

Debate No. 05 of 18.04.2006**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS – TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS - CONSULTATIONS**

(No. B/258) 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, with regard to the annual tripartite negotiations for the determination of wage compensation, he will state if Government intends to do away with the existing arrangements and, if so, whether consultations have been held with the trade union federations and other workers' organisations.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development): I am proposing to convene the Tripartite Committee on salary compensation at the beginning of next month.

LAND RESTITUTION COMMISSION – SETTING UP

(No. B/263) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second 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 he can state if the report of the delegation having visited South Africa in view of the possible setting up of a Land Restitution Commission in Mauritius recommends the setting up of a Land Restitution Commission in Mauritius and, if so, whether Government intends to implement the recommendation.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/315 “Oral Answers to Questions”)

**SEWTOHUL, MR R. A. - SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS – STATEMENT AGAINST**

(No. B/267) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) 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, information as to whether a civil servant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation, made a statement against the Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Pope Hennessy Police Station and, if so, the reasons thereof.

Reply (The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation): I can inform the House that the Commissioner of Police has confirmed that Mr Rajnish Amallovlesh Sewtohul, First Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a declaration on 07 April 2006 at 1435 hours at Pope Hennessy Police Station alleging that he had been manhandled by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and that an inquiry was under way.

The officer has not reported such a matter to the Ministry nor to the civil service. As soon as the matter was reported in the press, particularly in Weekend 09 April 2006, an inquiry has been opened by the Responsible and Accounting Officer of the Ministry.

**H5N1 BIRD FLU - HIGH POWERED COMMITTEE –
SETTING UP**

(No. B/270) Mr A. Jugnauth (First 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 he will consider the advisability of setting up a High Powered Committee with a view to proposing the measures to be taken in case of an outbreak of the H5N1 Bird-Flu in the region.

Reply (The Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries): PQ Nos B/270 and B/342 will be replied together. As regards the setting-up of a High Powered Committee, there is already a National Emergency Preparedness Committee chaired by the Principal Veterinary Officer of my

Ministry and comprising government officials and the private sector representatives. This Committee was set up in 2004 to monitor closely the evolution of the situation and the measures that are required to prevent the outbreak of the disease in Mauritius. A National Contingency Plan has been put into place and is constantly being updated following the pattern and occurrence of the disease.

In accordance with the contingency plan, an Avian Flu Crisis Committee consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Local Government and the Police Department will coordinate actions in case of the entry of the disease.

The National Committee used to meet monthly initially but with the evolution of the disease affecting certain European and Baltic countries the Committee holds meeting weekly as from November 2005.

The measures that have already been taken regarding the importation of birds by breeders are as follows –

- (a) a ban on importation of live birds and poultry products from certain countries;
- (b) collection of samples at the Terre Rouge Estuary and in domestic farms for analysis.
- (c) reinforcement of vigilance at the airport and port;
- (d) placing of foot dips and virucidals at our ports;
- (e) distribution of posters and pamphlets by the Ministry of Health to outgoing passengers, and
- (f) acquisition of necessary equipment such as protective clothing, equipment, disinfectants and biological test kits.

A consignment of 225,000 doses of vaccine against avian flu has been ordered. A vaccination programme has already been adopted and will be implemented on arrival of vaccines.

A simulation exercise will be carried out shortly in order to assess whether the different organisations can effectively implement quarantining of affected zones, road blocks, disinfection of vehicles and other protective measures.

The importation of parent and grand parent day old chicks by the seven major poultry industries and the Animal Production Division of my Ministry are subject to strict veterinary conditions, namely –

- (i) importations are allowed only from countries known to be free from the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, as certified by the World Animal Health Organisation;
- (ii) all shipments to Mauritius arrive by air and all the crates are individually opened and health of chicks inspected by a veterinary officer;
- (iii) mortalities are recorded and dead chicks are taken to Animal Health Laboratory for disease investigation. The live chicks are closely monitored in quarantine stations for a period of two weeks by veterinary officers of Animal Health Laboratory;
- (iv) health inspectors carry out regular visits to poultry farms to ensure that proper husbandry practices are being observed and to report abnormal deaths of poultry, and
- (v) sensitisation campaigns are being carried out by AREU and the Ministry of Health on poultry farms.

CHAGOSSIANS – RETURN FROM CHAGOS ISLANDS - FACILITIES

(No. B/271) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First 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 what arrangements were made for the welcome of the Chagossians by their relatives on their return on Monday 10 April 2006.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications): I propose to reply to PQ Nos B/271 & B/278 together. Arrangements pertaining to the organisation of religious ceremony and songs for the sending off of the Chagossians on 30 March, were handled at the level of the Chagossian Community, without any specific involvement from the MPA. For its part, the MPA made necessary arrangements with regard to *inter alia* the erection of marquise, provision of chairs and refreshments and flowers to each passenger, in line with the responsibilities entrusted to the Authority for the event.

Insofar as the return of the Chagossians on 10 April was concerned, no specific requests were made to the MPA other than access to the Quay, made by the '*Comité de Soutien aux Chagossiens*'. As the return was on a normal working day, the MPA, after consultations with other stakeholders like the Mauritius Shipping Corporation and the Port Police, took the initiative of providing a marquise adjacent to the arrival lounge of the Aurélie Perrine Terminal to provide shelter to relatives and well-wishers who chose to be present on that day to welcome the Chagossians back.

The MPA as well as other port Authorities have tried to extend facilities which were appropriate and permissible in the said circumstances.

**MAMODESENE, DORA MARIE THERESA -
PASSPORT - RENEWAL**

(No. B/273) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third 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 Dora Marie Thérèse Mamodesene, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police information as to the reasons as to why the Mauritian passport issued to her in 1994 has not been renewed.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Miss Dora Marie Thérèse Mamodesene, born in Egypt on 05 October 1949, from a Mauritian parent, was issued with a Mauritian passport in 1994. At the time that the passport was issued, officers of the Passport and Immigration Office have overlooked the requirement regarding the production of a certificate of Mauritian citizenship given that she was born outside Mauritius.

In accordance with section 3 of the Passport Regulations 1969, Miss Dora Marie Theresa Mamodesene was not eligible for a Mauritian passport as she was not registered as a Mauritian citizen under section 15 of the Mauritius Citizenship Act.

On 29 March 2006, she made a fresh application for a new passport in replacement of the one, which had expired. This was not favourably considered. She was advised to apply, in the first instance, for a certificate of Mauritian citizenship for which she is eligible in accordance with section 15 of the Mauritius Citizenship Act.

She did apply for her Mauritian citizenship on 13 April 2006 and a passport will be issued to her as soon as application for citizenship is finalised.

BRAIN DRAIN - SURVEY

(No. B/274) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) 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 any survey has been or is being carried out by Government to assess the problem of brain drain in Mauritius.

Reply: The problem of brain drain is worldwide and is not specific to Mauritius. This problem exists even in the developed countries.

As regards Mauritius, I am informed that the Pay Research Bureau had, in the context of its 2003 Report, carried out a survey on recruitment and retention problems in the public sector. Findings revealed that some Ministries encountered difficulties to retain their personnel while others were unable to recruit officers in certain grades.

To improve the situation, the Pay Research Bureau proposed a series of recommendations such as employment on contract, waiving of age limit and negotiable point of entry in salary scales.

I am further informed that, the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life also carried out an exercise to assess the problems of brain drain with respect to officers in the nursing group over the period 01 July 1999 to 31 March 2006. The survey revealed that some 513 officers of the nursing cadre have left the service during the above-mentioned period. The Ministry of Health & Quality of Life has implemented a number of measures as recommended in the 2003 PRB Report to address the problem affecting the nursing cadre.

The idea of having a survey to gauge the extent of brain drain in Mauritius is a laudable one and I propose to cause the matter to be pursued.

NESC - SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

(No. B/275) Mr D. Boodhoo (The Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) 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 it is proposed to set up an independent and permanent think tank with a full-fledged team of professionals with the objective of carrying out research and advising the Government on all issues, in particular those relating to economic and social matters.

Reply: As hon. Members are aware, there already exists a well-established independent and consultative body, the National Economic and Social Council, to undertake studies on socio-economic issues of national importance and make recommendations to Government on economic and social policies.

Although this is a worthwhile proposal, it is not intended to duplicate the work of the National Economic and Social Council.

PEREYBERE PUBLIC BEACH - POLICE POST

(No. B/276) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will use his good offices to impress upon the Commissioner of Police the need to set up a Police post at the Pereybère public beach to ensure the safety of the tourists and the public thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that policing in the region of Pereybère is presently being carried out by personnel of Grand Bay Police Station, which is located about 3 kilometres away from

Pereybère. The local Police is supported by the Emergency Response Service, CID, ADSU and the Police of Tourism. In addition, regular afloat patrol is also carried out by officers of the National Coast Guard post situated at La Cuvette to ensure security at sea at Pereybère Public Beach.

However, in view of the importance of Pereybère as a tourist resort, arrangements will be made for the setting up of a Police post there to further enhance the security and safety in the area.

DETAINEE JAWAHARLALL SEETOHUL – DEATH AT GROS CAILLOUX

(No. B/277) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) 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 relevant authorities, information as to the circumstances in which one Ajay Seetohul escaped from Jail and was later found dead in the region of Gros Cailloux.

Reply: I propose to answer PQs Nos. B/277 and B/282 together as they relate to the same subject.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 27 March 2006, at approximately 18 10 hrs, during the lock-up of the Central Prison, it was discovered that convicted detainee Jawaharlall Seetohul was missing.

A search was conducted in all areas of the prison including roofs after all other detainees had been locked up. A further roll check and physical count were carried out. It was confirmed that the detainee had escaped.

The case was referred to the Police and a Departmental Enquiry was set up.

The Departmental Enquiry has not been able to establish the exact circumstances of the escape but there is anecdotal evidence that the detainee escaped by hiding himself in or under the garbage trailer. The vehicle toured the prison in the morning collecting garbage from a number of sites and left at 09 35 hours. The statements given by the Officers were checked with the CCTV images.

As a result of the inquiry, one Acting Chief Prisons Officer and one Acting Principal Prisons Officer have been interdicted on 17 April 2006, and will face disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Forces Service Commission Regulations. Four Prisons Officers are to face departmental disciplinary action.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Prisons, that no personal diary was found but three copybooks belonging to the detainee were secured at the Prison Headquarters, and copies of which have been handed over to the Police.

I am informed, by the Commissioner of Police that on 05 April 2006, a dead person identified as Jawaharlall Seetohul was found hanging by the neck with an electric wire under a mango tree at Gros Cailloux.

The Chief Police Medical Officer, who performed post-mortem, established the cause of death to be "Asphyxia due to hanging". No foul play is suspected.

A Police inquiry is being carried out to determine how Jawaharlall Seetohul effected his escape from Beau Bassin Prisons, and whether there is any negligence on the part of the Prisons Officers as well as into the circumstances that led to his death.

Since a Police enquiry is in progress, it is not advisable at this stage to reveal the contents of the copybooks. On completion of the enquiry, the relevant dossier will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

CHAGOSSIENS COMMUNITY - REQUEST FOR CELEBRATION OF MASS

(No. B/278)Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister 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 relevant authorities, information as to why the request from the Chagossiens community in relation to the celebration of a mass by the Bishop of Port Louis prior to their departure at

the departing quay and the welcoming back of their relatives on the arrival quay was not acceded to.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/271)

CHAGOS ISLANDS - HISTORICAL SITES - UPGRADING & REHABILITATION

(No. B/279) 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 state if, following the recent visit effected by the Chagossiens on the Chagos islands, a request will be made to the US Government for the upgrading and rehabilitation of important sites of historical and sentimental value to the Chagossien community.

Reply: The official of my Ministry who accompanied the Chagossians to the Chagos Archipelago has submitted a report on the visit.

According to this report, the graveyards and the churches located on Ile de Boddam and Ile de Coin are in a state of neglect.

Government will, therefore, approach the UK and the US Authorities which are physically in control of the Archipelago for the rehabilitation of the graveyards and the churches.

This request will be made without prejudice to our frequently reiterated position with regard to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD - LONDON OFFICE - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/280) 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 he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd, information as to whether any

recruitment has been made at its London Office since July 2005 and, if so, the name/s of the recruit/s and the terms and conditions of employment attached to the post/s.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications): Two persons have been recruited by the Air Mauritius London Office since July 2005.

As the second part of the question pertains to the internal operations of Air Mauritius Ltd. which is a company incorporated in accordance with the Company's Act and quoted under the Port Louis Stock Exchange, it would not be appropriate to disclose such details.

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HAJJ MISSION 2005-2006 – REPORT

(No. B/281) 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 Islamic Cultural Centre, a copy of the report of the last Hajj mission it undertook and consider the advisability of tabling same.

Reply (The Minister of Arts & Culture): I am tabling a copy of the Report of Hajj Mission 2005-2006, obtained from the Islamic Cultural Centre.

DETAINEE JAWAHARLALL SEETOHUL – DEATH

(No. B/282) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) 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 prisoner Ajay Seetohul, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to –

- (a) the date and time the prisons authorities discovered that he was missing from the Central Prisons, Beau Bassin;

- (b) if a personal diary belonging to him has been secured and, if so, if mention has been made therein regarding a certain amount of money, indicating the amount, and
- (c) if any inquiry has been carried out following the discovery of his dead body to ascertain whether there has been any foul play.

(Vide Reply to PQ NO. B/277)

CARDIAC CENTRE - PROFESSOR KALANGOS SURGICAL OPERATIONS

(No. B/323) Mr A. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state the number of surgical operations carried out at the Cardiac Centre by the Geneva team led by Professor Kalangos and give details of his future collaboration with the Centre.

Reply: As the hon. Member is aware, the team from the “*Clinique de Chirurgie Cardiovasculaire, Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève*” and the “*Association Humanitaire Coeurs pour Tous*” of Geneva, led by Prof. Kalangos has effected 9 visits to Mauritius from July 2002 to June 2005, and 2 visits as from July 2005. During these visits, the team has carried out 134 complex paediatric congenital cardiac surgeries.

The Ministry is pursuing its collaboration with the “*Association Humanitaire Coeurs pour Tous*” In fact, the next visit of the team is scheduled for June 2006. Moreover, a cardiac surgeon, sponsored by the *Association* is coming to Mauritius regularly to perform adult cardiac surgery. The surgeon, who is presently working at the Cardiac Centre, arrived last Sunday itself.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life proposes to discuss further avenues of collaboration with Prof. Kalangos during his proposed visit in June 2006, in particular regarding training opportunities for our medical and paramedical staff.

**SUBRAMANIA BHARATI EYE HOSPITAL
– CORNEAL GRAFTINGS**

(No. B/324) Mr A. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to corneas, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof available at the eye bank to date;
- (b) the number of corneal grafts that has been carried out since July 2005, and
- (c) the policy of his Ministry in respect of the training of local professionals to carry out such grafts.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, corneas are usually obtained from overseas for grafting. In fact, when the corneas arrive in Mauritius from abroad, they are grafted immediately on the needy patients. In view of a limited number of corneas received compared to the demand for corneal grafting, preservation of corneas at the eye bank has not been necessary.

As regards part (b), I am informed that since July 2005, eight corneal graftings have been performed under strict supervision at Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital. These corneas were received from Sri Lanka.

Regarding part (c), I am advised that our local specialists are qualified and trained to carry out corneal grafts. In fact, the specialist qualification for ophthalmology includes a module on corneal grafting. Furthermore, the local surgeons are trained at the hospital as and when visiting specialists carry out corneal graftings at the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital. However, difficult cases of corneal graftings are sent to Netralaya Eye Hospital of Chennai, India.

***"CONVENTION SUR LA DIVERSITE CULTURELLE" -
RATIFICATION***

(No. B/325) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Co-operation whether Government proposes to ratify the "*Convention sur la diversité culturelle*" which the UNESCO adopted in October 2005 and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: Mauritius has already ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions on 29 March 2006.

May I refer the hon. Member to the website of UNESCO at <http://portal.unesco.org/culture> which reported the meeting the hon. Prime Minister had with the Director General of UNESCO in Paris on 30 March, 2006 and wherein this ratification was mentioned. May I quote the relevant part "He (meaning the Director General) also congratulated Mauritius for becoming the first (and only country so far) that has ratified the three Cultural Conventions for the preservation of the cultural diversity (i.e. the 1972 Cultural Heritage Convention, the 2003 Convention on the Preservation of Intangible Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions)".

For the benefit of the Member I am laying on the Table a printed version of the download from the UNESCO website.

SC/HSC EXAM FEES - EXEMPTION

(No. B/326) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he proposes to exempt students from the full payment of the examination fees of the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate.

Reply: I wish to remind the House that it was under the Labour Government who in 1999 decided to grant 50% subsidy on fees payable by school going Mauritian students for the School Certificate (SC), Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations run by Cambridge in November/December, irrespective of the income level of the parents in an attempt to alleviate the financial burden of these parents. This measure applies only to school going candidates taking these examinations for the first time to encourage the students to do their

best at the first attempt. The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions is already providing financial assistance to the tune of 50% for first timers and 100% to second timers who come from poor families benefiting from social aid. The Employee Welfare Fund also has different loan assistance schemes whereby parents can take loans for the payment of examination fees.

However, let me remind the House and particularly the hon. Member that the previous Government of which she was a Member had decided to target the subsidy on SC and HSC examinations only to those students whose family income did not exceed MUR 30,000 per month.

I am surprised that, now in the Opposition, she is asking to exempt students from the full payment. I cannot understand this incoherence except that it smacks of political demagogy at the expense of our students.

In view of the current financial constraints the present arrangements for 50% subsidy will be maintained. If in future the need arises to review the whole scheme, same will be considered.

CELLULAR PHONES - REGISTRATION

(No. B/327) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether in regard to the registration of the accounts and identities of the users of cellular phones, he will state where matters stand and whether the deadline imposed for such registration was extended and, if so, why.

Reply: I am informed by the ICT Authority that it issued a Directive (Telecommunication Order 3 of 2004) on 28 April 2004 for all operators providing an ICT service to the public to keep records of the details and particulars of all their subscribers/customers and that the Telecommunication Order (TO) would be effective as from 01 June 2004.

Operators were given a 6-month period as from 01 June 2004, i.e. up to 30 November 2004, to complete the registration of all customers on their networks, failing which the operators would be required to discontinue provision of service to unregistered users.

Towards the end of the 6-month period, the mobile operators (Emtel and Cellplus) made representations to the Authority, as they had not been able to register all the unknown users and requested for an extension. On 14 December 2004, the ICT Board gave its approval to extend the deadline to 31 May 2005.

Towards the end of the new cut-off date, mobile operators requested for another extension, as all unknown users were not registered despite their efforts through advertising, press communiqués and SMS's sent to prepaid customers. The deadline was further extended to 31 August 2005.

On 31 August 2005, the consumer organisations, ICP and ACIM, made representations to the Authority that prejudice would be caused to many consumers if disconnection were effected at midnight on 31 August 2005.

The ICT Authority held an urgent meeting on 31 August 2005 with the mobile operators and the consumer organisations to discuss the issue. At the meeting, the following points were raised -

- There is a definite time lag between the moment a paper registration is completed by a subscriber, and the moment when the same record is captured on the Network Operating System (NOS) of the operators.
- In the implementation of T03 of 2004, there is a potential risk that the time lag may cause a disconnection of service to a subscriber who has already registered his/her SIM but who is not yet captured on the NOS.

Following discussions, it was agreed that –

- The provisions of the Telecommunication Order No. 3 of 2004 shall remain applicable;
- The mobile operators would not disconnect any subscriber, pending confirmation to the Authority that all registered subscribers were captured on the NOS;
- The mobile operators would provide information on the number of subscribers captured and the estimated number of subscribers who had not yet been registered to the Authority, and

- The deadline for the registration of SIM cards would be determined upon receipt of the updated information from the operators.

On 12 April 2006, the ICT Authority had another meeting with the mobile operators, whereby the operators informed that they will be coming with new proposals for better enforcement of the provisions of the TO3 of 2004.

GRAND BOIS - HOUSING UNITS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/328) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NHDC Ltd., information as to whether all the housing units built in Grand Bois have been delivered and, if so, a list of the beneficiaries.

Reply: I am advised that 39 housing units have been built under the Firinga III Housing project at Grand Bois. Out of 39 housing units, 34 have been delivered.

I shall arrange to have the list placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

RIVIERE DES ANGUILLES – MARKET FAIR & SWIMMING POOL

(No. B/329) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment & NDU whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a covered market fair and a swimming pool in Rivière des Anguilles, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In reply to PQ No. I B/110 in August 2005 on this subject matter, I informed the House that the projects for the construction of a market fair and a swimming pool at Rivière des Anguilles were put on hold following representations made by the Parish of the locality. I also indicated that the Ministry of Housing & Lands was requested to identify alternative land in the region of Rivière des Anguilles for the implementation of the two projects.

The Ministry of Housing & Lands has informed my Ministry that there is no uncommitted and vacant State land in that region.

I have been advised that the Ministry of Youth & Sports proposes to make a request to the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries to consider the swapping of the land at Rivière des Anguilles earmarked for the swimming pool project with another plot of land belonging to Bel Air St Félix company in the context of the factory closure exercise. My Ministry proposed to make a similar request for the market fair project.

TYACK – ROYAL ROAD – PAVEMENTS

(No. B/330) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of pavements along the Royal Road at Tyack, he will state why it was not carried out along the whole length of the road, indicating what remedial measures, if any, are envisaged.

Reply: I am informed that for each financial year, there is a programme of work for the construction of footpaths and drains to improve safety along classified roads and that available funds are distributed for works all over the island.

Footpaths and drains along Savanne Road from Tyack to Rivière des Anguilles, covering a length of about 2 km, have been carried out over the years. There is need to provide such services for a further extent of 300 metres.

I have requested the RDA to carry out a survey and thereafter I will look into the possibility of including this request in the next financial year.

SC & HSC EXAMINATIONS - ORGANISATION

(No. B/331) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will consider the advisability of introducing the 'O' level and the 'A' level examinations for Mauritian students under the aegis of the University

of Mauritius with the collaboration of the MIE, the MES and the University of Mauritius.

Reply: National external examination at the end of secondary schooling serves two purposes –

- (i) to certify that secondary education has been completed at a satisfactory level of achievement, and
- (ii) to select young persons for higher education, professional training and ultimately for the world of work.

As these examinations are internationally recognised, they exert a powerful influence over the nature and content of schooling and of performance and achievement.

‘O’ level and the ‘A’ level examinations, namely SC and HSC examinations, have been organised since 1940 under the Cambridge International Examination Syndicate. This, in fact, was a general practice adopted by all countries belonging to the Commonwealth as it conferred a uniform system of standardisation and recognition in certification.

The Cambridge International Examination Syndicate has over time withstood its reputation of being a reliable, internationally recognised and world-class benchmark in the organisation and certification of examinations. Because of their status and international currency, these qualifications have been the main authority for most students in Mauritius to access tertiary education throughout the world and enter the world of work without seeking for equivalence of qualifications.

Over the years, there has been more consultation between Mauritius and Cambridge in connection with syllabus content and assessment arrangements. For instance, the syllabuses for French, Agriculture, Asian Languages etc..., have been developed with strong input from Mauritius. new syllabuses, such as travel or tourism have been designed in consultation and in response to the needs of Mauritius. At SC/‘O’ level, 16 subjects and around 30 components are now marked locally. The markers have been fully trained in the marking criteria and this has a positive backwash effect on the teaching/learning process.

It is not proposed, for the time being, to introduce local 'O' level and 'A' level examinations.

However, in the context of the curriculum reforms, my Ministry will examine the whole issue of assessment of students and will come up with proposals and recommendations.

GRAND GAUBE-SSRN HOSPITAL – BUS SERVICE

(No. B/332) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he will consider the advisability of providing a bus service from Grand Gaube to the SSRN Hospital via Goodlands.

Reply: I am informed that, in order to relieve passengers travelling between Grand Gaube and SSRN Hospital, the NTA is considering the advisability of diverting some trips of Route 22 (Grand Gaube-Port Louis via Goodlands) through SSRN Hospital.

AV FISTULA SURGERY & DIALYSIS – NUMBER OF PATIENTS

(No. B/333) **Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will state the number of patients –

- (a) awaiting for AV Fistula, and
- (b) on central line undergoing dialysis at different regional hospitals.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that, as at 14 April 2006, from a total of 512 patients who are on haemodialysis treatment in the Government hospitals, 24 patients are on the waiting list for AV Fistula.

In addition, there are 79 patients diagnosed for renal failure who are being prepared to start haemodialysis in due course. In this respect, arrangements are being made at the level of the regional hospitals for the surgeons to perform the AV Fistula surgery on those patients during extra sessions.

Concerning part (b), as regards the number of patients undergoing dialysis on central line in the regional hospitals as at 14 April 2006, the figures stood as follows –

(i)	Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital	-	11
(ii)	SSRN Hospital	-	6
(iii)	Flacq Hospital	-	6
(iv)	J. Nehru Hospital	-	8
(v)	Victoria Hospital	-	16

From a total number of 47 patients being dialysed on central line, 23 of them have already had their AV Fistulae done. They are waiting for the fistulae to mature before being utilised for dialysis.

CENTRAL FLACQ - MARKET FAIR

(No. B/334) **Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the Flacq market place and, if so, will he say what short term and long term measures will be taken in connection therewith.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the market fair at Central Flacq is indeed in a deplorable state.

I am further informed that for the short term the Council is planning to carry out necessary patching works within this current financial year.

With regard to long term measure, the Council has decided to construct a new market.

CAMP MARCELIN VILLAGE/QUATRE COCOS – ROAD WORKS

(No. B/335) **Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping whether he is aware that the road leading from the village of Camp Marcelin to Quatre Cocos is in a deplorable state and, if so, will he say what measures will be taken to rehabilitate the road.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Local Government that the road leading from the village of Camp Marcelin to Quatre Cocos is not a public road. It forms part of the property of Constance Sugar Estate, and runs along the sugar cane field. It is about 500 metres long and 6.0 metres wide, and being given that it is a short cut, most people make use of the road.

Improvement works can only be carried out when the whole extent of the road is declared public. I will request my colleague, the Minister of Local Government, to take up this matter with the Constance Sugar Estate.

HOSPITALS – MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, MAINTENANCE, ETC.

(No. B/336) Dr. P. Ramlohl (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Asset Management Programme, he will –

- (a) table a list of the medical equipment utilised in hospitals in each speciality;
- (b) the total amount spent by the Ministry between 2000 and 2005 on these equipment;
- (c) the company/ies responsible for their maintenance between 2000 and 2005 and the amount disbursed, and
- (d) the number of equipment not in use after breakdown between 2000 and 2005.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, the information asked for is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as possible.

As regards part (b), a total amount of Rs662,323,431 was spent for the purchase, maintenance and repairs of equipment for period 2000-2005.

Concerning part (c), the planned preventive maintenance of biomedical equipment forms an integral part of the Physical Asset Management Programme. In fact, the Biomedical Engineering Unit of the Ministry maintains a certain number of biomedical equipment. However, for some equipment including high-tech ones for which the required technical knowledge, skills and competencies are not available at the level of the Ministry, the maintenance and repair works are contracted out to local private firms. In this respect, I am tabling the list of firms which were responsible for the maintenance and repairs of a series of equipment in the hospitals between period 2000-2005. The total amount disbursed for such services amounts to Rs34,423,431.

With regard to part (d) of the question there is a list of 78 medical equipment which are not in use following their breakdown between 2000 to 2005.

FLORÉAL ROAD - DRAINS AND HANDRAILS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/337) **Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if consideration will now be given to the construction of drains and handrails alongside Floréal Road between the St. Paul Junction and the Allée Brillant Junction.

Reply: I am informed that the distance between St. Paul Junction and Allée Brillant Junction is approximately 600m.

A survey has already been carried out and costs estimate assessed. I will look into the possibility of implementing the project during the next financial year.

MON DÉSSERT ALMA SUGAR ESTATE - POST OFFICE – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/338) **Dr P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the building presently housing the Post Office at the Railway Square nearby Minissy Office of the Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate, he will consider –

- (a) its rehabilitation and conversion into a community centre or social hall, and
- (b) carrying out drain works in the vicinity thereof.

Reply: My Ministry will carry out a survey of the Post Office building and, if it is confirmed that it is structurally safe, the rehabilitation and conversion exercise can be carried out in consultation with the Ministry of Social Security or Ministry of Environment & NDU.

As regards the drain works in the vicinity, the Road Development Authority or the National Development Unit will be requested to carry out a study in the first place.

**PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE
– FOOTBALL GROUND – FOG LIGHTS**

(No. B/339) **Dr. P. Ramlooll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if consideration will now be given for the installation of fog lights on the football ground at Providence.

Reply: The football ground at Providence, Quartier Militaire, is under the control of the District Council of Moka/Flacq. I am informed that the Council has no project for the time being for the installation of fog lights at the Providence football ground due to unavailability of funds.

However, I am informed that the National Development Unit is prepared to implement the project subject to funds being made available and the lighting system is maintained by the District Council.

Accordingly, my Ministry in consultation with the District Council will liaise with the National Development Unit to consider including the project in its programme of works.

NHDC LTD. – CASTING OF SLABS – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/340) **Mr R. N. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the casting of slabs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NHDC Ltd, information as to the number of persons who during the period July 2005 to March 2006 have –

- (a) applied for financial assistance therefor, and
- (b) who have benefited therefrom.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that 4237 applications have been received during the period July 2005 to March 2006.

As regards part (b) of the question, 1678 persons, I am further advised, have benefited from Government grant during the same period.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT
- MEDICATION & MOSQUITO REPELLANTS

(No. B/341) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the donation of medication and mosquito repellent by the Indian Government to fight the chikungunya disease, he will state when the consignment was received, indicating how it has been used.

Reply: During the visit of His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of the Republic of India, he announced the donation of 79 tons of mosquito repellents by the Government of the Republic of India to be used in our national campaign to fight the chikungunya disease.

A first consignment of 5.5 tons air freighted by Air Mauritius reached Mauritius on Monday 20 March 2006.

A second consignment of 37 tons, also air freighted by Air Mauritius, was received on Thursday 23 March 2006.

The first two consignments consisted of mosquito coils and sprays. The remaining balance of 43 tons, consisting of cream and mats, is expected to reach Mauritius today on board the Indian Naval Ship "Suvarna".

On 27 March 2006, a symbolic donation ceremony was organised at Jawaharlal Nehru hospital in the presence of my colleague, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation, His Excellency the High Commissioner of India and other eminent personalities.

As at todate, 20,960 mosquito coils and 15,700 sprays have been distributed. The recipients, so far, are members of the public who attended the donation ceremony, all hospitals and health centres for patients suffering from chikungunya, charitable institutions, the forestry department, Rodrigues and Agalega.

The Ministry has adopted the following strategies for the distribution of the mosquito repellents –

- (a) a roadmap has been established showing the regions or localities where most cases have been reported;
- (b) organisation of community mobilisation activities in the specific localities by involving community leaders and other *Forces Vives* where the repellents are distributed to the participants;
- (c) collaborative links have been established with other Ministries/Departments such as the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit so that distribution of the mosquito repellents can be effected during their cleaning campaigns.

Officers of the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life are having meetings with the different partners concerned such as the MPs, PPS, Municipality and District Council Counsellors and community leaders to ensure that the distribution is done during the education and mobilisation campaign as well as the clearing campaign.

H5N1 BIRD-FLU VIRUS - MEASURES

(No. B/342) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to ensure that the Bird-Flu virus H5N1 is not being brought into the country through the import of breeders.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/270)

NGO TRUST FUND - MICRO-PROJECTS - JULY 2005 - JANUARY 2006

(No. B/343) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NGO Trust Fund, information as to -

- (a) the number of micro-projects approved by the Fund from July 2005 to January 2006, and
- (b) whether the Fund is reviewing its policy in regard to future micro-projects.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, during the period July 2005 to January 2006, the Fund approved disbursement in respect of four NGOs in Rodrigues, but I wish to inform the House that partial funding of micro-projects by the NGO Trust Fund is an annual exercise normally carried out around May and June. Funds in respect of micro-projects approved by the NGO Trust Fund Committee are usually disbursed at the end of each financial year, that is, in June.

As concerns part (b), I am advised that there has been no policy change as regards the partial funding of micro-projects by the Fund. The standing practice so far has been to publish a "Press Communiqué" inviting NGOs to submit applications for partial funding of micro-projects. Being given that the NGO Trust Fund was reconstituted in December 2005 and the new Board met in January this year, the "Press Communiqué" was released in March and the deadline for submission of applications was set at the 14th April. 106 project proposals received are being examined for release of funds in June.

FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME - STUDENTS - FAKE PASSES

(No. B/344) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the free bus transport scheme for students, he is aware that -

- (a) non-students are using fake student's passes to benefit from the scheme;
- (b) students are using multiple bus passes to travel from their home to different destinations, and

- (c) bus owners refuse to collect students before 9.00 a.m. and after 3.00 p.m. and, if so, what remedial measures he proposes to take.

Reply: With regard to parts (a) and (b), I am informed by the National Transport Authority that it has not received any complaint from bus operators or any other concerned party to the effect that non-students are using fake bus passes or are using multiple passes to travel between their home and different destinations.

As regards part (c), it is a fact that complaints have been received from educational institutions as well as students that buses of mainly individual bus operators fail to pick up students both in the morning and in the afternoon.

The NTA inquires into all the complaints and the cases are referred to the Authority for disciplinary action. Pending disciplinary action, the NTA effects a deduction of Rs5,500 which is equivalent to 5 days' allowance payment. So far, deductions have been made in 15 cases.