerial Committee was set up in August last under the chairmanship of my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications, to look into problems associated with bottlenecks and red tape in the civil service. The recommendations of the committee regarding the streamlining of the existing procedures and process concerning the grant of licences and permits have already been approved by Government and are being implemented by Ministries/ Departments and the Local Authorities concerned.

Moreover, Government has set up in February 2006, an Industrial Services Monitoring Cell under the chairmanship of the hon. Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives, to look into the non-factory factors impinging upon the competitiveness of the Textile and Clothing Sector and to address issues relating thereof, including business confidence. The Committee comprises representatives of both the public and the private sectors. The work of the Committee is ongoing and its recommendations are expected to contribute to improving the business climate and facilitate further investment in Mauritius.

In addition, a programme of modernisation is ongoing in the civil service to provide Public Officers with modern tools and equipment to enable them to perform efficiently and effectively. Also, in line with the “Putting People First” concept of my Government, administrative reforms strategies are being promoted to ensure that public services are delivered in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of citizens and investors, both local and foreign.

I am informed that the survey referred to was carried out by the Mauritius Employers’ Federation in November/December 2005. Notwithstanding, the findings the survey, I must inform the House that addressing problems in public administration is a long-term process and can only be achieved over time. The transformation of the public service into a quality public service will continue to rank high on the agenda of Government.

**BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS LTD. - INFINITY BPO LTD. -
RENT**

(No. B/367) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd, in regard to the Infinity BPO Company operating thereat, information as to the action initiated to recover the amount due.

Reply: I am informed that Infinity BPO Ltd. is by far the biggest rental and utilities payer of the Cyber city and that it has to this day made a total payment of US\$586,405.20 as rent and Rs5,051,463.27 for utilities.

Infinity BPO Ltd. has therefore paid the equivalent of Rs17 m. as rental for office space it occupies at the Cyber city.

As regards its arrears, as per document laid in the Library of the Assembly in reply to PQ B/198, Infinity BPO Ltd. has effected a further payment of US\$57,796.84 for rent and Rs662,177.13 for utilities.

I am further informed that the sum owed by the company as at today is amply covered by the 3 months advance deposit paid by the company.

Various measures are being taken by Government to attract investment in the ICT sector and to sustain the growth of this sector. The House will appreciate that questions related to arrears and dues of companies at any one point in time are commercially very sensitive and can undermine efforts taken by Government to promote the ICT sector.

ZEE CINE AWARDS - EXPENDITURE

(No. B/368) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, a breakdown of expenditure it has incurred since July 2005, indicating the expenses, if any, incurred in connection with the Zee Cine Awards held in Mauritius.

Reply: I am arranging for the breakdown of expenditure of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority to be compiled, and this information will be tabled in due course.

I am also informed that an amount of Rs3,016,296.50 has been incurred in connection with the Zee Cine Awards held in Mauritius.

The organisers of the Zee Cine Awards had approached the MTPA to be one of the sponsors of the event. MTPA has favourably considered the request in view of the extensive media coverage to be given to the event thus representing an excellent opportunity to enhance the visibility of our destination in the numerous countries covered by the Zee TV network.

In fact, we were made to understand that the event would be broadcast live in over 120 countries including India and viewed by some 300 million people all over the world.

SCHOOLS (PRIMARY & SECONDARY) - PRIVATE TUITION

(No. B/369) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if he proposes to amend or introduce legislation to ban the practice of private tuition.

Reply: The practice of private tuition is widespread in Mauritius, and has been so for numerous decades. Ideally, private tuition should not be a general practice but should be the avenue for students who are facing major difficulties in their schoolwork or who are slow learners.

Section 37 A of the Education Act prohibits the giving of private tuition to students of Standards I-III. However, for security reasons, primary school teachers are allowed to use the school premises for the purpose of giving private tuition to pupils of Standards IV, V and VI.

To that end, the Ministry has established clear guidelines and criteria for the use of the school premises for private tuition. These include, *inter alia*, the requirement that the teacher make an application to the Head Teacher for the use of the school premises, the prohibition of using the school premises for private tuition at specific times of the academic calendar, the requirement that there be a break of at least half an hour between the end of regular lessons and the private tuition, and limits on the class size and the time for giving private tuition on the school premises.

Concerned with the issue of private tuition, I had set up a team at my Ministry to study all the various implications of private tuition in State primary and secondary schools. The team has conducted preliminary assessments and has submitted their interim report recently.

In-house discussions are now being held at the level of my Ministry. I intend, subsequently, to involve all the stakeholders, including the parents and the teachers, to study the issue and come up with pragmatic and feasible remedial measures. Based on the recommendations of the future consultative sessions to be held on the subject, appropriate administrative and legislative measures will be taken.

However, I also wish to point out that within the context of the reforms that are currently being undertaken at the Ministry for the provision of a world class quality education to all Mauritian students, specific quality initiatives are being implemented to enhance both the teaching and learning experience at schools. Mechanisms are being set up for promoting early childhood development, ensuring literacy and numeracy, promoting a reading culture, ensuring responsibility and accountability at all levels, and for strengthening the management capacity at the schools.

Moreover, the MBC and the MCA, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, are holding consultations for the launching and running of a

proposed learning channel which will be beneficial to both students and teachers.

The ultimate objective is to ensure that the time spent in classrooms is geared towards the attainment of the Ministry's set goals and objectives. It is projected that if quality of teaching and learning is improved across board, the need for private tuition will be reduced.

MINISTRIES - VACANCIES

(No. B/387) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will state the number of vacancies in all grades existing in each Ministry.

Reply (The Prime Minister): The information called for is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.