

Debate No. 18 of 20.06.06

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ASSOCIATION CITOYENS RESIDENCE KENNEDY –
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX - MEETING

(No. B/771) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms 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 on 19 May 2006 a meeting of the *Association Citoyens Résidence Kennedy* which was being held in the Municipal complex of *Résidence Kennedy*, Monseigneur Leen Street, Quatre Bornes was interrupted by Police Officers and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the President of the *Association Citoyens Résidence Kennedy* requested the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes to put at its disposal the Municipal Complex at *Résidence Kennedy*, Mgr Leen Avenue, Quatre Bornes for a meeting on Friday 19 May, 2006 from 19 00 hours to 21 00 hours. The Council acceded to the request, subject to the Association paying a fee of Rs200 to meet the overtime expenses of the hall attendant after 19 00 hours.

I am given to understand that it is the policy of the Municipal Council to put municipal halls at the disposal of registered associations of the Town on weekdays from 09 00 hours to 19 00 hours free of charge, and for all activities after 19 00 hours, an attendant fee of Rs100 per hour is claimed by the Municipal Council from the user to meet the overtime expenses of the attendant.

I am also informed that the President of the *Association Citoyens Résidence Kennedy* refused to pay the fee of Rs200 for the use of the hall after 19 00 hrs. Instead, he decided to start the meeting earlier with a view to ending the meeting well before 19 00 hours so that he does not have to pay the required amount.

However, the meeting of the Association on 19 May 2006 went on beyond 19 00 hours and the members of the Association were reluctant to

leave the hall. Therefore, at about 2000 hours, the attendant on duty at the Municipal Complex called for Police assistance.

Police Officers who came on the spot told the President of the Association that he had to comply with the municipal regulations. Thereafter, the members of the Association left the complex at about 20 30 hours.

No incident was reported.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the Prime Minister aware that, in the past, the association had never paid any fees to the Municipal Council?

The Prime Minister: The regulation says clearly that it is free of charge to use the Municipal Council from 09 00 in the morning to 19 00 hours. After 19 00 hours it is still free to use the Municipal Council, but somebody has to pay the attendant. That is why a minimum fee of Rs100 per hour is claimed for the attendant. If they spend two hours, it is Rs200. I cannot see why they refused to pay that amount.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the Prime Minister aware that for the inhabitants of *Residence Kennedy* it is very difficult for them to have their meeting before 19 00 hours as well as to be able to pay the fee.

The Prime Minister: Who will then pay the fee to the attendant?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In the past, the fee was waived because the inhabitants were unable to pay it. I would ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware that, when the Municipal complex was inaugurated, it was meant to be a meeting place for the inhabitants of *Residence Kennedy*, especially to help drive out the locality from the social problems that were there.

The Prime Minister: All that I can do is to take up the matter with the Municipal Council.

ABERCROMBIE POLICE STATION – BUILDING - REHABILITATION

(No. B/772) Mrs B. Juggoo (First 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 is aware of the state of the building of the Police Station at Abercrombie and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the building currently housing the Abercrombie Police Station is a very old one. In fact, it was constructed during the French colonial period.

The roof of the building has been leaking heavily. In August 2004, an in-depth survey of the building was done by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. The scope of works for a complete rehabilitation of the Police Station has been finalised and tender documents have been approved by the Central Tender Board in April 2006.

Mrs Juggoo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see that accommodation is provided to women constables who are working and also to see that the toilets which are in bad orders are taken care of?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly take up the matter with the Commissioner of Police.

CENTRAL PRISONS, BEAU BASSIN – SMF MEMBERS - POSTING

(No. B/773) Mr Y.Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Central Prisons of Beau Bassin, he will impress upon the Commissioner of Police, the need to post members of the Special Mobile Force on a permanent basis thereat, with a view to helping the Prisons Authorities to maintain discipline and order.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the responsibility of the Prison Authorities to maintain discipline and order in the prisons. Prison Officers are trained by the Prison Service and the Special Mobile Force for performing security duties.

The Prisons also have a Security Squad consisting of 183 Prison Officers trained in self-defence, weapon training, intervention, protection, arrest and escort techniques.

However, should any serious incident occur in the prisons, the assistance of the Police and the Special Mobile Force is resorted to. This has happened on several occasions in the past.

It is felt by the Commissioner of Police, that there is at present no need for a permanent posting of members of the Special Mobile Force to assist the Prison Authorities.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware if a report was drawn up by the former Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr Dass Joganah, and, if so, could he inform the House whether the recommendations thereof were implemented?

The Prime Minister: I will have to ask the Commissioner of Police to look into the matter.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether security managers have been appointed in the prison authorities?

The Prime Minister: I do not whether the hon. Member is referring to the security squad which is acting as security managers there.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to a PNQ on 04 November 2004, the former Prime Minister informed the House that security managers are to be appointed. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether these security managers have been appointed?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware as to whether security managers have been appointed.

Mr Speaker: The Prime Minister has just replied that there is a security squad.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Prime Minister is aware that in spite of the efforts of the previous Government, of the new Government, of Mr Duff, in spite of the efforts of everybody, the situation remains very, very bad in the prisons. Now, Mr Duff is leaving. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has any new ideas, what are we going to do with those prisons? This thing is going to blow up. Does he have any new ideas? And if he does not have any new ideas, does he have any proposal for the setting up of a Committee of people who have accumulated

experience to come with new ideas. Otherwise, this is a time bomb ticking away.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member is saying that this has been an issue since some time. In fact, Mr Duff has also talked to me; he has written letters as well. In spite of all the goodwill, it seems there are going to be problems there to which we are not finding solutions. In fact, I did mention this to the French Authorities that I wanted to have somebody to look at the Prisons section and I believe they will be coming here shortly.

WOMEN PRISONERS – NUMBER ON REMAND, ETC.

(No. B/774) 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 women prisoners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number thereof –

- (a) on remand;
- (b) serving sentences;
- (c) on remand/serving sentences and having their children in their custody in the prisons, and
- (d) with mental health problems

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that as at 16 June 2006, 47 women prisoners are on remand and 91 are serving sentences.

Four detainees who are serving sentences have their child in their custody in the Prison.

There are twenty-eight (28) detainees at the Women Prison who suffer from psychiatric problems.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister the age of the children who are in the custody of their mother?

The Prime Minister: Two of them are 3 years old. One is nine months old and one is one month old.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a unit which looks after the children's education while they are in prison with their mother?

The Prime Minister: There is someone looking after the education of the children.

POLICE GARAGE – CLOSURE - EMPLOYEES

(No. B/775) 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 in regard to the proposed closing down of the Police Garage, he will state where matters stand in regard to the redeployment of the employees working thereat.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision to close down the Police workshop is one of the measures proposed in the Budget Speech not only to reduce wastage in the public sector but also to get value for money.

I am further informed that the Police Mechanical Workshop has strength of 114 persons of whom – and I'm sure hon. Members will be surprised to learn that - 61 are tradesmen and 53 are Police officers. Among the Police officers, there is one Superintendent, one Chief Inspector, nine Police Sergeants, ten Corporals, twenty-five Police Constables and two women Police Constables. The situation is even worse at the SMF Workshop where as many as 63 Police officers of various grades are working compared to only 29 tradesmen.

This is why a committee under the chairmanship of the Home Affairs Division of my Office, and comprising representatives of the Police Department, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, has been set up to implement the decision.

Mr Naidu: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister give assurance to the House that all the people right now employed by the Police Garage will still have employment after its closure?

The Prime Minister: What we are trying to do is to redeploy as far as is practicable.

MINORS – SEXUAL ASSAULTS

(No. B/776) 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, information as to –

- (a) the number of minors who have been sexually assaulted during the last three years;
- (b) the number and the percentage of cases where the perpetrator is
 - (i) a member of the family of the victim;
 - (ii) a close relative of the victim;
 - (iii) a non-relative but a person known to the family of the victim, and
 - (iv) a person not known to the family of the victim.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being tabled.

INDONESIA - EARTHQUAKE - DONATION

(No. B/777) 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 Government has made or proposes to make a cash donation to the Indonesian Government following the natural catastrophe that hit that country recently.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, shortly after the earthquake occurred, I sent a letter of condolence to his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Government and people of Mauritius. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also expressed his condolences to his counterparts.

According to a report of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator's office in Jakarta, the total damage caused by the earthquake is estimated at US \$ 3.1 billion.

According to the same report, the Coordinating Ministry of the Indonesian Government will finance up to 40% of the amount for rehabilitation and reconstruction and that the Consultative Group of Indonesia, which is a country level group of creditor countries and multilateral agencies have pledged US \$ 3.9 billion in loans and grants to support the state budget and another US \$ 1.5 billion for reparation efforts in the Central Java earthquake region.

In other words, they got more money than the damage they have assessed. In those circumstances, it is not proposed to give a donation.

OFFENCES (SERIOUS) – CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

(No. B/778) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) 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 introducing capital punishment for persons convicted of serious offences, in particular, rape and sexual assault on children.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in August 1995, the Abolition of Death Penalty Act was passed to provide for the sentence of death to be replaced by a sentence of penal servitude for life.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, no amendment was made at that time to section 4 of the Constitution, which still provides for the deprivation of life in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence.

The hon. Member will surely appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the issue of capital punishment is a very delicate and sensitive one. There are deeply-held convictions among members on both sides of the House. In fact, the issue had been extensively debated in this very House in 1995 during the passing of the Abolition of the Death Penalty Bill. Several Members had expressed strong views – not to say very strong views - for

and against capital punishment. And I must say, some of them are still in this House today.

Additionally, Mauritius has subscribed, or is a party, to the following international instruments which provide for the right to life and for protection from inhuman and degrading treatment -

Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment
 Convention on the Rights of the Child
 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Mr Speaker Sir, although there is, I must say, no concrete evidence that capital punishment is a deterrent, we have all felt the shock and resentment over the recent ghastly and brutal crime perpetrated against women and children. Indeed, I believe we must be tough not only on crime but also tougher on the causes of crime. But we need to address the whole issue in a dispassionate manner. In reply to a Private Notice Question on 30 May last, I informed the House of measures that would be taken to combat criminality. I indicated then, that the Criminal Code and other enactment would be reviewed to provide for stiffer penalties for atrocious crimes especially on women and children. The necessary amendments to the law are being finalised by the State Law Office.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister consider the introduction of the necessary legislation to reestablish the capital punishment and allow a free vote in the National Assembly?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I am not aware whether in 1995 there was a free vote or not, but generally, if you take a sample of the population, there will be a huge majority for capital punishment. But, what I think we need to do is to, first, toughen the laws and then keep an open mind.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Prime Minister his personal opinion...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, you cannot ask that. Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. I have to inform the House that Question B/783 has been withdrawn.

BANK FISHERS - WINTER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/779) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state if Government is proposing to grant a winter allowance to bank fishers for the months of June, July and August of this year and, if so, will he give the quantum thereof, indicating if any discussions were held with the fishers in this respect.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform my colleagues that I chaired a meeting on 10 January, 2006 with stakeholders in the bank fishing including members of the Maritime Transport and Port Employees Union representing bank fishers, with a view to discussing the problems encountered in the bank fishing sector and to come up with proposals which would enable the Ministry to formulate a policy paper thereon. One of the issues discussed was the setting up of a Contributory Scheme to assist financially bank fishers from June to August when bank fishing vessels are not active.

In order to encourage active participation from stakeholders and with a view to promoting a culture of self-dependency and saving within the bank fishers community, it was agreed that the scheme be set up under the Fishermen Welfare Fund along the following lines -

- (i) bank fishers contributing at least Rs2,000 annually;
- (ii) bank fishing operators making a contribution of Rs2,000 per fisher annually, and
- (iii) the Fishermen Welfare Fund providing a similar amount of Rs2,000 per fisher annually.

Subsequently, Government gave its approval to the establishment of a contributory scheme as follows -

- (i) bank fishers contributing at least Rs2,000 annually;
- (ii) bank fishing operators making a minimum contribution of Rs2,000 per fisher, and

- (iii) the Fishermen Welfare Fund providing a similar amount of Rs2,000 per fisher annually from funds deposited by bank fishing vessels in a special account of the Ministry.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Fisheries Division has already contributed Rs412,000 on behalf of the Fishermen Welfare Fund to the scheme. Regulations for the setting-up of the Contributory Scheme under the Fishermen Welfare Fund Act, have been submitted to the Attorney General's Office for vetting. Meanwhile, the Fishermen Welfare Fund has officially requested bank-fishing operators to contribute their share along with that of fishermen employed by them.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. This is a matter of urgency. Is the Minister aware that bank fishers might not be going for the next fishing campaign because bank-fishing operators have made urgent request to recruit Malagasy fishers?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, although this question does not relate to the reply I have given, the matter is being monitored. There are specific criteria to which bank-fishing operators have to adhere. Otherwise they will have to bear the consequences.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the bank fishers association/s and the bank fishers, in general, have agreed to this contributory scheme?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. There was consensus in the light of which decision was taken, Cabinet apprised and matter referred to State Law Office.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Minister whether he is aware that the mode and terms of payment that has been agreed between bank-fishing operators and fishers is not being adhered to and that families of bank fishers are finding it very hard? Because they are getting their salary after months now, in Mauritius.

Dr. Boolell: This is a matter that was addressed. In fact, in the past, it was an acute and chronic problem, but the matter has been addressed and if there is any specific case, certainly, we will take appropriate action.

VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM - OPERATION

(No. B/780) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state if the Vessel Monitoring System is fully operational, indicating the number of vessels and fishing boats which are equipped to be tracked by the system.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) was set up at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) in February 2005 and became fully operational in April 2005. The VMS monitors the positions, speeds and directions of fishing vessels by means of Inmarsat and Argos satellite-based tracking systems. These data are transmitted to and stored in a database of the server at the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) at AFRC. The network connected to the server comprises five workstations, out of which three are located at the FMC and the remaining two are placed at the National Coast Guard (NCG) Head Quarters (Port Louis) and the NCG Maritime Air Squadron (Plaisance).

The VMS receives reports from fishing vessels through the two tracking systems namely Argos and Inmarsat. All Mauritian vessels/boats are equipped with Inmarsat VMS equipment except for one boat which is equipped with an Argos VMS equipment. Most of the licensed foreign vessels are equipped with Argos equipment.

In the case of the Argos equipment, the CLS (Collecte et Localisation Satellite) in France is responsible for the transmission of data to the Mauritius FMC.

As regards the Inmarsat tracking system, Blue Finger Ltd is required as per contractual arrangements with my Ministry to transmit the data to the FMC.

The Argos system is restricted to providing data in respect of fishing vessels operating in our EEZ only, whilst the Inmarsat system allows for obtaining information in and beyond our EEZ. The Inmarsat system also allows for querying the vessels, in case they are not reporting.

All foreign and local vessels licensed to fish in our Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) are required to be equipped with a VMS equipment, namely a transponder that can transmit data to the FMC. Sixty eight

licensed foreign vessels were reporting to the FMC up to April of this year. Fifteen licensed foreign fishing vessels are reporting to the FMC as the other vessels are no longer fishing in our EEZ. Hence, the number of foreign fishing vessels reporting through the VMS varies according to the season and the validity of their licences.

As regards local fishing vessels and boats, there are 31, which are equipped with a transponder to report to the FMC and can be tracked by the VMS system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw attention to the fact that at times transmission of data from the fishing vessels and boats may not be obtained at the FMC for reasons such as power failure or breakdown of the transponder.

All data obtained through the VMS and fishing logbooks are cross-checked to ascertain the veracity of the data submitted. There has been the case of two irregularities caused by one and the same boat lately. A last warning has been given in writing to the owner of the boat that any further default would lead to revocation of his fishing licence and institution of legal proceedings.

I am conscious that the VMS system is an effective tool to combat Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing. The use of the VMS system is now being recognised as an important means to combat IUU fishing at the global level in various international fora, namely the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

The Government of Australia carried out a training course for officers of my Ministry on implementation of the Catch Documentation Centre in respect of patagonian toothfish last year. We are thus ensuring that the CCAMLR Conservation measures are strictly adhered to.

Furthermore, as you are aware, Government has agreed to the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between my Ministry and the Department of Fisheries of the Government of Western Australia. This, of course, amongst other things, would address the issue of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing through one of the activities to be carried out in the programme and this would reinforce our willingness to combat IUU.

Mr Lesjongard: As a supplementary question, Mr Speaker, Sir, out of those 31 transponders installed on local boats and vessels, can I know what percentage it represents of the total number of local boats and vessels?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the reply, I wouldn't like to venture. But we impress upon them that those who fish in our EEZ have to be equipped with the transponder for reasons which are obvious. As matters stand, the countries in the region stand to lose more than 1.5 billion euros in respect of IUU.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the case of foreign vessels that either are not equipped with the VMS system or the system is not operational for this or that reason when they call in the harbour, can I know from the Minister whether such foreign vessels are allowed to make use of our harbour?

Dr. Boolell: This matter was raised following a meeting which we had with Mr Hardill and, in fact, appropriate measures are being taken; our concern is real, because we have to impress upon them that they have to be equipped with the relevant equipment, otherwise necessary measures will be taken.

ANTI-CHIKUNGUNYA CAMPAIGN – FOGGING IMPACT ON FAUNA AND FLORA

(No. B/781) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he will state if any exercise has been carried out to assess the impact of fogging, in relation to the anti-chikungunya campaign, on the fauna and flora.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to circulate the reply. (Appendix I).

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the name of the insecticide used for larviciding and the one used for fogging?

Dr. Boolell: Chemicals used are active ingredients in cyfluthrin fluid frame. Specifications are spelt out and, of course, they can be toxic. But, the level used was closely monitored and following tests carried out by the

Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment, the results were negative. There has been no impact upon the fauna and flora.

Mr Lesjongard: I will read the information later. We have been informed that for larviciding, temefos is being used. Is it true to say that temefos is going to be banned in September in Europe?

Dr. Boolell: Well, let me find out from the Dangerous Chemical Board and then I can report the matter. This question, of course, has to be addressed to the Minister of Health.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the Minister say that a Department of his Ministry has already carried an exercise and has come to the conclusion that there has been no negative impact. Surely, this is a case of judge and party. Does not the Minister believe that there should be a third party, somebody independent professionally equipped to see whether there has been a negative impact? It should not be left to the Ministry of Agriculture to see whether practices adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture has had any negative impact.

Dr. Boolell: The hon. Member, I am sure, is aware that before the drug is used it has to be on the list of the World Health Organisation. Besides, it has a low toxicity. Furthermore, people were given advanced notice that they have to take the necessary precautions. Over and above, after the fogging and larviciding were done, the three Ministries concerned, concerted and there had been no adverse report. So, there was no reason to carry any further test.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to larviciding in Reunion Island, they had moved to biological products, because they had come to know that the chemical products used was causing a lot of damage to the fauna and flora. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish that our friends from Reunion Island could have been as responsible as we had been in Mauritius.

Having said so, I grant you that if we can use biological products, why not? But, we have to face facts.

(Interruptions)

That campaign waged by certain Members of the Opposition bench was not justified. Besides, as a Government, we acted promptly and we reacted; we were proactive and the result today is that when we look at figures, there has been a decline. And, of course, we have to reinforce preventive measures, **Mr Speaker, Sir.**

Mr Lesjongard: One last question. Is the hon. Minister aware that the Wildlife Foundation has written a letter to his Ministry, highlighting the dangers of the insecticides being used in our country with regard to the fauna and flora?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to make sure that the advantages outweigh the minor disadvantages. We are talking of the life of people, about preventive measures. Besides, I have stated that this drug is on the list of the World Health Organisation, provided it is used judiciously in respect of the amount to be used. There is no problem then. This is what has been done. There has been no case of overdose reported.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY SETTING UP

(No. B/782) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will consider the advisability of setting up a National Institute of Fashion Technology with a view to –

- (a) training Fashion Technologists;
- (b) providing the textile industry with up-to-date information, and
- (c) providing courses in fashion design, apparel, marketing and merchandising, garment manufacturing technology, knitwear design technology and textile design and development.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government in its Programme 2005-2010, had announced the setting up of a Design and Fashion Institute in Mauritius to promote the development of creativity, talents and expertise amongst our designers and entrepreneurs for the production of fashionable and differentiated products.

Moreover, we have secured the assistance of Prof. Edward Newton, a seasoned and highly qualified UNIDO Consultant, to assist the Government in the establishment of the Design and Fashion Institute. Prof. Newton was in Mauritius from 23 April to 20 May 2006, for the first leg of his mission. He visited several companies and had working sessions with institutions and associations involved in design and fashion, and he also interacted with entrepreneurs within the textile and clothing sector.

His full report, detailing the modalities for the setting-up of the Design and Fashion Institute, as well as an action plan for its implementation, is expected shortly.

As the project is still at conception stage, it will be too early to pronounce on the exact courses to be delivered and the mode of operation of the proposed institute.

I wish to inform the House that the Fashion and Design Institute will take under its umbrella all courses that cater for fashion and design that actually are offered by different institutions.

A stand alone institute and integrating existing facilities at the University of Mauritius, IVTB, and Enterprise Mauritius will be set up to -

- (i) rationalise resources and training programmes;
- (ii) upgrade capacity at enterprise level in area of design and fashion through consultancy services;
- (iii) provide fashion intelligence to the industry and keep them abreast of latest trends in fashion, and
- (iv) conduct research in use of materials, as well as undertaking for the development.

The overall objective of the institute will be geared to promote production, high value, favourable and trend products for middle and upper segment of the international markets. In this context, our enterprises will bring competing less on price consideration and will develop a competitive edge.

SADC FREE TRADE AREA –TARIFF REDUCTION

(No. B/783) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and

Co-operation whether, in regard to the establishment of the SADC Free Trade Area, he will state if any study has been carried out on the implication for Mauritius of the tariff reduction and its impact on the local domestic industries and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**AIRPORTS OF MAURITIUS LTD. -
RECRUITMENT OF STAFF**

(No. B/784) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to if the posts of Junior Account, Retail Operation Officer and Human Capital Management Officer which were advertised in 2003 have now been filled, indicating in each case –

- (a) the number of applications received;
- (b) the qualifications of the applicants, and
- (c) the qualifications of the persons recruited.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd. (AML) is a public company incorporated under the Companies Act and that the powers of Government are thus limited to those of a shareholder.

The question of recruitment of staff is an internal matter for the AML as it relates to the day-to-day operations of the company. As such it is Government policy not to deal with such issues in the House.

**AIR MAURITIUS LTD./AIR SEYCHELLES –
MOU, SIGNATORIES, ETC.**

(No. B/785) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if –

- (a) any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between that Company and Air Seychelles and, if so, the date and names of the signatories, and
- (b) the MoU has been renewed and, if so, the date and names of the signatories.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in pursuance of the bilateral Air Services Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Mauritius and Seychelles signed in 1997, the designated airlines of both contracting parties may enter into commercial agreements for the operation of the air services. Such commercial cooperation is however subject to the approval of the Aeronautical Authorities.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Code Share Agreements on the Mauritius-Seychelles-London and vice-versa routes and Mauritius-Seychelles and vice-versa routes was signed in November 2004 for an initial period of one year and effective as from IATA Summer 2005.

The signatories of this MoU, are on behalf of Air Mauritius, Mr Megh Pillay, the former Managing Director and Mr Indradev Buton, Chief Marketing Executive and Capt. David Savy, Executive Chairman on behalf of Air Seychelles.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that the MoU was renewed in January this year and have been jointly signed by Mr Nirvan Veerasamy, Managing Director and Mr Indradev Buton, Chief Marketing Executive, on behalf of Air Mauritius, Capt. David Savy, Chairman and Executive, and Dr. Rajiv Bissessur, Director Corporate Strategy, on behalf of Air Seychelles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that Air Mauritius Ltd. is a publicly quoted company incorporated under the Companies Act and in accordance with Government Policy, I may not be able to deal with the contents of the MoU.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that one of the co-signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding, namely Captain Savy is a Director of the Company by the name of Veling and that

the Managing Director of Air Mauritius is a Co-founder of the Company and is still a Director on leave?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this issue, but certainly I'll ask for it to be looked into.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, such is my information. It is true and I can confirm it. Now, in the light of this, Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with me that there is a conflict of interests?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I am being made to understand, it seems that both are Directors of a third company and one is on leave.

(Interruptions)

This is new to me, but I'll have it looked into, especially so far as the issue of any conflict of interest that may have arisen in this particular case. As you know, Air Mauritius is a publicly quoted company, but as with most companies now, there is an Audit Committee which, amongst other things, is meant to look at this sort of thing.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism inform the House whether the Memorandum of Understanding with Air Seychelles and Air Mauritius is resulting in heavy financial losses to the national carrier?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not able to deal with the commercial operations of Air Mauritius in this House.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism know that in accordance with the deal, Air Mauritius is buying a seat on the leg Mauritius/Seychelles/London at the cost of 550 euros and selling same for Rs15,000 Mauritian rupees.

Mr X. L. Duval: The answer is the same, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, on this same question, I am glad that this time the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has kindly agreed to give

replies to questions on Air Mauritius, whereas in the recent past, only two weeks back...

Mr Speaker: Well, this is not a question. I am sorry!

Mr X. L. Duval: Maybe I can enlighten the House, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I mentioned, it is an agreement which is recorded in the Ministry of External Communications. I did say, at the beginning, that this was the case. Perhaps the hon. Member missed that point.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that the company had, in the past, financial dealing with Air Seychelles, namely selling aircraft and leasing aircraft to the same company?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has brought all this to our attention. As I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will transmit same to the relevant persons. The hon. Member can rest assured that whatever he has said will be taken into account.

VICTIMS (COMMERCIAL & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION) - RESIDENTIAL DROP-IN CENTRE

(No. B/786) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether it is proposed to set up a residential drop-in centre for children who are victims of abuse and, if so, when.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes.

The main aim of this project is the rehabilitation of minors who have been victims of commercial and sexual exploitation.

We do realise the urgency for the implementation of the project and we intend hiring a building where this project will be implemented.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give us an indication of the time frame when this project will be implemented?

Mrs Seebun: In the few months to come.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Minister whether there has been a study to come to the conclusion where the best site will be for this drop-in centre and, if yes, what site do we have in mind?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have noticed that we have a majority of cases in the region of Grand River North West and this is where we are going to locate the project.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL - ATTENDANTS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/787) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Women's Council, information as to -

- (a) the number of attendants recruited thereat since July 2005 to date, and
- (b) if the posts were advertised.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is no.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL - ATTENDANTS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/788) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Women Entrepreneur Council, information as to -

- (a) the number of attendants recruited thereat since July 2005 to date, and
- (b) if the posts were advertised.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is no.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, then can I ask the hon. Minister why the posts have not been advertised?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the work was being done by a cleaning company and we have terminated the contract and since last May the same job is done by a general worker.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister how many attendants or cleaners have been recruited?

Mrs Seebun: Only one.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The Minister just said "no". Now, she is saying "one". Which is which?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member mentioned "attendant" and no attendant has been recruited. What we have recruited is a general worker.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I didn't mention "attendant", I mentioned "attendants or cleaners" and the Minister said "one".

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to recruitment, can I ask the Minister whether, in the context of providing equal opportunities to everybody, those posts should not have been advertised?

Mrs Seebun: Being a former Permanent Secretary, the hon. Member should know better the difference between an attendant and a general worker.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know fully well and that is why I am asking the question whether in the context of providing equal opportunities to everybody - and everybody could have applied - those posts should have been advertised.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Member pretend to be more concerned about the state of women in this country?

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am. I am really sorry that the Minister is not replying to the question. *Elle est en train de passer à côté de la question.*

Mr Speaker: Je ne peux pas forcer la ministre à répondre.

**MORCELLEMENT NOUVELLE INDUSTRIE, MONTAGNE
LONGUE - DRAINAGE SYSTEM**

(No. B/789) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware that the residents of Morcellement Nouvelle Industrie at Montagne Longue face recurrent overflowing caused by an improper drainage system and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that representations have been made by the inhabitants of Morcellement Nouvelle Industrie at Long Mountain regarding problems encountered with the drainage system. A site visit was effected by NDU officers on 21 May...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bachoo: ...followed by a meeting with stakeholders on 26 May last.

The NDU has taken note of the problem and has arranged for appropriate drain works to be carried out under the Land Drainage Programme in due course.

I am also advised that the District Council North has undertaken to maintain the existing drains in the meantime.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister tell us whether there was provision for drainage system in the initial plan of the same morcellement at that time or whether provision was made for only earth drains?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of it, but one thing I can assure the Member is that I'll give instructions to NDU to start the clearing of the existing drains and then we'll come for a second phase where they can have the drain enlarged.

***IN VITRO* FERTILISATION - GOVERNMENT POLICY**

(No. B/790) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state Government policy in regard to *in vitro* fertilisation.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is presently no specific legislation governing the practice of *in vitro* fertilisation in Mauritius. However, I am informed that the Ministry has in August 2000 and July 2002 respectively authorised two private clinics registered under the Private Health Institutions Act 1989 to carry out *in vitro* fertilisation.

It is to be noted that under the Private Health Institutions Act 1989, the Ministry may issue a licence to a private clinic to provide for specific medical services.

At present, in absence of any legal framework, my Ministry has issued conditions under which these private clinics can practise *in vitro* fertilisation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the Minister inform the House whether a legal framework will be provided for *in vitro* fertilisation?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, as at present, there is no legal framework which covers this area of medical practice. However, there was a decision which was taken back in 2002 to recruit a consultant with a view to helping the Ministry to draft an *in vitro* fertilisation Bill and also regulations thereof. But this has not materialised so far. In fact, since March of this year, my Ministry has contacted the East, Central and Southern African Health Community for the services of an expert to assist us in the holding of consultations and also with a view to preparing a legal framework, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister how many clinics have been authorised to practice *in vitro* fertilisation and how many cases there have been?

Mr Faugoo: I stated in my main answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are two clinics. In fact, the first one which was granted a licence back in 2000 is the St. Esprit Clinic which is found at Quatre Bornes and a second one which is found in the compound of clinic Darné, it is called Harley Street Fertility Centre. The number of IVF cases performed by St. Esprit is around 40 per year and the success rate over there is 30% and at Harley Street, the number of cases which were carried up to date is 243 and the success rate over there is 38%.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has made mention of a consultant who was recruited in 2002. Could we know the name of the consultant and whether he was paid for the work?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a decision taken to hire a consultant with a view to having a legal framework prepared as far as *in vitro* is concerned, but nothing was done so far. Now, since March of this year, we have asked the ECSA for an expert. We have already finalised the scope of work and we are expecting an expert to come and help us in the drafting of the legislation.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he can make sure that no identification of the embryos' sex is done before implantation?

Mr Faugoo: I think that it forms part of the instructions which are given to the private clinics.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, in preparing the legislation concerning this issue, will the hon. Minister look into the matter of surrogate mothers? Will he discuss with the relevant stakeholders on the issue of surrogate mothers?

Mr Faugoo: This will be taken on board, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the former Minister of Health, while intervening on the Appropriation Bill in 2002, stated that a legal framework was under preparation and that he had enlisted legal assistance through the World Health Organisation? Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether legal assistance was, in fact, obtained from the WHO?

Mr Faugoo: This is another big bluff, an *effet d'annonce* of the previous regime, Mr Speaker, Sir! As I said, nothing was done. In fact, we started the process in March of this year.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, for the technique of *in vitro* fertilisation, a number of embryos is normally utilised. May I know what has happened to the extra embryos in the cases mentioned by the Minister? Have they been discarded or are they stored somewhere in Mauritius?

Mr Faugoo: I need notice of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

/...

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has given us the rate of success in the case of the two clinics. May I know whether there have been cases of complications as a result of the *in vitro* fertilisation, which have had to be treated in public hospitals?

Mr Faugoo: Not to my knowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can find out and table the information if there has been a case.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I suppose the hon. Minister is aware that *in vitro* fertilisation is a very costly process. Those who have difficulty conceiving and who would normally like to have recourse to this method, are sometimes not found among the wealthiest members of the society. Is it possible for the Ministry, in some way, to extend help to them?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very costly business. I can see the figures that have been given, namely Rs100,000 to Rs140,000 per case. In fact, this is something which needs to be discussed and debated further.

MAHEBOURG & PLAINE MAGNIEN – TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(No. B/791) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if there is any tourism development project in the constituency of Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been apprised by the BOI that two applications of hotel projects have been

received and are at different stages of processing, namely the Mahebourg Hotel Project as well as another project promoted by Pointe Jérôme Development Ltd. Two expressions of interest have also been received from Landmark Hotels and the Dodo Resort at Le Chaland and Pointe Jérôme respectively. Together, the four projects would bring about a total investment of nearly Rs2 billion, generate around 740 jobs and bring on the market an additional 556 rooms.

Besides these, other tourism and leisure related development projects have been proposed in the region as follows –

A nautical centre at Pointe Jerome; State land to an extend of 5,492 m² has been earmarked for the project by the previous Government.

The Ministry of Youth & Sports has received a request from the Mauritius Yachting Federation for the setting up of an “*Ecole de Voile*”, within the premises of the Pointe Jerome Sports Training Centre. The school would cater for training young potential athletes in the field of yachting. The Ministry of Youth & Sports has agreed to the request in October 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that part of the Pointe Jerome Youth Centre has been converted into a ‘*centre d’application*’ functioning under the aegis of the ‘*Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval*’. The centre is dispensing training in food production, restaurant & bar services and housekeeping through the apprenticeship mode. The centre is running three classes with 24 seats each.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Tourism kindly consider converting Mahebourg into a tourist village?

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to discuss this with my colleagues.

CHATGAON, PLAINE MAGNIEN – BUILDING PERMITS

(No. B/792) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he is aware that the inhabitants of Chatgaon, Plaine Magnien, near the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport are facing difficulties in obtaining building permits for the construction and/or extension of their houses and, if

so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the relevant District Council, information as to the reasons therefor and the remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that all applications for development and building permits in the airport building restriction zone are referred by it to the Department of Civil Aviation/Airports of Mauritius Ltd for clearance, so as to ensure the safety of airport operations under the Plaisance Airport (Building Restriction) Act 1964 and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) requirements.

As regards applicants who are facing difficulties to obtain their building permits, I am informed that three applications have not been recommended in July 2005 by the Airports of Mauritius Ltd, as the lands fall in the area earmarked for land acquisition as recommended by Aéroport de Paris in the 2004 Airport Master Plan.

I am alive to the fact that these applicants are facing hardship, and I propose to consult my colleagues, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications and the Minister of Housing & Lands to expedite matters regarding the land acquisition procedures.

ROSE BELLE/LA FLORA & BOIS CHERI/GRAND BOIS ROUTES – BUS FARES

(No. B/793) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to the reasons for the decision for the change in the bus fares for the routes Rose Belle-La Flora, Bois Chéri-Grand Bois in May 2005.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, in its application to the National Transport Authority, the reasons stated by the National Transport Corporation to claim lower bus fares along the two routes were as follows –

- (i) poor passenger loading on account of stiff competition from taxis and illegal operators;

- (ii) the induction of one-man operated buses, and
- (iii) to facilitate the work of the driver cum conductor working in the bus with fares of two round denominations only, i.e. Rs5 and Rs10.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the stakeholders, in this particular instance, the taxi owners, were ever contacted by the NTA, when that decision was taken?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is no, and this is one of the reasons why, on appeal to Court, the taxi proprietors won their case. I read here –

“The NTA failed to follow the proper procedure as prescribed by the Road Traffic Act, whilst approving the application of the NTC”.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, therefore, from the answer of the Deputy Prime Minister, both the NTC and the NTA were party to the decision. Can I know whether there has been any breach of the law and procedure in this matter by members on the Board of the NTA and the NTC? If there has been any violation of rules, procedure and law, what action must be taken and will be contemplated against those officers who have violated the law?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the answer I gave, it is obvious that the NTA did not follow procedures and, therefore, violated the law.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the same practice is applicable to other regions?

Dr. Beebeejaun: The problem of bus fares and availability of transport is not only limited to that region. It applies elsewhere as well, for example, in the region of Trou d’Eau Douce, and we are addressing the problem.

Mr Bundhoo: Therefore, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to specify the reasons why, specifically, in May 2005, it was applied to this specific region?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Member is aware of the circumstances prevailing at the time. In the absence of the main - I would say - culprit, it would be unfair for me to comment further.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to confirm whether this was just prior to the general election?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was tailor-made for the general election.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard the answer of the Deputy Prime Minister, as far as the wrongdoing is concerned. But, the other part of my earlier question was: if there has been wrongdoing, does the Government propose to take relevant action against every single person responsible for that wrongdoing, that has led the Government of Mauritius to concede a case before the Supreme Court of Mauritius?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not reply to the second part of the question on purpose. I certainly take the point that I will submit all the evidence to the State Law Office and ask for advice.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

LAND SURVEYOR – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/794) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, he will state the number of applications received for the obtention of a commission to practise as a Land Surveyor, indicating the number of such applicants who have been requested to submit to his Ministry, in accordance with Section 5 of the Land Surveyors Act, a survey plan which contains roof lines of all permanent buildings.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that according to records available, 24 applications were received for the grant of a commission to practise as a Land Surveyor under the Land Surveyors Act.

In accordance with the Land Surveyors Act, 22 out of 24 applicants have been requested to produce to my Ministry a plan of the survey of a portion of land of not less than 800 metres square, to be indicated by the

Chief Surveyor, showing the triangulation of the ground contour lines and the general features, including roads and water courses.

The applicant is provided with a map indicating the area to be surveyed together with a copy of the technical specifications as a guideline for the preparation of the abovementioned requested plan.

Mr Mohamed: May I ask the hon. Minister whether with regard to the figure that is mentioned as per part one of the schedule of the Land Surveyors Act, that of not less than 800 metres square, that in actual fact, this is being interpreted by the Chief Land Surveyor of his Ministry as meaning any area whatsoever even going as far as to 180 acres?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to differ. The interpretation given by the Chief Surveyor of our Ministry is 800 metre square amount to 800 metres x 800 metres; in total it gives 152 arpents.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that there is an application some two years ago which is in line with the Land Surveyors Act, which is still pending? I can give the Minister the name in private.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister the following...I am sorry the Minister has to give an answer to the question of hon. Dayal.

Mr Speaker: Does the hon. Minister have an answer to give?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have out of the 24 applications received, 22 have been processed and they have been requested to produce plan. The one that I suppose my colleague is referring to is Mr Gawtam Hurnauth. The gentleman did not produce the plan according to our specification.

Mr Mohamed: With regard to that particular gentleman whose name has been mentioned by the Minister, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, in fact, in this particular case, the Chief Land Surveyor of his Ministry requested in writing to that gentleman to give a plan of much more than 800 metres square? And this matter, because of wrong interpretation even had to be referred to the State Law Office for advice. Can the hon. Minister answer on both limbs, whether, yes, he would agree this was referred to the State Law Office for advice, because of this problem in

interpretation as far as the area is concerned, thereby causing him immense prejudice and discrimination?

Mr Dulull: Concerning the interpretation of 800 metres square, the interpretation is that the plot of land being a square one, one of the lengths is 800 metres, which means it must be 800 x 800 metres. This is the interpretation we have been given.

(Interruptions)

Because we have to distinguish between 800 metres square and 800 square metres. These two things are totally different. Concerning the same gentleman, when his application was filed, I have a document from the University of Mauritius, which I am going to table. He has been awarded a diploma through oversight.

(Interruptions)

And the University of Mauritius recognises through this letter, which I am going to table to the Assembly. So, the case being before...

(Interruptions)

The letter is dated December 2004 when the application was filed. So, this case is being looked into; and this gentleman is challenging the ruling given by the State Law Office. This is the general interpretation and all the recognition being given on the basis that 800 metres square means 800 x 800.

Mr Speaker: Is the case before the Supreme Court?

Mr Mohamed: There is no case pending and no litigation otherwise I totally agree I would not have ventured in this matter. Following the answer that has been given by the hon. Minister, there is a very serious allegation that the University of Mauritius said that the degree was given by oversight. I shall break down my question, with the leave of Mr Speaker, Sir, for clarity sake. Is he aware that the same University of Mauritius wrote to him afterwards and apologised for having gone as far as to say that they gave him a degree by oversight and asked that this letter being referred to, be ignored and withdrawn? And this copy was sent to the hon. Minister's Ministry. Is the Minister aware of that?

Mr Dulull: I am in possession of the letter which I am going to table: where Mr Hurnauth was informed accordingly and requested to return the certificate issued to him so that necessary amendment can be done. So, should there be any other letter, I'll be glad if the hon. Member can table it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: If I understand the answer correctly - actually there was no answer to the question. What I would like to understand is the following. Is the hon. Minister in presence of another letter from the University of Mauritius apologising ...

Mr Speaker: Put the question!

Mr Mohamed: ..for having made that wrong allegation and assumption?

Mr Speaker: That is the question.

Mr Dulull: I am not aware of any letter to negate the letter which I tabled.

Mr Mohamed: Will the hon. Minister give the undertaking that if he is put in presence of that official letter, his Ministry will reconsider its position as regards giving him his commission?

Mr Dulull: Well, if I am in presence of any letter which negates that which I have tabled, of course, we will do justice to the gentleman. We believe in justice.

Mr Mohamed: One last question on this particular issue. I thank the hon. Minister for his sense of justice which I bow to. The last issue which I would like to raise is the following, part one of the Land Surveyors Act talks about 800 metres square. I shall not get into the discussions as to what it means, metre square or square metres, let's not get into that, we are not experts. As far as I am concerned, it is logical, it means the same thing. As far as that particular schedule is concerned, this applicant was requested, like all other applicants, to give roof lines. If the hon. Members, Mr Speaker, could understand. We are asking a student who is going to make his application to be given a commission as a Sworn Land surveyor who has obtained his diploma and who has done all that and who has practical

knowledge. The Ministry is asking, by virtue of this, his practical knowledge; and to satisfy the Ministry of his practical knowledge in surveying, he has been asked to produce this 800 metre square, the plan, which also says “showing triangulation ground of contour lines and the general features”, which include roads and water courses. But what he was requested to provide to the Chief Land Surveyor of the Ministry of Housing & Lands, was the following:

What is provided for in part 1 of the schedule as well as each and every single roof line of every single building existing in that area of 150 or so acres. In fact, this goes *ultra vires* of what is provided for in the schedule. How could therefore the Minister reconcile if there is no law that says that roof lines can be sought for? Why will the Chief Surveyor decide that he can go *ultra vires* of the law?

Mr Dulull: Should there be any breach of the law, we will look into it and the hon. Member can rest assured that necessary action will be taken. We do not want injustice to be done to any of our citizens. We are here to guarantee.

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION – MANAGEMENT LICENCE - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/795) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, for the last five years, information as to the number of applications for a management licence –

- (a) received, and
- (b) rejected, giving the reasons therefor in each case.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, since the setting up of the Financial Services Commission in December 2001, the number of formal applications received for a management licence is 39. In addition, several persons desirous of applying for a licence have, following informal discussions with the Commission, not pursued the application after having been apprised of the requirements for such a licence.

Of the 39 formal applications received only 27 licences have been issued. In other cases, the applications were either withdrawn or not pursued following exchanges with the Commission on the relevant requirements, two have been rejected and two are still being processed.

The Commission has published a checklist of information that has to be submitted by an applicant for a management licence and which will be taken into consideration in examining the application to meet the requirements of the Commission.

In cases where the Commission was not satisfied that these requirements were met or indicated to the applicants that it was unlikely that the Commission would be satisfied, the applications were not pursued or were ultimately rejected.

I am advised, Mr Speaker, Sir, that all applications for a management licence are first processed by the Licensing Directorate of the Commission, are then examined by the Applications Committee and are finally submitted to the Board which decides whether the licence should be granted.

Mr Mohamed: May I ask the hon. Minister about a particular problem which I have recognized? Is he aware that whenever a management licence is refused by the Financial Services Commission, this is communicated to the applicants in a written letter, but never is it that reasons are given for the grounds of refusal of the licence? When there are no reasons that are given, it is therefore impossible for any applicant to seek judicial redress because he does not know on what grounds to base his appeal.

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the information I have there are basically two broad criteria which are used by the Commission. One is the fit and proper criteria and the second one is the credibility and soundness of the business plan.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, obviously the Financial Services Commission being independent, as such we try to see in what way Government can give the good example so that whenever someone's application is rejected, specific grounds of rejection are stated in that letter and it becomes Government policy because that would also be *une affaire de transparence*.

Mr Sithanen: I will convey the message to the Financial Services Commission, Sir.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE – CHIEF EXECUTIVE – POST

(No. B/796) **Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will state if the vacancy for the post of Chief Executive in the Local Government Service as advertised in February 2006 has been filled and, if so, will he give particulars of the selected candidate.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the vacancy for the post of Chief Executive in the Local Government Service as advertised in February 2006, has been filled. The name of the selected candidate is Mr Dhanandjay Kawol, Principal Assistant Secretary in the public service.

However, it would not be proper to give the particulars of the selected candidate in view of the fact that appointments and promotions in the Local Government Service fall under the sole responsibility of the Local Government Service Commission which is an independent body.

Mr Mardemootoo: Is the Minister aware that one Mr Rashid Mohit from Souillac who is Assistant Chief Executive applied for the job? I believe he is better qualified than the one who has been selected for the job.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, the Minister cannot answer, it is an independent body.

Mr Mohamed: Sir, on the same line as to what I put to the Deputy Prime Minister. True it is, it is an independent body, I totally agree. But once again, would the hon. Minister consider setting up a fact-finding committee ...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. According to our Standing Orders, if the hon. Member wants to criticise a Commission, he has to come with a substantive motion. The only thing he can do is to ask the hon. Minister to table the list of all candidates who have applied with all their qualifications.

Mr Mohamed: I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I bow to your directions. Would the hon. Minister, therefore, table the list of all applicants who have applied for that job on that particular advertisement with the relevant qualifications?

Dr. David: I'll seek advice, Mr Speaker, Sir.

SUGAR – PRICE DECREASE – ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

(No. B/797) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to the sum to be paid by the European Union in the form of accompanying measures following the 5% decrease in the guaranteed price of sugar this year, he will state –

- (a) the amount in Mauritian rupees;
- (b) the mechanism to be set up to manage and distribute this sum, and
- (c) the percentage of this sum that will be allocated to small planters to alleviate their conditions.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, in a communication to my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr Stefano Manservisi of the Directorate General Development of the European Commission has informed that 6.543 million euros will be made available to Mauritius for the year 2006. I cannot, at this stage, state the amount in rupees as this will depend on the conversion rate applicable on the date the transfer is made, which is not expected to be before December 2006.

As regards part (b) of the question, such amount would be made available as budget support. Consequently, the funds will be managed with the same rigour and highest standard of framework of good governance as per budgetary items. The Director of Audit of Mauritius will audit the accounts relative to amounts received under the accompanying measures.

As regards the allocation of this sum to various projects, this will be decided in consultation with the delegation of the European Commission in Mauritius. At this point, the House may wish to note that at the implementation level of the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006-2015, there would be a three-tier approach, namely –

- (1) A High Powered Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to oversee the whole plan and review on a regular basis the targets and objectives of the plan in the light of circumstances.
- (2) A Coordination Committee chaired by myself to ensure interaction with stakeholders.

- (3) A Technical Committee chaired by the Mauritius Sugar Authority to ensure the technical and administrative back up for the above committees.

As regards part (c) of the question, there are two urgent needs to be addressed in 2006-2007: Assistance to planters for land preparation and plantation of new higher yielding varieties to improve yield and reduce costs, as well as the needs of employees who will retire under VRS or be redeployed due to factory closure linked to centralisation.

At this point, it is not possible to state what share of the assistance will go to alleviating conditions of small planters, but I will certainly keep the House informed as and when allocation for 2006-2007 is finalised. The first project in regard to improving the productivity of small planters is expected to be implemented in Queen Victoria, over 103 hectares and will cover land preparation, plantation with a high yield variety against a commitment to keep those lands under sugar cane cultivation for, at least, one crop cycle. For example, in order to help small planters, the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool has already placed an order for derocking equipment valued at Rs190 m. to enable accelerated land preparation.

In regard to varietal replacement, we have statistics that show that the yield for variety 1400/86 in Queen Victoria is 35% higher than that of the variety R570. When we realise that 55% of small planters' land throughout Mauritius is under the variety R570, we can foresee that replacement with higher yielding varieties on well-prepared land along with efficient farm layout can bring immediate gains in yield.

Of course, we are canvassing farmers/planters and they are responding very positively to join the scheme. In fact, they are coming forward, which is a good sign.

This will facilitate prioritisation of the land preparation works depending on rockiness of field, availability of cane setts for most appropriate varieties for the region, and expected gains in yield. It makes economic sense to give priority to areas where the gains in yield would be the highest.

(No. B/798) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if the Customs and Excise Department is planning to organise examinations for Customs Agents to be qualified as Licensed Brokers and, if so, will he state who will conduct the examinations and when.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to enhance the professionalism of customs brokers, the Customs Department has decided to provide a training course to those interested to act as customs brokers. The training course is expected to start by the end of July 2006. Existing customs brokers may also attend the training course and sit for the examinations if they so wish. Those, who have followed the training course, will then sit for the examinations to be held tentatively in September 2006 and to be conducted by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT – AUDIT COMMITTEES

(No. B/799) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if a committee has been set up to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Director of Audit and, if so, will he give its composition and the number of times it has met.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, following recommendations in the reports of the National Audit Office for the years 2003 and 2005, an Audit Committee has been established on 02 June 2006 in 5 Ministries. I wish to point out that the role of a Committee is, not of an executive, but of an advisory nature. Its function is not to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Director of Audit. This is the responsibility of each Ministry and Department. The function of the Committee is rather to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Director of Audit and also to advise on reducing wastage, and improving efficiency in the utilisation of public funds. The setting up of such Committees will be extended in the near future to all Ministries and Departments.

An Audit Committee consists of, at least, three Senior Officers appointed by the Ministry of Finance and with the following profiles –

- (a) having a sound understanding of the workings of the Ministry concerned;
- (b) having an understanding of Government environment and accountability structures as well as any relevant legislation, and
- (c) having General Management skills including Human Resources skills.

To ensure monitoring of the conclusions and recommendations of each Audit Committee, an Audit Monitoring Committee has also been set up in my Ministry. It is chaired by the Director of the Management Audit Bureau and comprises the following other members -

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance & Economic Development;
 Accountant-General;
 Head Finance Cadre;
 Head Internal Control Cadre;
 Head Purchasing & Supply Cadre, and
 4 other members having legal, administrative, technical or corporate governance expertise

The Audit Monitoring Committee has met on ten occasions. A briefing session was held in my Ministry on 02 June with members of the Audit Monitoring Committee and the Audit Committee to explain to them their roles and responsibilities, their terms of reference and their *modus operandi*. The Audit Committees are expected to meet, at least, three to four times a year.

I am given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Audit Committees, already set, will, in the coming weeks, seek appointment with the Responsible Officers of the five Ministries to prepare a work plan. As regards the composition of the Audit Committees, I am circulating a table giving the information requested. **(Appendix II)**

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister what are those five Ministries concerned?

Mr Sithanen: *Le bon exemple commence chez soi!*

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;
Ministry of Education and Human Resources;
Ministry of Health and Quality of Life;
Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping,
and Ministry of Public Utilities.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the hon. Minister also whether this Audit Committee, that he has set up, is also taking into account the reports published by the Public Accounts Committee?

Mr Sithanen: I think a proposal was made to the effect by some Members of the Public Accounts Committee, because, very often, there is convergence in the criticisms that are made by the Director of Audit and the report of PAC.

**CIVIL SERVICE – RED TAPISM & BOTTLENECKS
- MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE**

(No. B/800) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will state if he was appointed Chairman of the Committee to address the problem of red-tapism and bottlenecks in the Civil Service and, if so, if any report has been published, indicating if it will be tabled.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. Duval): Mr Speaker Sir, as in stated in my reply to PQ No. B/183, a Ministerial Committee was set up by Government in August 2005 under my chairmanship to look into the problems of bottlenecks and red tape in the Civil Service. The Committee also comprises my colleague, Dr. the hon. Rajesh Jeetah, Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, streamlining the bureaucratic processes and procedures in the service cannot be achieved overnight. It is a long term process. No report has been prepared as such although progress made by the Committee has been submitted to and approved by Government. The Committee has already made a series of recommendations, particularly, with regard to the grant of licences and permits by the Local Authorities which are being implemented since November last year. These include –

- (a) a system of clustering of trades for trade licensing purposes. The clustering has been done in such a way that once a development permit is issued for a trade falling within the cluster, there is henceforth, no need for a fresh permit in the event there is a change of trade within that same cluster;
- (b) a single application form in respect of development and building permit for single residential units;
I am glad that both proposals have been taken one step further in the Budget Speech.
- (c) the grant of a Certificate of Morality within a period of 2 weeks, compared to a much longer period previously;
- (d) facilitation of the request for permission for filming in the non-security zone at the airport;

- (e) deregulation of bakery licensing by the Ministry of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives;
- (f) the revision of the list of items requiring an export permit. In this regard, a number of items would no longer require a permit to export;
- (g) the reduction of the processing time for the registration of MEs, from one month to 2 days;
- (h) the revamping of the procedures for the grant of a Tourism Enterprise licence by the Tourism Authority, and
- (i) the reduction of the processing time for the grant of work permit and residence permits. This has also been taken one step further in the Budget Speech.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the list is not exhaustive. Already, these measures are yielding positive results. The Ministerial Committee has now targeted a number of other Ministries/Departments where the problems of bottlenecks and red tape are common and have to be addressed.

FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME – CONSULTANT

(No. B/801) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if a consultant has been appointed to work out the modalities of the existing Free Transport Scheme and, if so, will he state the amount of consultancy fees paid out to the consultant.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the services of International Development Partners Ltd, a member of the De Chazal du Mée Group, have been enlisted to review the current Free Travel Scheme.

The consultant will be paid an all inclusive fee of Rs869,000 plus VAT for the assignment.

Mr Guinness: May I know whether there are other firms which have quoted if ever there was a tendering exercise?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There have been no quotations, but there has been an expression of interest from another firm, but rather late. We were pressed because of the time limit.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister the difference in the price? What price did the other firm quoted?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There was no quotation of price, but just an expression of interest. They learnt about it through the press that there was going to be this consultancy and they were interested in the project.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister how this international firm came to know that there was a consultancy exercise to be carried out?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It was in the press. I announced it myself that we are going for a consultancy.

Mr Guinness: I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister will agree with me that we want to get the best consultants to do the work. The Deputy Prime Minister said that there was no advertising in the local or international press to call for consultants. But how is it that one consultant came to know about it? He came and he was enlisted.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It was not like that at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the field of transport, we know who are the transport specialists. The reference of this particular firm is a very first-class one and I have faith that they will do the job that they are meant to.

Mr Guinness: I do not challenge the integrity of that firm. It can be a reputed firm. But what I mean to say is that if we want to get other firms, at least, we ought to have advertised that we need consultants to carry out an exercise in the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, our main objective was to have a report as early as possible by a world-class consultant. We have got one and we are going to get it soon.

Mr Guinness: I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister will agree that there are other world-class consultants in that field.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, there are. But we do not need two, we need only one.

DWC – EMPLOYEES - REDEPLOYMENT

(No. B/802) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Development Works Corporation, he will state –

- (a) the number of employees at managerial level, unskilled workers, employees working on a permanent basis and contractual workers, presently in post, and
- (b) the modalities of the redeployment scheme, following the proposed closing down of the Corporation.

Te Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to Parliamentary Questions Nos B/802 and B/814 at the same time as they relate to the same issue.

During its existence, the DWC has been facing chronic financial difficulties. The state of affairs of the DWC arises from high operating and administrative costs, high finance costs to meet working capital obligations, and inadequate working capital. Several studies and reports have been commissioned in the past with the aim of reviewing the operation and financial position of the DWC and to find ways and means to redress or revamp the Corporation.

Already in 1992, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Rughoobur Report had proposed a restructuring of the DWC and the redeployment or retirement of the Corporation's surplus manpower. In 1999, the Management Audit Bureau made a review of the financial set up of the DWC and qualified its financial situation as being chaotic and drew attention that only drastic measures would put back the Corporation on track.

In November 2005, the MAB submitted a report on the future orientation of the DWC. After having examined all the options the MAB recommended the closing down of the Corporation with the possible redeployment of the personnel. Government appointed a Ministerial Committee under my Chairmanship to help DWC improve its financial situation and its operations. Despite continued efforts to improve efficiency

and productivity level, through the implementation of various strategies, the state of affairs remained a matter of concern. In the circumstances, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government considered it more appropriate to take the decision to proceed with the closure of the DWC as recommended by the MAB. This decision was announced by Dr the hon. Prime Minister on Saturday 03 June 2006 during a press conference.

To reply to the specific question, Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of employees under the different categories in post at the Development Works Corporation is as follows -

Managerial level above the grade of Secretary	17
Unskilled permanent DWC employees	50
Employees working on a permanent basis, excluding the unskilled employees, and including Leading Hands who are Government employees	503
Contractual workers	381

On Friday 09 June 2006, I had a meeting with the representatives of the DWC workers unions and the management of the DWC to listen to their proposals and solicit their collaboration in the smooth implementation of the decision to close down the DWC.

Government decided on 16 June 2006 to set up a Ministerial Committee under my Chairmanship to look into the implementation of the decision to close down the DWC. The Ministerial Committee will be guided by the following measures mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech 2006-07 -

- First, Government will meet fully its obligation on the terms of contracts for the employees.
- Second, a special unit at the Ministry of Labour will assist the employees to shift to productive activity in line with our policy of protecting workers instead of jobs.
- Third, there will be redeployment of employees.

- Fourth, the workers with a pensionable age profile will be pensioned off.
- Fifth, assistance will be made available through the Empowerment Programme for training for those who can be recycled into other jobs.
- Sixth, in line with our policy to diversify the base of enterprises eligible for Government contracts, workers wishing to start a business and in particular to set up companies for construction will be given all necessary support.
- Seventh, those setting up such businesses may obtain the equipment of the DWC on favourable terms.

I wish to point out that the Government has provided an amount of Rs230 m. in the forthcoming Budget to meet all the obligations following the winding up of the DWC.

The Ministerial Committee will meet soon. It is my intention to consult the unions as we go along.

Mr Guinness: Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House of the composition of the Ministerial Committee?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Committee set up will include the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Public Utilities, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health, that is, those Ministries with DWC projects.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Would the Deputy Prime Minister kindly inform the House as to the list of the contracts as well as the dates of the awards for which the DWC has not been paid by the public bodies?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, if a substantive question is asked, I will certainly provide the answer. It is a very complex and involved process as the former Minister would know.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the refurbishment of the office of the former Minister Guinness on that list?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will seek the answer.

Mr Naidu: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that, at the DWC, there are permanent employees and employees on a contract basis. Can the Minister give assurance to the House that employees on contractual basis will be given the same treatment as the permanent employees as the redeployment is done?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it cannot be. They are contractual workers and the contract will be honoured to the end.

Mr Naidu: The point that I was to make is that there are some contract employees at the DWC who have worked for more than 15 years in that Corporation and their contract has been renewed year in year out and they have never been given employment. Today, they are finding themselves in very difficult situation. These are the people whom I am referring to.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am in sympathy with the problem that the hon. Member has brought up. But it is the nature of contractual work that contract has a beginning and an end. Of course, we will do our best and it comes under the other headings. We are not just asking them to leave. We are trying through the Empowerment Programme to recycle them and I am sure if they are given the right *encadrement*, they will be very useful, especially for jobs which Government would like them to perform. I agree that there is a major problem which we have to address. We will do it humanely and we will do our best that all come out on the winning side.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister have the name of the Minister of Environment on this committee?

Dr. Beebeejaun: For your concern, hon. Bhagwan, I'll certainly ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Committee or Government has fixed a deadline by when all this redeployment, training or whatsoever procedure will be effective?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, obviously, we would like to do it as quickly as possible because as time goes on, the DWC becomes less and less effective and is unable to respect its commitment. So, whilst we are saying that we have a timescale of six months, we would like to address the

problem. But, as the former Minister realises, we have a list of projects that can be terminated very quickly, those that will never be terminated, and then in between. But the longer we wait, the more money down the drain it will be and the more dissatisfaction it will be among the workers. I think the sooner we address the problem the better.

KEROSENE – PRICE INCREASE

(No. B/803) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to kerosene, he will state –

- (a) if any survey was carried out to determine the number of households where kerosene was used for cooking before the previous 135% increase in its selling price, and
- (b) the reasons for the last increase in the selling price.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, regular surveys are carried out by the Central Statistical Office. In its Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey, carried out in 2004, it was revealed that only 2.2 % of all households use kerosene as principal fuel. Another 7% use it as secondary fuel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member who is showing concern about the increase in price of kerosene. In fact Government has to strike a just balance between the price of kerosene and the problem of adulteration of mogas and gas oil by kerosene. According to information on the consumption of kerosene, it came to light that almost 50% of kerosene which, until increase in price, was heavily subsidised was being used for adulteration purposes. The cost to Government was consequential, that is around Rs50 m.

The recent increase in the selling price of kerosene was motivated by two main reasons -

- (i) it was high time to review the price, as the evolution of prices on the international market was following an upward trend.
- (ii) It was high time to take measures to discourage the practice of adulteration.

Furthermore, I am advised that before the coming into effect of the Automatic Pricing Mechanism for mogas and gas oil, there was a given price relativity between the price of mogas, gas oil, and kerosene.

Since April 2004, the fluctuation in prices of mogas and gas oil were taken care of through each APM exercise. On its part, the price of kerosene has remained unchanged until November 2005, although international prices of kerosene have the same soaring tendency as mogas and gas oil.

The price differential between DPK and mogas was Rs20.25 prior to 19th November 2005. For DPK and gas oil, it was Rs11.05 prior to 19 November 2005. In May 2006, the price differentials were Rs11.05 and Rs8.25 respectively.

As at November 2005, STC has accumulated losses to the tune of Rs175.4 m. on kerosene as a single item. As a responsible Government, measures had to be taken to ward off adulteration tendencies, mitigate loss on the product and adjust prices according to price evolution on the world market.

In april 2006, the price differential between DPK, mogas and gas oil would have encouraged adulteration. Therefore, the price increase, as I said before, was also meant to put an end to this practice. The House may wish to note that a high price differentiation acted as an incentive for unscrupulous persons to practice adulteration, which is illegal.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, it seems that even up to now 2.2% of the household still uses kerosene for cooking. And it is also true about adulteration, as the Minister has said. But, has he, at the level of his Ministry, tried to find out in what ways we can help the 2.2% of the households who are still using kerosene?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for pointing out this fact. Firstly, I should assure the hon. Member that currently they are not paying the actual price. So, they are still paying a price lower than the price that it should have been sold on the market. Secondly, at the level of my Ministry, we have discussed about the difficulty people are having to face, but it's a question of having the right mechanism to compensate these people. If the hon. Member has any suggestion, I am all ears to whatever he has to say.

SC/HSC EXAMINATION FEES – NEEDY STUDENTS- SUBSIDY

(No. B/804) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed change in the scheme for the payment of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examination fees, he will state the criteria that will be used to determine who is a “needy student” in order to benefit from the exemption of the payment of either half or full examination fees.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, further to the reply I gave to the PNQ this morning, I wish to add that one of the key objectives of the budget 2006/2007 is to increase support to those who need it most. In line with this philosophy of greater solidarity and support towards the neediest members of the community, we are ensuring that all needy students obtain not 50% but 100% of subsidy on SC/HSC exam fees.

The present scheme under the social aid is being maintained. The scheme is as follows –

Recipients of social aid and unemployment hardship relief (UHR) which are means tested schemes de facto qualifies for refund of SC/HSC Exam fees. They are needy and destitute persons. Payment of exam fees is effected to beneficiaries in receipt of basic retirement pension, basic invalidity pension, basic widow’s pension and basic orphan’s pension (which are universal benefits and not means tested) only if they would have qualified for social aid, were they not in receipt of these basic pensions. An inquiry is carried out into their financial circumstances to determine their eligibility.

Further, my Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions has also taken into account that there may be other cases in need of support. Both Ministries are working out a set of criteria which will be applied on a case to case basis.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has not given anything new. Recipients of social aid, unemployment benefits, BRP, orphans pensions were already getting the refund, since years. The Minister says “on a case to case basis”, this is unacceptable. Either we have a clear-cut policy on income based, or we put an income threshold. But we cannot go on a case

to case basis. Therefore, can I know from the Minister what are the other modalities that are being worked out?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have explained that we are going to address the case of needy students. These needy cases will have to be referred to the Ministry of Social Security and a scheme is being worked out.

Mr Guinness: What the Minister defines as needy students are those who receive social aid, unemployment benefits, BIP, BRP ...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has said that there are other criteria that are being worked out.

Mr Guinness: How can we announce a measure without knowing what are the other criteria?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, even for those students who go to the Ministry of Social Security, it's not automatic; there are certain procedures which are in place. Then these students are provided with the fees. If there are other cases of students who need that support, that will be dealt with.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether he does not consider that the sum of Rs72 m. which is normally spent on the SC/HSC examination fees is very small in comparison to the sum of money allocated to the budget of the Ministry of Education? So, would he not consider reviewing this particular facility given to students? Because, otherwise, our objectives would become self-defeating. We give free education, free transport to school and it might not lead to our objective if examination fees are not subsidised.

Mr Gokhool: I have already answered the question in the morning. The general policy orientation is given in the budget and explained. The subsidies are being redirected.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a question for the hon. Minister. I would like to know from him whether he has already identified the number of students that qualify...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Listen to the question, please!

Mrs Martin: I would like to know if he has already identified the number of students that qualify as needy students.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is for students who feel that they have a problem, they need their support, they will make the case.

Mrs Labelle: Does not the Minister think that we have to come with clear criteria to define...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! The Minister has just said that he is working on the criteria. I think, after some time, you can come with the question and ask whether the criteria have been defined or not. Next question, please!

CAMP LEVIEUX, ROSE HILL - HOUSING UNITS

(No. B/805) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the new housing units built at Camp Levieux, Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to -

- (a) if interviews have been carried out of the prospective buyers and selection made and, if so, since when;
- (b) if deposits have been made by the prospective buyers and, if so, the number of housing units reserved, and
- (c) when the new owners will take possession of their houses.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir ..

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Answer the question, please! Order!

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note with much interests the growing concern of the hon. Third Member of Constituency No. 19 ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, please!

Mr Dulull: ... to have the housing units of the NHDC at Camp Leveux be reinstated and occupied by the eligible beneficiaries. But I only wish that the hon. Member had the same concern on the eve of the general election

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Hon. Bhagwan, order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! According to the Standing Orders, I cannot prevent the Minister unless ..

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, please! I cannot control the answer of the Minister unless it is outside the Standing Order! Please, hon. Minister, carry on with whatever you have to say! Order!

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, like I mentioned, I wish the hon. Member had the same concern on the eve of the general election when those houses were being illegally occupied. I have to say that the hon. Member was a *complice* by her passiveness ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Minister is casting aspersion on the hon. Member. Withdraw this! According to the Standing Order, you cannot cast aspersion.

Mr Dulull: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am advised, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the interview for exercise of the prospective buyers ..

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, I am on my feet. I know that this answer has been written by Civil Servants and my remark goes to the Civil Servants as well.

(Interruptions)

Mr Dulull: I am advised, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the interview for exercise of the prospective buyers for the 152 housing units at Camp Levieux has already been completed. The selection of beneficiaries from amongst those who attended the interview exercise is still under way and is expected to be completed by end of July 2006.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am further advised that -

- (i) since the selection exercise has not yet been completed, no down payment has been made and housing units have not been completed because of the delay caused by the illegal occupation of the squatters on the eve of the general election. Damages were caused, including the Camp Levieux Housing Estate, to the tune of Rs22.4 m.
- (ii) the housing units will be delivered in October 2006, after completion of the required formalities.

OLD AGE PENSIONERS, DESTITUTE PERSONS & VULNERABLE GROUPS - BLANKETS & PULLOVERS

(No. B/806) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state if old age pensioners, destitute persons and the vulnerable groups will benefit from free blankets and pullovers during the winter season this year and, if not, why not.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is no. The policy for the provision of blankets, cardigans and even cash in lieu of same has been stopped by the previous Government since the year 2004.

DR JEETOO HOSPITAL - INCIDENT 05.06.06

(No. B/807) Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware of any incident which occurred at the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital during the night of 05 June 2006 and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the number of nursing officers, doctors and Police officers who have allegedly been assaulted by a patient, and
- (b) the measures that have been or will be taken to ensure better protection of the staff.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on the night of 05 to 06 June, 2006 a patient aged 25 years, apparently an habitual criminal, attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital with a history of injury. He was attended by a Medical Officer and a Buscopan and Diclofenac injection was administered. He was requested to wait for half an hour to be seen again by the doctor to assess his condition and decide about further action.

However, after 10 minutes he came back, accompanied by three relatives to see the doctor. The patient was again examined and referred to the surgical unit for further treatment. He was not satisfied and he verbally insulted the Medical Officer and a Nursing Officer. No case of assault was reported by any doctor or nursing officer.

However, one Police Officer who was called in, at that particular time, to deal with the patient was physically assaulted by him and was injured. The Police Officer has made a declaration against the patient.

Concerning part (b) of the question, regarding measures taken to ensure better protection of the staff, it is to be noted that the Police provides a 24-hour security coverage in the Accident and Emergency Department of all regional hospitals.

GRAND'BAIE - SEWERAGE SUB-OFFICE

(No. B/808) Mr D. Rucktooa (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will consider the advisability of setting up a sub office in Grand'Baie to deal promptly with sewerage problems as and when they occur.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of premises connected to the Grand'Baie sewer network is presently 1418 made up of 1404 residences, 15 commercial undertakings and two hotels.

The number of complaints received for the period August 2005, when the sewer network was made operational, to June 2006 is nine with an almost even distribution of one complaint per month.

The number of interventions required is very limited and are attended to by the Port Louis Sewerage section operating at Caudan. This is evidently more economical at this moment.

The setting up of a sub-office in Grand'Baie is, in the present circumstances, not warranted, but may be considered in future on a felt need basis.

However, it is being envisaged that a team of four Wastewater Pipe Cleaners, one Driver and one Assistant Works Superintendent with necessary equipment and tools and expertise be posted to the Grand'Baie Wastewater Treatment Plant in due course.

In these days of economic and financial stringency, it is imperative that every move we make on the wastewater front is cost effective and does not result in any further waste of our financial resources.

TUBERCULOSIS CASES - DOTS PROGRAMMES

(No. B/809) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to tuberculosis, he will state -

- (a) the number of cases recorded for each of the last three years, and

- (b) if there is any plan to implement the Direct Observed Treatment Short-course programme (DOTS) for the treatment of tuberculosis and, if not, why not.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a total of 137 cases of tuberculosis have been reported for the year 2003, 139 for the year 2004 and 127 for the year 2005.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that since 1992, the DOTS (Direct Observed Treatment Short-course Programme) is being implemented for the treatment of tuberculosis. The programme is ongoing. The treatment of tuberculosis is in line with WHO recommendations.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, since this DOTS programme, as the hon. Minister said, has already started and one of the legs of this Programme is to supervise treatment, can I understand from the Minister that this needs the involvement of human resources and material in terms of transport? Is such mobilisation being undertaken?

Mr Faugoo: The answer is yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. Under DOTS patients are taking their drugs under the observation of the health personnel and eventually because it is a six months course, once they are discharged from the hospital, they benefit from frequent visits of trained home visiting nurses, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think supervise treatment means here that the health personnel should go the patient's home and make him take the tablet in front of him. I am just asking whether this is actually being done.

Mr Faugoo: This is what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir. The treatment is done under the supervision of the health personnel when they are in the hospital as in-patient. Once they are discharged, specially trained nurses attend to them in their residence and they are also followed as outpatient by Chest Physicians at the Chest Clinic in Port Louis.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think 137 cases of tuberculosis per year is a very big number for a high-income country like Mauritius. What I want know is the number of health personnel that is being deployed for this specific programme.

Mr Faugoo: I do not have the figures in the file, Mr Speaker, Sir.

GEORGE V STADIUM (NEW) - FLOOD LIGHTS

(No. B/810) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will consider the advisability of having flood lights installed at the new George V Stadium.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has a programme to provide lighting facilities in all stadia under its management. Lighting works at Rose Belle Stadium have just been completed and it is now proposed to provide same facilities at George V stadium.

In this context the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of Public Utilities has been requested to carry out a survey and submit specifications with cost estimates for the installation of lighting facilities at the New George V Stadium.

Mr Guimbeau: Does the hon. Minister have any idea as to when those lights are going to be installed?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the necessary will be done in a few months' time, I think.

CLINICS (PRIVATE) – STAFF

(No. B/811) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to private clinics, he will state if regular visits are carried out by officers of his Ministry to ensure that they comply with all the conditions of the Private Health Institution Act, especially, the one regarding the qualification requirements of staff, including nursing officers.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that before the issue of renewal of a licence to a private health institution, visits are carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of officers, comprising the Regional Public Health Superintendents, Consultants from the various units, Regional Nursing Administrators and Health Inspectors of the regional health offices to ensure that private clinics comply with all the conditions of the Private Health Institutions Act 1989.

.../...

As regards the qualification requirements of staff, including Nursing Officers in private clinics, I am informed that –

- (a) all doctors working there are duly registered with the Medical Council and have the required qualifications to practice, and
- (b) only nurses and midwives registered in accordance with the provisions of the Nursing Council Act can function as such in the private health institutions. Registration is granted only to those who satisfy the qualifications and other requirements laid down in the Nursing Council Act.
- (c) In addition, private clinics employ auxiliary nurses, Health Care Assistants and Nursing Aids.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a multi-disciplinary team from the Ministry visits private clinics throughout the year on an *ad hoc* basis, as and when required. Furthermore, all private clinics are required to report on their activities and staff on a quarterly basis.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether during all the visits effected, the officers concerned did not find anything irregular in the private clinics?

Mr Faugoo: Does the hon. Member have in mind a particular clinic or in general?

Mr Guimbeau: In general.

Mr Faugoo: I don't have any report in this regard with me, Mr Speaker, Sir.

CUT MAKE AND TRIM FACTORY – SALARY COMPENSATION

(No. B/ 812) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state the measures, if any, that will be taken to provide assistance to the “Cut Make and Trim” factories in the textile sector which are not in a position to pay the salary compensation of Rs 135 to their workers.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr S. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, in limiting the salary compensation for the current financial year to Rs135, we had taken into account, amongst other things, the ability of enterprises to pay this compensation. We were aware that some enterprises might face difficulties in paying even this minimum salary compensation.

This is why we have announced the setting-up of a National Wage Council, which will retain the spirit of tripartism, but will also ensure that the level of wages and compensation are linked to productivity and capacity to pay.

The House is aware “Enterprise Mauritius” is already implementing a programme to support the restructuring of enterprises, which are facing difficulties in the clothing and textile sector, including “Cut Make and Trim” factories with a view to improving the efficiency productivity and competitiveness.

Enterprise Mauritius will also help such enterprises to prepare restructuring plans that can be financed through Equity Funds.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he has been made aware of any enterprise that will not, in fact, be able to pay this compensation, and if yes, which are they?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are some enterprises that have written to me to say that they can’t pay. This is going to be the law of the land, and if it is the law of the land they will have to comply.

ROAD ACCIDENTS - NUMBER

(No. B/813) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of accidents caused by drivers with alcohol concentration exceeding the prescribed limit and resulting in loss of life for the period 2001 to 2004.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Police, that the Police does not keep systematically any

records on the number of accidents caused by drivers with alcohol concentration exceeding the prescribed limit and resulting in loss of life.

My Ministry will have consultation with the Police on the review of the whole system of keeping vital statistics relating to road accidents.

DEVELOPMENT WORKS CORPORATION – CLOSURE – STAFF REDEPLOYMENT

(No. B/814) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the proposed closing down of the Development Works Corporation, he will state the modalities to each redeployment of the staff.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/802)

CITÉ BARKLY, BEAU BASSIN - CENTRE DE JEUNESSE

(No. B/815) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he is aware of the state of the *Centre de Jeunesse* at Cité Barkly, Beau Bassin and, if so, will state the measure that will be taken.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the *Centre de Jeunesse* at Cité Barkly, Beau Bassin became flooded after the passage of cyclone Diwa in March this year due to the development of cracks on the roof, thus causing damage to the vinyl flooring.

A survey was carried out by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to ascertain the extent of damage caused and the remedial works to be undertaken.

These remedial works comprise waterproofing and replacement of the vinyl with tiles. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has already been provided with the materials required and will start with the waterproofing within this month. The replacement of the vinyl will be undertaken after completion of the waterproofing works.

Mr Naidu: Can the hon. Minister let us know when works will start?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I have already said that it will be within this month.

CITÉ LA CHAUX, MAHEBOURG -COMMUNITY CENTRE

(No. B/816) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Community Centre at Cité La Chaux, Mahebourg, he will state when works are likely –

- (i) to start, and
- (ii) to be completed.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/417, I indicated that it was proposed to award the contract for the upgrading of the Community Centre at Cité La Chaux to the DWC.

In view of the recent development regarding the closure of the DWC, it is now proposed to implement the projects through a competitive bidding exercise. The tender documents are under preparation and will be ready by July 2006. It is proposed to float the tenders in August and award the contract in October 2006. The works will, therefore, be completed around October 2007.

CAMP THOREL - *PARCOURS DE SANTÉ*- PROJECT

(No. B/817) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the *Parcours de Santé* Project at Camp Thorel, he will state when the project was initiated and when will it be commissioned.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the contract for the *Parcours de Santé* at Camp Thorel was awarded to the DWC on the 18 May 2005. Handing over of the site was effected on the 01 June 2005. Works were delayed due to bad weather conditions, among other reasons. The project is now scheduled to be completed and commissioned in three months time.

CEMENT – PRESENT STOCK, CONSIGNMENT, ETC.

(No. B/818) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the supply of cement, he will state –

- (a) the present stock;
- (b) the date on which the last consignment was received;
- (c) the expected date of the next consignment, and
- (d) if there is the likelihood of any shortage and, if so, the measures, if any, that will be taken.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, as per information obtained from importers, I am informed as follows.–

With regard to part (a) of the question, the present stock of cement as at 19 June 2006 stood at 34,000 metric tons.

With regard to part (b), the last consignment, that is, 18,000 metric tons was received on 27 May 2006.

Insofar as part (c) is concerned, the next consignments are as follows -

- (i) 11,000 metric tons are expected to reach Port Louis on or about 26 June 2006;
- (ii) 18,000 metric tons are expected on or about 30 June 2006, and
- (iii) 15,400 metric tons are expected on or about 09 July 2006.

As regards part (d), I am advised that the answer is in the negative.

Mr Bhagwan: Le ministre est-il au courant que la semaine dernière il n'y a pas eu de livraison de ciment pendant deux jours? Il y a eu un chômage technique dans ces deux entreprises. S'il n'est pas au courant, peut-il vérifier et informer la Chambre par la suite?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did see some press reports. But, from the information I have here, there is no shortage of cement in Mauritius.

Mr Naidu: Will the hon. Minister advise whether the STC is going to introduce an automatic pricing mechanism for cement?

Mr Speaker: No, this question does not arise.

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
– TRAINING SESSIONS**

(No. B/819) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Human Resources Development Council, a detailed list of training sessions organised by the Council since July 2005.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Human Resources Development Council has not organised any training programmes since July 2005.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the HRDC organised and delivered courses themselves for call centres?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question relates to whether HRDC has organised any training programme, and the answer is 'no'.

FOOD AID – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/820) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floréal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state the number of families benefiting from food Aid as at 30 April 2006.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as at 30 April 2006, the number of families benefiting from Food Aid was 25,817, that is, representing 41,234 persons.

STREET CHILDREN PROJECT – SUPPORT

(No. B/821) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state if identified street children are benefiting from any support and/or follow-up and, if so, will she give details thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the non renewal of the contract of the street educators in April 2006, my Ministry has had several meetings with them, to find out the possibility of extending any help, to enable them to carry on their activities.

We are satisfied that the 15 street educators, who were previously employed on contracts for the Street Children Project, are maintaining regular contacts with the 182 children already identified. The street educators have already set up an NGO under the name of SAFIRE, whose main objective is to cater for street children.

My Ministry has submitted the NGO's request for financial assistance, to the NGO Trust Fund and NATReSA. Moreover, the IT corner at my Ministry has been placed at their disposal for use whenever required and the conference room at the NPF, Rose Hill is provided to them for the holding of meetings.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have previously stated in this House, my Ministry has at heart the Street Children Project and will constantly endeavour to provide any assistance to keep the project going through the NGO, SAFIRE. The street educators, are in contact with officers of my Ministry and we are being provided with regular reports on the situation relating to the Street Children Project.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned regular contacts. May I ask her whether she is aware that the street educators are unable to response because of financial constraints and how many contacts have there been between these street educators and the street kids during the past three months?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just said that we had to keep regular contacts with them because we wanted to give them all the support to get registered as an NGO to promote the work that is being done in favour of the street children. So, this is not done in one day. We have taken the months of April and May to help them at the level of the Registrar of Associations with the help of my colleague, the Minister of Labour, to get the registration of the NGO. This has already been completed. Now, their project is being channeled to the NGO Trust Fund and NATReSA for financial support. And, in the meanwhile, they are keeping regular contact and we are giving them maximum support to be able to attend to these children.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, my main concern was the street children and the hon. Minister has so kindly given me so many details on street educators. I was concerned with the support and follow-up of the street children. I want to know whether these children have received support and whether they were followed up. My concern was street children I want to know what support street children had been receiving from the Ministry.

Mrs Bappoo: As regards support, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not only financial support. These children, first of all, need moral and psychological support and this has been going on with the help of the street educators. The NGO is now waiting to get their financial support from the NGO Trust Fund and this has already been taken on board by the NGO Trust Fund Board.

(Interruptions)

Please listen to my answer!

Mr Speaker: Order! I am sorry! Let the Minister answer! Has she answered? She has answered.

Mrs Labelle: Once again, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to be clear in my question. I am asking whether the street children have been receiving support and follow up.

Mr Speaker: Has the Minister replied?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes.

RIVERS - DREDGING - JULY 2005 TO DATE

(No. B/822) Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will table the scope of works and the specifications for all dredging works carried out in our rivers since July 2005.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being tabled.