

Debate No. 31 of 31.10.06**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****DRUG TRAFFICKERS – ACCOUNTS & ASSETS**

(No. B/1214) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Drug Commissioner, information as to whether, since August 2006, the accounts and other assets of presumed drug traffickers have been discharged and, if so, the reasons thereof.

Reply: I am informed that since August 2006 to date, no discharge has been effected in respect of the accounts and other assets of presumed drug traffickers.

During that period, 11 provisional freezing orders have been lodged by the Court and all the cases are pending trial.

However, the House may note that the Drug Commissioner does not enquire in cases of presumed drug trafficking but only in cases of convicted drug traffickers and upon referral from the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In this respect, since August 2006 to date, the Drug Commissioner has submitted 40 reports to the Director of Public Prosecutions after conducting investigations. In his report, the Drug Commissioner submits recommendations on either discharge of the order of forfeiture or an application for the forfeiture of the possession of the trafficker.

Any revocation of the freezing order is made by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Court.

PRIME MINISTER – OVERSEAS MISSIONS – MBC REPORTERS

(No. B/1215) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of

Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the reporters who accompanied him during his overseas missions since July 2005, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the amount of money spent in each case in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and other expenses, giving a detailed breakdown thereof.

Reply: I am tabling a list of the reporters from the MBC who accompanied me on my official missions abroad.

I am informed that the *per diem* allowances were paid by the MBC in line with rates approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

POLICE BRUTALITY – VICTIMS – COMPENSATION

(No. B/1216) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state Government policy, if any, with regard to the payment of compensation for the victims of police brutality.

Reply: Under the Protection of Human Rights Act 1998, the National Human Rights Commission is empowered to enquire into alleged cases of police brutality.

On completion of its enquiry, the National Human Rights Commission may make recommendations about the granting of compensation to complainants under Section 4(4)(b) of the same Act.

POLICE BRUTALITY –REPORTED CASES & INQUIRIES

(No. B/1217) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to allegations of Police

brutality since July 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to (a) the number of reported cases and (b) the number of cases in which inquiries have been initiated.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since July 2005 to date, 232 cases of allegation of Police brutality have been reported to the Complaints Investigation Bureau. The status of the cases is as follows

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- (i) 2 cases have been referred to the Departmental Orderly Room for disciplinary action against the Police Officers concerned;
- (ii) 6 cases have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecution for advice;
- (iii) 205 cases are still under enquiry;
- (iv) 18 cases have been classified; and
- (v) 1 case pending trial before court.

**PRIME MINISTER – OVERSEAS MISSIONS – DURATION,
DELEGATION, ETC.**

(No. B/1218) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions he has undertaken since July 2005 to date, he will state the number thereof and in each case, give details as to (a) the duration (b) the composition of the delegation and (c) the amount of money spent in terms of air fares, *per diem* and other expenses.

(Vide Reply PQ No. B/1210)

PETRIN, GRAND BASSIN – POLICE OPERATION

(No. B/1219) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and

Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the inquiry into the Police operation carried out in the vicinity of Pétrin, Grand Bassin, on 07 July 2006, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I would like to refer the hon. Member to reply made to Private Notice Question by the hon. Acting Prime Minister at the sitting of the House on 18 July 2006.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the eight persons arrested, in connection with the case, have been bailed out. Two other persons were allowed to go after being interrogated.

Mr Cehl Meeah, whose name has been mentioned in one of the statements, has not yet been questioned as he is still abroad.

The inquiry is still under way and upon completion, will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

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ACKTAR, MR RAMCHURN - JEWELRY SHOP - HOLD UP

(No. B/1220) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the case of a hold up in a jewelry shop, involving one Acktar Ramchurn, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I would like to refer the hon. Member to reply made by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to a Private Notice Question at the sitting of the House on 18 July 2006.

Enquiry in the case is still underway and upon completion, the case file will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

DRUG (FAKE) – SEIZURE

(No. B/1221) 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, in regard to the recent seizure of fake drugs concealed in a container, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the quantity and nature of the medicines seized, indicating the different types of psychotropic and/or narcotic substances and the number of pills or capsules in each category.

(Vide reply to PQ. No. B/1213)

FIREARM LICENCES – GRANT

(No. B/1222) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to firearm licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether any follow-up is made on the conduct and character of the licensees after the grant of the licences and, if so, at which frequency.

Reply: According to the Firearms Act, the Commissioner of Police is empowered to cancel or refuse to renew a firearm licence where he reasonably believes that the licensee should cease to possess a firearm in the interest of public safety and peace.

Moreover, the new legislation which was passed by the National Assembly in April this year, further consolidates the issue and control of firearm licences. It also provides where the Commissioner of Police has reason to believe that the licensee is of intemperate habits or is otherwise unfit to purchase, acquire or has in his possession a firearm, he may cancel or refuse to renew the licence.

Further control measures are exercised by the Police at the time of the renewal of the licence in January where the licensee should personally call at the Divisional District Headquarters with his firearm and ammunitions in his possession for inspection. Police can also check firearm and firearm licence of person carrying firearm in a public place. Moreover, when a person is involved in offences pertaining to the public safety or proceeds abroad, he has to surrender his firearm to the Police. The new legislation also provides that whenever a protection order is issued against a possessor of firearm, the Magistrate will order him to surrender his firearm.

MBC -ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – ADVERTISEMENT

(No. B/1223) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the advertisement of alcoholic beverages, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to its policy.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that its policy on advertising of alcoholic beverages is subject to existing regulations provided under the MBC Act of 1982, and the IBA Act of 2000 respectively. Advertising of alcoholic beverages on MBC Television and Radio is accepted for broadcast exclusively between 21 00 and 02 00 hours subject to surcharge of 30% on normal advertising rates.

I have in my reply to PQ. No. B/874 at the sitting of the House on 04 July 2006, expressed my concern regarding the potential risk and damage that the promotion of alcohol and tobacco may have on our youth.

I have also requested the MBC Board to give consideration to review its policy relating to advertisement of alcoholic beverage, including the possibility of discontinuing with such practice.

SALARY COMPENSATION JULY 2006

(No. B/1224) 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 will state if Government is proposing to grant an additional salary compensation to the one already granted in July 2006.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – DRUG SEIZURE JULY
2005/OCTOBER 2006**

(No. B/1225) 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, in regard to the seizure of drugs at the SSR International Airport since July 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the dates, the quantity and the net value thereof in each case;
- (b) the number of persons arrested in connection therewith, indicating the number of foreigners involved, and
- (c) the number of times drugs were discovered, unattended to, in airplanes and in the airport premises.

Reply: I am tabling information relating to paragraphs (a) and (b) of the question.

As regards paragraph (c), there are two cases where drugs were discovered, unattended to, in airplanes as follows -

- (i) on 16 March 2006, acting on information, two kilos of powder suspected to be drugs were found concealed in the life-jacket compartment on flight MK 282 from Nairobi, Kenya via Tananarive, Madagascar, and

- (ii) on 09 June 2006, again acting on information, one kilo of powder suspected to be drugs was secured from under a seat on board flight MK 749 from Mumbai.

Controlled delivery operations in both cases led to the arrest of five persons in all. The enquiry is in progress in both cases.

STATE LANDS – HUNTING AND SHOOTING – LESSEES, RENT, ETC.

(No. B/1252) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to State lands used for hunting and shooting purposes (*chassées*), he will give –

- (a) a list thereof;
- (b) the names of the lessees;
- (c) the amount of rent payable in each case, and
- (d) when these leases were granted.

Reply (Ministry of Agro-Industry & Fisheries): There are 45 lessees over State lands for shooting and fishing purposes as at date. A list containing the information requested is being tabled as **list A**.

In certain cases a guardiennage lease may be granted to holders of shooting and fishing leases over State lands. A list of holders of guardiennage leases is being tabled as **list B**.

The guardiennage lease is normally granted for the following reasons

- (i) where a shooting and fishing lease is found in proximity to highly residential areas, nature walk, public gardens or any other areas used for public activities, an area within the shooting and fishing Lease on the limit of the said areas is granted for Guardiennage Lease and serve as a buffer and security zone for public in the region;
- (ii) where a land found within a Shooting and Fishing Lease is not suitable for shooting and fishing activity because of

the environmental sensitivity of the area, the land is given on lease as Gardiennage to the lessee.

The rentals for the shooting & fishing and gardiennage leases are determined by the Chief Government Valuer and are also tabled as **list C**.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – PRICE INCREASE

(No. B/1253) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether in regard to petroleum products, he will state the reasons as to why there has been an increase in the price thereof on the local market, whilst its cost has fallen on the world market.

(Withdrawn)

DAME ROSINA HENRISON MULTI-PURPOSE COMPLEX PROJECT – LES CASERNES, CUREPIPE

(No. B/1254) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether in regard to the Dame Rosina Henrison Multi-purpose complex, situated at Les Casernes, Curepipe, he will state –

- (a) the initial and final costs of the project;
- (b) the name of the contractor, and
- (c) the amount of money spent on the yard for its –
 - (i) fencing, and
 - (ii) upgrading

Reply: I am informed by the Municipality of Curepipe that the initial cost of the Dame Rosina Henrison Multi-purpose complex project was Rs3,681,725 and the final cost was Rs3,745,148 which represents a cost overrun of 1.72%.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the contractor was Future Builders Co. Ltd.

As far as the last part of the question is concerned, I am advised that the amount of money spent on fencing and upgrading of the yard was Rs478,500 and Rs432,673 respectively.

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME – DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS, BENEFICIARIES, ETC.

(No. B/1255) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether in regard to the Empowerment Programme, he will state –

- (a) the criteria laid down for the disbursement of funds, and
- (b) the names of the beneficiaries as at to date.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1251)

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – GRANTS

(No. B/1256) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Private Secondary Schools Authority, information as to the criteria laid down for the allocation of grants to private secondary schools.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1234)

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – BLUEPRINT

(No. B/1257) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if Government proposes to render public the Blueprint on the state of private secondary schools, and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I wish to thank the hon. Member for providing me the opportunity to clear out a misunderstanding on this issue, as a result of reports carried by certain sections of the local media.

In fact, in March 2006, I requested the Director of PSSA to favour me with his personal views on the current situation in the private secondary school sector and to submit his recommendations on the way forward with a view to allowing my Ministry to reflect further on the development of that sector. The Director of PSSA has accordingly submitted a report to me which is being examined in the context of the ongoing educational reforms and in line with the new philosophy of Government.

The Report is therefore for internal use and will be an input to the proposals that will be formulated for the sector in due course after proper final consultations with all the stakeholders. At this stage, therefore, the question of releasing the report of the Director of the PSSA does not arise.

In due course, I shall come up with policy proposals for an overhauling of the private secondary school sector generally. I thank the Hon. Member for her interest in the matter and I take this opportunity to invite her as well as any other member of the House to submit to me their views to that effect.

PALAIS DES SPORT-FORUM – SPORTS ACTIVITIES

(No. B/1258) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to whether the sports associations of Curepipe have been refused access to the use of the *Palais des Sport-Forum* for carrying out sports activities and, if so, if the Municipal Council proposes to review its decision.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC BEACHES - DANGEROUS BATHING ZONES

(No. B/1259) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that, despite the posting of warning signs indicating dangerous zones at sea, people continue to swim thereat and, if so, will he state if Government is proposing to introduce legislation to make it an offence.

Reply: I am advised that, in line with its policy to ensure the safety and security of public beach users, the Beach Authority has, in collaboration with the National Coast Guard, installed warning signs indicating dangerous bathing zones on some 21 public beaches across the island. Furthermore, the Beach Authority has, in November 2005, undertaken the demarcation of a dangerous bathing zone at Flic-en-Flac public beach through the installation of red-coloured buoys and floats.

However, I am advised that, apart from cautioning people and creating awareness, neither the Beach Authority nor the National Coast Guard have control over people swimming in dangerous bathing zones nor the power to prevent people from going at sea in dangerous zones or during adverse weather conditions.

In regard to enacting legislation to make it an offence for people to swim in dangerous zones, in spite of warning signs, it is believed that this measure would not solve the problem *per se*. In fact, it could even be perceived as an attempt to restrict individual freedom. However, the different authorities will continue collaborating and reinforcing action to sensitise and educate people on the associated risks of wandering into dangerous zones at sea. It is believed that people should be able to act responsibly, the more so when their own safety is at stake.

PLAINE MAGNIEN – MUSLIM CEMETERY

(No. B/1260) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether he will state if he has received a letter dated 21 September 2006 from the *Association d'Aide Fraternelle Musulmane* of Plaine Magnien, requesting for the allocation of a plot of land to be used as a Muslim cemetery and, if so, will he state the actions that have been or will be taken.

Reply: I confirm having received an application dated 21 September 2006 from the “*Association d'Aide Fraternelle Musulmane*” of Plaine Magnien requesting a portion of land to be used as a Muslim cemetery.

I am pleased to inform the House than an appropriate plot of privately owned land adjoining the existing cemetery has already been identified. Action has been initiated to obtain the agreement of the owners in regard to

the use of the land. Upon obtention of such agreement, the land will be acquired and vested in the Ministry of Local Government.

RAMPE LE MOIRT – ROAD SAFETY MEASURES

(No. B/1261) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware of the existence of a dangerous curve on the road from Mare d'Albert to Plaine Magnien, near the region commonly known as Rampe Le Moirt and, if so, will he state if Government is proposing to take necessary actions to render this place safe for the road users.

Reply: I am informed that a number of road safety measures already exist along the road from Mare d'Albert to Plaine Magnien, near the bend in the region commonly known as Rampe Le Moirt. These measures are –

- (i) footpaths alongside the traffic lanes on both sides of the road to segregate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic;
- (ii) traffic warning signs placed 50m before the bend;
- (iii) prohibition of on-street parking and standing along the bend;
- (iv) continuous white line to prevent overtaking at the bend, and
- (v) handrails on the right hand side of the curve towards Plaine Magnien.

However, to improve safety further, the Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit will place additional warning and speed limit signs and reflectorised chevron signs to carry out a survey to further improve the delineation of the bend. The Police Department is also being requested to carry out speed checks in the region.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS - CREATION

(No. B/1262) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Co-operation whether, in regard to the creation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), he will state the progress achieved so far in regard to the negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP).

(Withdrawn)

**NATIONAL DETOXIFICATION CENTRE – MEDICAL &
PARAMEDICAL STAFF**

(No. B/1263) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the National Detoxification Centre at Barkly, she will state –

- (a) if the medical and paramedical staff thereat are encountering problems in dealing with substance abusers, and
- (b) the role of treatment centres and other NGOs in the implementation of the treatment and aftercare programmes of this Centre.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1244)

**L'AVENIR, ST. PIERRE, DAGOTIERE, VUILLEMIN, QUARTIER
MILAIRE & PROVIDENCE – WATER SUPPLY**

(No. B/1264) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he is aware that there are problems in the supply of water in the regions of l'Avenir, St. Pierre, Dagotière, Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire and Providence and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: The regions of l'Avenir, St. Pierre, Dagotière, Vuillemin and Quartier Militaire are supplied with water from the La Marie Treatment works, through different service reservoirs situated at Côte d'Or, Alma and Quartier Militaire.

During the normal period, water is generally supplied round the clock to the areas of Côte d'Or, Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire and Providence and at staggered hours aggregated to 12 hours to l'Avenir and Upper Dagotière, except when there are repair and maintenance works.

Presently, we are in the dry season. The storage capacity of the Mareaux-Vacoas reservoir is around 8% below normal. The production at La Marie Treatment Plant has been, therefore, reduced from 115,000 to 85,000 cubic metres daily, which has compelled the CWA to reduce the hours of supply. To make things worst, there is a stretch of about 10 kilometres of pipe from Camp Fouquereaux to Alma Reservoir which, due to old age, often burst, causing major water disruption in the region. As this stretch goes through private land, repairs take longer than usual because permission to access the site has to be sought and obtained.

The CWA will shortly appoint a consultant to carry out a study and detailed design of improvement works for water supply to Highlands, Camp Fouquereaux and Alma regions. These works will also improve water supply in the regions of l'Avenir, St. Pierre, Dagotièrè, Vuillemin and Quartier Militaire.

QUARTIER MILITAIRE - SWIMMING POOL PROJECT

(No. B/1265) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the swimming pool project at Quartier Militaire, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: As I already informed the House in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/251 in April this year, an extent of land of about 1.7 hectares was vested in the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the construction of a swimming pool, parking facilities as well as other sports facilities at Quartier Militaire.

However, in December 2004, the Ministry of Housing and Lands retrieved part of the land for the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research to provide sports facilities to the students of Quartier Militaire State Secondary School and to the community after school hours.

As regards Quartier Militaire, there is presently a number of sports facilities such as a stadium, football grounds, volleyball and basket ball pitches in the region.

In view of the prevailing economic situation, my Ministry is providing major sports infrastructure on a priority basis subject to availability of funds and land.

Accordingly, the construction of a swimming pool at Quartier Militaire may be considered once land and funds would be available.

**MAHATMA GANDHI SSS – MOKA, SOLFERINO, FLACQ and
NOUVELLE FRANCE – CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/1266) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the Mahatma Gandhi State Secondary Schools of Moka, Solferino, Flacq and Nouvelle France, he will state –

- (a) the number of blocks;
 - (i) to be constructed
 - (ii) already constructed
 - (iii) under construction, and
- (b) the date on which all the blocks are expected to be handed over to the respective schools, and
- (c) the number of students who have enrolled at each school.

Reply: With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that according to the infrastructural programme of my Ministry, nine blocks each are to be constructed at MGSS Moka/MGSS Solferino and MGSS Central Flacq as per the details that I am tabling.

For Moka MGSS, two classrooms blocks and one toilet block have already been constructed and handed over to my Ministry. As regards MGSS Solferino, one classroom block, one toilet block and one Administration block have been completed. For Central Flacq MGSS, two classroom blocks and two toilet blocks have been completed.

One Science block each, is under construction at MGSS Moka/MGSS Solferino and MGSS Central Flacq.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been given to understand that the Science block at MGSS Moka and MGSS Solferino respectively will be ready by end December 2007 whereas that for Flacq MGSS will be ready by end February 2007. Concerning the remaining blocks, they are presently being designed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) and they have been included in the list of priority infrastructural projects for 2007/2008 prepared by my Ministry.

Concerning the number of students enrolled at each of the MGSS the figures are as follows –

MGSS Moka	-	468
MGSS Solferino	-	470
MGSS Central Flacq	-	526
MGSS Nouvelle France	-	249

I would like to inform the hon. Member that with regard to the Nouvelle France MGSS, the 131 students of Form I and the 118 students of Form II are presently accommodated at Nouvelle France State College due to the fact that –

- (i) sufficient space is available in that school, and
- (ii) the school buildings of the MGSS have not yet been constructed.

My Ministry is therefore making optimum utilisation of space to accommodate the students of Nouvelle France MGSS. In view of the present Government's policy to transform all State Secondary Schools/Colleges and MGSS into Form I – VI schools, my Ministry is presently studying all the implications for the construction of Nouvelle France MGSS.

My Ministry is working closely with the MPI to speeding up the completion for the remaining blocks of all the three MGSSs.

MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCES – GOVT. POLICY

(No. B/1267) Mr J.C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in

regard to the bad weather allowances, he will state if Government has devised a new policy, following the meetings he has had with the different fishers organisations of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Reply: In June 2006 Government approved a set of new criteria for the payment of bad weather allowance (BWA) to registered fishers in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues as follows -

- (i) a bad weather day will be defined as a day when the sea is rough to moderate, or moderate to rough;
- (ii) computation for payment of bad weather allowance be done on a daily basis excluding Sundays and public holidays;
- (iii) payment be effected every month. The fisher should, however, have his card duly stamped for at least one month immediately preceding the month of payment. and
- (iv) the newly registered fishers would be eligible to bad weather allowance only up to retirement age.

For the purpose of payment of bad weather allowance, both Mauritius and Rodrigues have been divided into 4 zones for the assessment of the state of the sea in the lagoon.

As regards the state of the sea in off lagoon, it would be assessed in two areas for Mauritius, whereas the state of the off lagoon in Rodrigues is the same everywhere.

According to the new criteria lagoon fishers are paid bad weather allowance only on days when the weather is bad in the zone in which they are fishing, whereas formerly they were paid bad weather allowance irrespective of the zone in which they were fishing. This targeted approach has led to better use of funds, but for lagoon fishers' point of view, this

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resulted in a reduction in the amount of bad weather allowance obtained by them.

Following the implementation of the new policy, fishers of Mauritius and Rodrigues made representations for reversion to the old system of payment of bad weather allowance.

I am advised that, my colleague the substantive Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries chaired several meetings of the Consultative Committee comprising the representatives of fishers of Mauritius and Rodrigues and officials from the Fisheries Division of my Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Environment & National Development Unit, the Meteorological Services, National Coast Guard and Development Bank of Mauritius in order to look into the requests of the fishers. Mr Grandcourt, Commissioner for Fisheries from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, also attended the first meeting. Following this meeting the “*Syndicat des Pêcheurs de Maurice*” submitted a memorandum requesting *inter alia*, for a revision of the new criteria for payment of bad weather allowance.

A Technical Committee was subsequently set up in the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries to discuss the proposals of the “*Syndicat des Pêcheurs de Maurice*”.

Several meetings of the technical committee were held and agreement was reached on the following issues –

- (a) the two outer lagoon zones of Mauritius shall be merged and considered as only one zone, as requested by the “*Syndicat des Pêcheurs de Maurice*”, following consultation with the Meteorological Services;
- (b) no fisher shall be issued with a fisherman card to fish exclusively in the lagoon in order to allow for the regeneration of the lagoon ecosystem;
- (c) lagoon fishers may voluntarily opt for registration as lagoon/off lagoon fishers. However, prior to being issued with lagoon/off lagoon cards they will be provided with the necessary training at the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre, (FiTEC), of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my colleague, the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries also met the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues to discuss the

concerns of Rodriguan fishers and in this context, he effected a visit to Rodrigues.

All policy decisions adopted relating to fishers for mainland Mauritius will be applicable to Rodrigues as a matter of principle.

PAILLES, CITE JONCTION – BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1268) Mr J.C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of the bridge at Cité Jonction, Pailles, he will state –

- (a) the name of the consultant and the date of his appointment;
- (b) the date the tender was launched;
- (c) the name of the successful tenderer;
- (d) the cost and details of the project, and
- (e) the date the construction was completed.

Reply: I am informed that the consultant for the construction of the bridge at Cité Jonction, Pailles, is the Road Development Authority which is also supervising the project.

Tenders were invited on 24 and 25 November 2005. The successful tenderer was Rehm Grinaker Construction Co. Ltd. and the contract was awarded on 17 March 2006.

The contract amount is Rs39,804,041.50 and the scope of works is as follows –

- design and construction of a new single span bridge complete with footpaths and parapets;
- upgrading and re-alignment of approach roads;
- construction of footpaths and drains;
- displacement of water, electricity and telephone services;
- protection of river banks and cleaning of river beds;
- road lighting;
- road furniture (traffic signs and road markings), and

- other ancillary works.

The contractual completion date of the project is 24 December 2006. However, the bridge component of the project was completed and opened to traffic on 06 September 2006.

There has been a request from the hon. Minister James Burty David for the footpath to be extended up to the motorway and the matter is being considered by the RDA.

I wish to express my appreciation to the hon. Minister for his keen interest and support to see that the project is completed on time.

LES SALINES – INCINERATION PLANT

(No. B/1269) Mr J.C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that the incineration plant at Les Salines was recently out of order and, if so, will he state the reasons thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that the incineration plant at Les Salines is closed since July 2006 due to difficulties encountered by the Municipal Council for the procurement of LP Gas. The Municipal Council launched a tender exercise on 31 May 2006 for the supply of LP Gas in respect of financial year 2006/2007 and the closing date was 14 June 2006. However, no bid was received. Furthermore, Total Ltd. D31/IF/W06/5

removed its gas storage tank on 05 July 2006, as the demand for gas was almost negligible.

The Municipal Council has now taken the decision to replace LP Gas by diesel oil. Meanwhile, I wish to inform the House that there is a funeral pyre which is being utilised by the inhabitants of the region for incineration purposes.

ST. FELIX SUGAR ESTATE - CLOSURE

(No. B/1270) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to the proposed closure of St Félix Sugar Estate, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The request for the closure of St. Félix Sugar Factory has been approved by Government and an official letter to that effect has been issued by the substantive Minister on Friday 27 October 2006.