

POLICE FORCE - PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. 1B/70) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether in regard to the last promotional examinations in the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) Police constables;
- (b) Police sergeants, and
- (c) Police inspectors

who sat therefor, indicating the dates thereof in each case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to parliamentary question 1B/7 at the sitting of 15 June 2010, that is, last week, whereby I explained that the procedure for the promotion exercise in the Police Force has indeed been set in motion and I can now say it is expected to be completed by next week.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Prime Minister table the criteria for promotion?

The Prime Minister: The criteria for promotion do not depend on the Prime Minister or any Member of the Government. It goes to the Disciplined Forces Commission and they decide. They have clear criteria, but I suppose they go through those criteria all the time.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that the delay on this issue is a significant factor contributing to the low morale of the Police Force and also contributes to demotivate members of the Police Force and consequently causes the deterioration of law and order being experienced in the country?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the law and order situation has improved, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't know whether it is a coincidence or not, but let me say that the sitting and the passing of the examination itself is one important aspect of the exercise. The Commissioner of Police has then to go through a list to check whether any Police officer – because this has happened in the past, I must say – who has passed the examination, is not under suspension, but what is worse, has not committed any serious offence in the meantime or shown gross negligence, and also

there is no complaint on paper. We have to look at it. That was an exercise which took the time that it took. And I must say there have been such cases. I am not going to mention them here. But also I should say that the passing of the competitive examination does not confer any right to promotion. In any case, when they pass the examination, Mr Speaker, Sir, it will depend on the vacancies that are available. I can tell you now that there is less vacancy than the number of people who have passed the examinations. So, those who don't get promotion will have to wait, but this exercise is ongoing.

I should also add, as I mentioned, I think it was in February of this year, before the election, that we have launched a national policing strategic framework. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a human resource management capability exercise that we have embarked upon. We want to ensure that the right people with the right skills are in the right places in the right numbers, and that is what we are doing.

NPF/MCB LTD CASE – INVESTIGATIONS

(No. 1B/71) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to National Pensions Fund/Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd case, he will state if Government will now consider setting up a Commission of Inquiry to look into the matter and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the NPF/MCB case was uncovered in February 2003 when a shortfall in the accounts of the NPF at the Mauritius Commercial Bank was discovered by the then Principal Accountant of the NPF. The case was referred to the ICAC in February 2003 by the Financial Intelligence Unit.

I am informed that a number of cases, both civil and criminal, are still before the Courts. In fact, in one of the criminal cases, the MCB is being prosecuted before the Intermediate Court for the offence of money laundering in breach of sections 3(2) and 8 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti Money Laundering Act, coupled with section 44(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act. I am also informed that the case was lodged on 04 September 2009, and will come for trial on 17 September 2010.

I am further advised that, in 2003, the MCB lodged a civil case against Mr R. L. and 37 other Defendants, including the NPF and the National Savings Fund. On 02 September 2009,

NPF and the National Savings Fund were put out of cause. The case was heard before the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court, and judgment has been reserved.

Other cases are still being investigated by ICAC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, under these circumstances, it is felt that it is not advisable at this stage, at least, to consider the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, as it might cause, first of all, prejudice to the cases before the courts and then to the ongoing investigation being carried out by ICAC.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I recall the hon. Prime Minister that, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, he has on more than one occasion demanded for the publication of the NTan report. Would he now announce to the House when the report will be published?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the whole case is going on. As far as I remember, 'Le Mauricien' published the report. God knows how they got the report, but they published it. I should also say that, in the court case, - I am just trying to check, Mr Speaker, Sir - there have been requests for the report to be handed over from the Bank of Mauritius. I think this has been done. But as there are court cases, I cannot go and intervene.

Mr Speaker: I think I will have to intervene at this stage, and say that the matter is *sub judice*. Being given that trial has taken place and we are awaiting a judgement from the Supreme Court, it is *sub judice*. I will request the hon. Member to stop questioning. When the judgment is over, then perhaps he can come back.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do have one very important point on this issue. In view of the loopholes established by the NTan report, which cost a huge sum to the Bank of Mauritius, does the hon. Prime Minister consider the report to have significant preliminary facts to set up a full-fledged inquiry into the matter?

Mr Speaker: In which matter does the hon. Member mean?

Mr Fakeemeeah: In the matter of publishing the full report.

Mr Speaker: No. As I have said, the Prime Minister has answered the question. Being given that there are so many court cases now pending before the Supreme Court and inquiries are going on, the *sub judice* rule in this present case applies, and I do not think that it is proper for

the hon. Member to put the question now. He will have to wait for all the matters to be sorted out before he can come back to this House and put the question. Next question!

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – MEMBERS – ALLOWANCES & BENEFITS

(No. 1B/72) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Honourable Members of the National Assembly, he will state if consideration will be given to –

- (a) bringing amendments to the National Assembly Allowances Act with a view to reducing the allowances paid to them, and
- (b) withdrawing all duty-free benefits derived by them.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the allowances payable to Members of the National Assembly under the National Assembly Allowances Act are based on recommendations made by the PRB, which is, as we all know, an independent body. These allowances are generally linked to civil service pay bands which have been established by the PRB through job evaluation techniques, in line with current international practice. The allowances are reviewed once every five years, along with the public service pay review. However, despite such periodic reviews, the pay and benefits of hon. Members are still, I should say, much less than what would obtain in the private sector. It would not, therefore, be fair and reasonable to further reduce the pay or benefits of the hon. Members.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the House and the hon. Member that, at the beginning of the second mandate of my Government, that is, in July 2005, when the economy was going through difficult times, Members of my Government then willingly accepted a reduction of 3.5% of their allowances. And, later on, when the country was hit by the international financial crisis, their allowances were again reduced, as part of a series of measures undertaken to prepare for the economic recovery. The pay of Members of Parliament, as far as I remember, was reduced by Rs10,000; my own pay was reduced by Rs15,000, and I think the President also had his wages reduced. But this did not dampen our enthusiasm. We toiled with the same dedication, determination and patriotism. The allowances were restored in January of this year, when the economy showed clear signs of recovery.

I should also like to add that, apart from the Members of the Government, all Parliamentarians of the MSM party had also voluntarily contributed to the National Solidarity Fund, as a generous gesture in favour of the poor and the needy.

MBC – BOARD MEMBERS & MEETINGS

(No. 1B/73) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the present composition of its Board and the date of its appointment, and
- (b) the number of Board meetings held since the appointment of the present Director General, indicating the dates thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, the office of Chairperson of the MBC Board is vacant, as you know, following the demise of Mr Fareed Jangeerkhan on 12 June of this year.

The two ex-officio Members of the Board are Mrs K. O. Fong Weng-Poorun, Permanent Secretary at my Office, and Mr J. Hurry, Director of the Government Information Service.

The four other Members are -

Mr Harold V. S. Chan Lam, OBE, CSK, GOSK;

Mrs Mariam Goodur, MSK;

Mrs Arlette Freyneau, PDSM, and

Mr Krishna A. Pather.

They were appointed on 18 November 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed by the Director General that, since his appointment in June 2009, the MBC Board has met on three occasions, namely on 09 December 2009, on 26 February 2010 and on 19 April 2010.

However, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the former Chairperson of the Corporation passed away recently, as I said - he was not well and he passed away. I am informed that there

were regular consultations with the Director General on matters, which he considered requiring his views or concurrences.

I take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to present my deep condolences to the family of Mr Fareed Jangeerkhan.

Mr Bhagwan: We also, Mr Speaker, Sir, have known the past Chairperson who had been working for the MBC. We also associate ourselves with the Prime Minister to pay respect to his family. But, can I ask the Prime Minister whether section 9(1) of the MBC Act, where it is said that a meeting of the Board shall be held, at least, once every month, at such time and place as the Chairperson may direct, has been strictly adhered to?

The Prime Minister: As I said, it was not strictly adhered to, but there were consultations. We are now considering whoever has to be replaced as Board Members. I am not saying all of them.

Mr Bhagwan: I won't go into the personal details, because I knew the Chairperson myself. We have been friends for many years; we have worked together. He was very frustrated, because the Board did not meet. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the MBC is being run as a one-man show.

The Prime Minister: I don't think it is a one-man show. It is a huge place. I must point out to the hon. Member that there was an inquiry that went on. We did say at the time that we should hold on everything. We want to see what the inquiry says. In fact, it was the Chairperson himself who found some irregularities - according to him - and asked for an inquiry, which I agreed to. The inquiry was done. The report was given, and this is what we were doing when I decided to call for the election. But this will be corrected.

Mr Bhagwan: We all know about the Hungama Affair, which we have discussed lengthily in Parliament. Is the hon. Prime Minister satisfied that everything is rosy at the MBC/TV? Because the citizens are paying Rs300 m. yearly, which is a huge sum. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the chaotic situation, as far as the management is concerned?

Mr Speaker: Can I refer the hon. Member that this question has a specific issue, which has been raised about the meeting of the Board. Now, the hon. Member is drifting, saying that there is a chaotic situation. How can he relate his question with this particular question?

Mr Bhagwan: It relates, because there is no Board meeting. The Prime Minister says that there is consultation. But the fact that there is no Board meeting, it is a one-man show. The situation is chaotic at the MBC/TV, and we are paying Rs100 monthly, Sir, including you!

The Prime Minister: But the hon. Member has just mentioned himself that he knew the Chairperson, and that he was a person of integrity. I can tell you that he was not somebody who would agree to anything. This is why, in fact, we had the inquiry. Even the Board, the Chairperson and the Director-General were named by Government. Still, because he asked for an inquiry, I proceeded with the inquiry. As I said, the last meeting was in April, but this is being corrected because we are reconstituting the Board.

Mr Bérenger: From what the hon. Prime Minister has said, the law is clear. There must be a Board meeting every month. So, it is not a question as the hon. Prime Minister has said, it was not strictly adhered to. It was not adhered to. The law is being flouted. If the Chairperson was not well, there is an Acting Chairperson. Can I know who is the present Acting Chairperson?

The Prime Minister: No, there is no Ag. Chairperson, but I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the law is also clear that in case the Board can't meet, then, at least, there should be some consultations before things are done. This is what has happened. There is no Acting Chairperson on the Board.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a last question. Being given that the Board has not met regularly as per the Act, is the hon. Prime Minister satisfied that all decisions which had been taken by the Director-General and the management are legal and whether he is agreeable to ask the Director of Audit, and in the public interest, to make an inquiry on the decisions of the Board and see whether they are in accordance with the MBC Act?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the last meeting of the Board was in April of this year and they did not draw my attention to anything that was going on. But I can look into it if there is anything. But I have not heard about anything. Maybe if the hon. Member can give me some details.

POLICE FORCE – SUICIDE CASES

(No. 1B/74) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to reported cases of suicide in the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof for each of the last five years, and
- (b) the actions that are being taken to avert the recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of reported cases of suicide in the Police Force in each of the last five years is as follows -

Year	No. of Cases
2005	5
2006	2
2007	1
2008	1
2009	2
2010 (up to 17 June 2010)	Nil

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the Police Force has adopted a prevention and intervention strategy based on medical support and organisational involvement in cases of officers suffering from stress problems and also demonstrating suicidal tendencies. In this connection, a circular has recently been issued by the Commissioner of Police to all Deputy Commissioners of Police, Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers, on Stress Prevention and Intervention Strategy. This circular provides guidelines for the identification of those officers who, through their behaviour and conduct, as well as their medical records, appear

to suffer from psychological problems, and are thus at risk. It also provides for close monitoring of such officers.

I am further informed that action is currently being taken for the recruitment of a Psychologist in the Police Force. In the meantime, cases requiring specialised treatment and counseling are being referred by the Police Medical Officers to Psychiatrists and Psychologists of Government hospitals. In simpler cases, Police Medical Officers offer treatment and counseling themselves.

In addition, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure that Police Officers at senior level are properly trained to deal with such cases, Stress Awareness Prevention and Management Training Programmes are being run for all Police Managers. Modules on Suicide Prevention are also being incorporated into the Police Training School curriculum for all members of the Force, including new recruits. The training will encourage Police Officers who need counseling to come forward with problems they may have.

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in the long run candidates applying to join the Force will undergo a screening exercise which will include predisposition factors such as their personality as well as precipitating factors such as their family background, or whether they have been exposed to problems related to alcohol abuse. It is also proposed to introduce psychometric tests in the future selection exercises of trainee constables with a view to assessing the mental state and behaviour of the candidates prior to their enlistment in the Force.

Emphasis is also being laid on the importance of extra professional activities with a view to combating stress as well as promoting a healthy life amongst Police Officers. As such, Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers have been requested to provide logistical facilities for the organisation of sports and other leisure activities including yoga, and meditation sessions. A Family Support Programme is also being put into place to provide social support to the Police Officers and their families.

POLICE WELFARE ASSOCIATION - ACCOUNTS - AUDITED REPORT

(No. 1B/75) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Welfare Association, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) when the Audited Report of the Accounts of the Association was submitted to him, and
- (b) whether the Report has revealed irregularities and, if so, the nature thereof, indicating the measures taken to redress its financial situation.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it is not mandatory for a copy of the Audited Report of the accounts of the Police Welfare Association to be submitted to him as he is only an ordinary member of the Association.

The fund of the Police Welfare Association is managed by a 17-member Committee in accordance with the Rules of the Association. The Commissioner of Police has no authority in the management of the Association and, as such, he cannot interfere with the lawful business of that Association.

I am also informed that following several complaints and allegations made to the Commissioner of Police, the latter referred the matter to the Registrar of Associations for enquiry pursuant to section 32 of the Registration of Associations Act. As the complaints and the allegations might also disclose criminal offences, the matter was referred to the Central CID for enquiry.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, following a request dated 15 June 2010 from the newly-elected Secretary of the Police Welfare Association the Commissioner of Police has requested the Director of the Office of Public Sector Governance (formerly what used to be the Management Audit Bureau) to carry out an internal audit and verification of -

- (a) all accounting records and systems;
- (b) the processing and granting of loans;
- (c) the reconciliation of accounts, payments and deductions;

- (d) the verification of minutes of proceedings, and
- (e) the bank statements and financial statements.

Appropriate remedial action will be taken in the light of the report of the Director, Office of Public Sector Governance.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is true that the Commissioner of Police is just a member, but, at the end of the day, he is the one who delegates the office bearers; he has to give them leave to manage the Association. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Commissioner of Police has, at least, been made aware of the report and the discrepancies which the internal auditor has found in the accounts?

The Prime Minister: I think, obviously, as he said, he has had several complaints and allegations following which he decided to have this inquiry.

Mr Baloomoody: Is it a fact that we are talking about millions of rupees which have been siphoned or given to officers without any authority whatsoever?

The Prime Minister: We can't say at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir. Obviously, there is an inquiry, let's wait for the inquiry to finish.

Mr Baloomoody: We know that the dossier has been submitted to the Central CID, and we know that most of the office bearers are senior officers of the Police. Does the hon. Prime Minister find it proper for the Police officer to inquire under act and doing of even some of the superiors who are people who have managed that fund?

The Prime Minister: That is why we said we want to change the system. We had an election; we are going to do it. But in the meantime, somebody has to inquire; we can't just leave it as it is.

PRISONERS - MOBILE PHONES - INQUIRY

(No. 1B/76) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to prisoners who have been found to be in possession of mobile phones and private phone numbers of Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Commissioner of Prisons, information as to whether an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof, indicating if any action has been taken against those responsible.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 13 January 2010, the Prisons authorities secured three mobile phones from the Segregation and Protection Unit where detainee S. C. was found along with eight other detainees.

These mobile phones were handed over to the Major Crime Investigation Team for investigation. After obtaining a Judge's Order, the MCIT enquired into the communications made through these mobile phones. The enquiry revealed that detainee S. C. had communicated with three Police officers.

These Officers were interviewed by the MCIT. They all agreed that they had conversed with S. C. on their mobile phones and they also explained the circumstances of the phone communication.

There is a Police enquiry which is ongoing, which is also looking into the circumstances under which the detainees in the Segregation and Protection Unit, which is a highly protected area, had access to mobile phones.

Once the enquiry is completed, the matter will be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know whether the hon. Prime Minister is aware that this has been ongoing for quite a while? It is common knowledge that mobile phones, drugs and so on are available in the prisons. What serious action is going to be taken being given that it is now established that drug traffickers - at least one - operate from inside the prison with mobile phones for their drug trafficking business outside the prison?

The Prime Minister: This is not new, Mr Speaker, Sir. I must say it is not just when we came in Government. This has been ongoing and, in fact, we are taking action.-

The Prime Minister: And what happens when you have a proper person to take action? Those who are 'cooperating' with the prisoners are the ones who go and see the unions, and then there are strikes. All this will be over very soon. I have told the Commissioner of Prisons that he will have to act, and those who have to be removed will be removed, and those who have to be prosecuted will have to be prosecuted.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the Prime Minister been drawn that these cellular phones or other things are found at places where people go to pray within the prisons?

The Prime Minister: That is why I always say that those who go to church, does not mean that they are gods or saints. We can see that they are putting mobile phones in religious places. But I will look into that.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this question was raised in the House some time back. Would the Prime Minister envisage the possibility of having CCTV cameras in the prisons, or setting jamming devices in the prisons so that nobody can use a mobile phone even if he is in possession of a mobile phone?

The Prime Minister: In fact, if the hon. Member remembers, I did mention that we are putting CCTV in the prisons as well.

Mr Bhagwan: The Beau Bassin prison is found in my constituency, and so that is why I am interested. There is a *laissez aller* even at the gate of the prison. Can the Prime Minister look into the possibility - I am very serious, because the Beau Bassin prison is found in my constituency and I have been in that constituency for a long time - of putting some sort of modern electronic apparatus - we all know about phone taping and so on; this is another debate; *tout nous téléphone écouté mem sa*; even for Ministers - so that even when people try to phone within the prison, these calls do not go outside.

The Prime Minister: There are three things. First of all, what the hon. Member is saying is not true. We do not need to tap phones in Mauritius, because we have such big mouths that we can hear whatever is said.

(Interruptions)

Whoever! Mauritians are like this! They speak all the time; they can't keep their mouth shut. I know what is happening there now. I do not have a taping system there, because they all open their mouth and speak more than they should be speaking. They do not know when to shut their mouth. That is what happens.

(Interruptions)

Anyway, I also get the same problem, and that is why I never say anything. That is why nobody knew that I was going to call there. I never say anything; it is all in my head and it is

going to stay in my head. I see big articles in the papers. I saw an article the other day, and one ambassador rang me saying: 'I saw my photograph!' I said: 'You saw your photograph? I never read the paper. Why do you believe the papers? Wait to see what happens!'

The hon. Member was talking about the gates, and I agree with him. We have looked into that. There is a problem. If everybody did their work properly and conscientiously, as they are being paid and getting money for that, we would not have this problem. But, there are so many people who do not have a conscience. And if they want to make quick money, they will end up quickly in jail very soon, because we are amending the laws. Especially if you are a police officer or a prisons officer, you have to take your responsibility when you are acting. What we are doing is to have a triple gate system and we are ensuring, as far as possible - because at the end of the day, we depend on people, as the gates will not open by themselves - that whenever there is a gate lodge, to improve the gate system itself. I think they are having detectors, things to listen to. If there are people saying things there, there will be some form of detectors.

With regard to the jamming system, there has been one, which I think was put up during the hon. Member's time, if I am not mistaken, and which was a good thing. It was installed at the prison, but it had a spillage effect, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was affecting people outside the prison. I do not know whether the hon. Member falls in that category, but he probably could not use his phone. The intensity of the jamming system had to be decreased. They are looking at ways of improving the jamming system at the moment.

***REZISTANS EK ALTERNATIV* CASE - CONSTITUTION – AMENDMENT**

(No. 1B/77) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in the light of the submission by Government to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in the *Rezistans ek Alternativ* case to the effect that the general population be termed residual community, he will consider amending the Constitution to redefine the term general population.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated previously in the House, I am sympathetic to the proposal of the replacement of the term "General Population" in our Constitution by a more appropriate term.

However, as already announced in the Government Programme of 2010-2015, Government will engage in a process of constitutional review and will appoint a team of constitutional experts which will, amongst other things, consider appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system. Any relevant amendment to the Constitution will be considered in the light of the recommendations of the experts and the stakeholders whom we will talk to.

I would nevertheless like to point out that the Government, in its submission to the Human Rights Committee, has not, in any way, suggested that the term “General Population” be replaced by “residual community”. The hon. Member seems to suggest that this is what the Government has done. This is not the case. Government only gave its interpretation of paragraph 3(4) of the First Schedule of the Constitution to the effect that the General Population community was meant to be a residual category comprising those who neither are Hindus or Muslims, or Sino-Mauritians.

I would also like to inform the hon. Member that the term “residual category”, in relation to the General Population, was not coined by Government. In fact, it was used in the judgement delivered in the year 2000 in the case of Carrimkhan vs Lew Chin and Ors, in which Justice Seetulsingh, as he was then, made the following observation, and I quote -

“Although some may hold the view that the members of the General Population are Christians, nowhere is this mentioned. Thus, the General Population means that all the inhabitants of Mauritius who are not Hindus, Muslims or Sino-Mauritians fall into that category. Paragraph 3(4) of the First Schedule is very clear in this respect. The General Population is what some may call a residual group, which is considered to be a community for the allocation of the best loser system seats.”

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in its submission, the Government’s contention is that *Rezistans ek Alternativ* is not challenging the best loser system, but the fact that somebody who refuses to declare his community cannot stand as a candidate?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure what are argued in the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will have to look into this, and see exactly what was said in that respect.

Mr Bérenger: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me - I am sure he will - that this malaise around the term “General Population”, the way certain communities are reacting to the results of the last elections, make it all the more urgent that we go through the process of adopting a good electoral reform as soon as possible?

The Prime Minister: We just had the results of a new election, and I do not want to go into another election immediately with an electoral reform. But I am taking the commitment, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the past, there were difficulties. The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows himself. When he was Prime Minister and was allied with the MSM, they did not manage to agree, although they had a very good report by Sachs and there were two committees. We also have some difficulties. But, I will certainly try to move this agenda forward.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the use of the term “residual community” hinders the nation building process of our country and could be the cause of humiliation to a section of our population?

The Prime Minister: As far as I remember, even Père Grégoire said that he does not like the term “General Population”, because it is as if when you are not a Muslim, a Hindu or a Sino-Mauritian, you are dumped into that basket. He said that in front of me. I think that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there. So, I agree.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions 1B/82, 1B/83 will be replied Dr. the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands and Parliamentary Questions 1B/131 will be replied by hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. Hon. Bhagwan!

CALODYNE – HOTEL PROJECT - EIA LICENCE

(No. 1B/80) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the hotel project by Global Prism Ltd at Butte à l’herbe, Calodyne, he will state –

- (a) when the application for the Environment Impact Assessment Licence was made, indicating the date
 - (i) when the application was considered by the Environment Impact Assessment Licence Committee,

- (ii) of the approval by the Minister,
 - (iii) issue of the licence,
- (b) whether the project is situated in environmentally sensitive areas and, if so, state whether all procedures in relation to Planning Policy Guidelines have been followed and
- (c) whether any objection has been filed against the project.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, the application for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) licence for the proposed hotel project by Globe Prism Co. Ltd was made on 18 August 2009. The application was examined by the EIA committee on 16 April 2010 and the project was recommended subject to set of conditions. The grant of the EIA licence was approved by the Minister on 20 April 2010. The EIA licence was issued on 20 April 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be inappropriate for me to reply to part (b) of this question as the matter is *sub judice* because three appeals have been lodged against the issue of the EIA licence in respect of the project concerned at the Environment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) on 19 May 2010. In fact, these cases have been fixed Proforma for today.

With respect to part (c), yes as I already mentioned three appeals have been filed at the Environment Appeal Tribunal.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister who is chairing the Appeal Tribunal these days?

Mr Virahsawmy: It is the Senior Magistrate Mr Kam Sing.

Mr Bhagwan: One supplementary question, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether in the process of proceeding with the EIA application, the views of all the authorities have been sought?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon Bhagwan!

INFINITY TOWER – ACQUISITION - SIC

(No. 1B/81) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to

the building, Infinity Tower, at Ebène, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to-

- (a) the reasons for its acquisition by the Corporation, indicating when the decision was taken and by whom;
- (b) state the total amount to be disbursed by the Corporation, and
- (c) whether any prior evaluation of the building has been carried out and, if so, by whom, indicating the estimated value thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my answers pertaining to this PQ are statements of facts as per documents that have been related to the operations carried out under the Mechanism for Transitional Support (MTSP).

I am informed that the process of requesting financial help from MTSP under the Stimulus Package is as follows -

- a) a Company in financial difficulties contacts its main banker and they jointly come up with a rescue plan;
- b) MTSP then appoints an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) to perform a review of the rescue plan of the Company and submits its report to the MTSP committee based on a burden sharing of all stakeholders, and
- c) then, a Term Sheet, embodying all the terms and conditions, is submitted by the IFA to all parties concerned for consideration and approval.

Infinity BPO Ltd has been facing difficulties to finance its activities since June 2009. The main reason that was put forward by the company to explain its financial situation at that time was cash flow problems given the inability of its clients to effect payments at scheduled periods due to the economic crisis prevailing in its main market that is Europe. Consequently, the Company was experiencing difficulties to meet its commitments as regards its debts and loans. Thus, it applied for financial assistance under Stimulus Package on 17 September 2009.

BDO DCDM was appointed as IFA to perform a feasibility report on Infinity BPO Ltd. Based on the IFA report, the MTSP and the other parties approved and signed the first Term Sheet. This enabled the Company to maintain 650 jobs and pursue its activities.

The first Term Sheet for an amount of Rs102 m. was signed on 28 November 2009. Based on the principle of burden sharing, the amount of Rs102 m. was allocated as follows -

The applicant, i.e – Infinity BPO Ltd:

- To inject a total amount of Rs12 m. by 30 June 2010.
Rs12m. for the Bank which is the Barclays Bank Plc;
- To finance Rs45 m.
- To issue Debentures of Rs45 m. in River Heights Ltd (at *Pari Passu* with Barclays Bank Plc), which is the owner of Infinity Tower.

Moreover, key conditions agreed with Infinity BPO Ltd included the following -

- (a) Rs1 m. per month cut in management costs;
- (b) two cars to be returned to the leasing companies;
- (c) appointment of an independent financial manager to take care of all financial matters including validation of all expenses and joint signatory power with the CEO;
- (d) relinquishing power of the CEO to make sole decisions on financial matters, and
- (e) appointment by MTSP of a project manager to ensure timely completion of the Infinity Tower.

All these conditions have been fulfilled by Infinity BPO Ltd.

I must point out for the information of the House that Infinity BPO Ltd undertook to phase its injection of Rs12 m. over time as per the terms of the First Term Sheet. As at date, only Rs3 m. has been injected.

The initial support to Infinity BPO Ltd was meant to being used as follows -

- a) completion of the Infinity Tower;

- b) settlement of certain unsecured creditors including BPML, and
- c) working capital requirements.

Despite having received funds under the first Term Sheet, Infinity BPO Ltd continued to experience difficulties due to the protracted crisis in Europe and the inability of its debtors to honor their commitments on time. What was believed to be a 'temporary' cash flow problem turned out to be a much more serious situation that threatened the core business of the company due to persistent payment defaults from its debtors. Moreover, simultaneously both secured and unsecured creditors manifested their intention to put the company into liquidation. The IFA then submitted a second report highlighting clearly that there was only one option remaining for the Company to continue as a going concern and to prevent any lay off of its staff. The IFA recommended the sale and lease back of the Infinity Tower to the National Real Estate Ltd (NREL). NREL which is 100% Government owned Company, which was created, in fact, under the Stimulus Package to assist firms facing financial difficulties with a view of sale and lease back of assets.

The Chief Government Valuer was appointed to value the Infinity Tower that is the Land and Building. The Land and Building were valued at Rs340 m. in a valuation report dated 05 March 2010.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed as follows -

The second Term Sheet was signed on 01 April 2010 under the following conditions -

- a) The purchase of Infinity Tower is subject to a buy back option over a period of three years by River Heights Ltd or earlier as from the date of purchase, based on a value that guarantees National Real Estate Ltd a 5% capital growth annually from the date of acquisition to the date of disposal, and
- b) Sales proceeds will go towards total repayments of secured debts and partial repayments of unsecured debts of River Heights Limited and Infinity BPO Limited respectively.

Under the agreement, NREL has secured advanced rent equivalent to around 20 months from Infinity BPO Ltd.

The implementing agency, NREL made the following disbursements -

Purchase of Infinity Tower	-	Rs340,000,000
Notary fees	-	Rs986,700
Registration Duty	-	Rs17,000,000
Land Transfer Tax	-	Rs17,000,000
Total amount	-	Rs 374,986,700

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the evaluation was done by the No. 1, that is, the Government Valuer and, if not, by whom? And, in any case, is the hon. Minister prepared to lay a copy of that evaluation report in the Library?

Mr Jugnauth: I do not have the name of the Government Valuer who did that exercise, but of course, I undertake to provide that information to the House. I do not see any problem in tabling the evaluation report to the House.

Mr Bhagwan: We all denounce all the saga *entourant cette affaire de* Infinity Tower. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this Infinity Tower or whatever company is still owned by Mr Jean Suzanne who is still the official adviser of the Prime Minister's Office?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I know that Mr Jean Suzanne is a shareholder of the Infinity BPO Ltd. I do not know about the other shareholders, Mr Speaker, Sir. Of course, given a specific question I will be able to provide this information to the House. Well, as far as his capacity as Adviser, I would not know. The question must be addressed to the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Bhagwan: *'Mo espérer ine ramasse tous sa bane Aston Martin, montres tout !'* Has any survey been done? Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Government has secured the amount due by that gentleman to the DBM, BPML, CEB - all the debts owed to the State?

Mr Jugnauth: As I have said, part of the money that has been given has been used to pay the debtors - but I do not know whether all the debtors. Again, I can provide this information to the House.

Mr Bhagwan: Could the Minister, after survey has been done on the amount due by that person to all the companies, Government owned companies, parastatal and so on, lay the information in the Library? Can I know from the hon. Minister whether any survey has been done by the Government Evaluator concerning the price per square feet paid for that unfinished building?

Mr Jugnauth: I just said that the Government Valuer has valued this building and has given his report. I have no problem in tabling the report to the House. I do not see why we should not.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the decision of buying this Tower been approved by the parent Ministry?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, it is co-chaired - from memory I know there is a member of the private sector - and there is somebody from the Ministry of Finance. The MTSP has looked at the report that has been submitted by the IFA and as I have just said in my reply, has come up with a number of conditions attached to the buying of this property.

Mr Bhagwan: Would the hon. Minister be agreeable to ask the Director of Audit or any independent auditor to have an inquiry of the sale of all these transactions made? And whether, the hon. Minister is agreeable to lay in the Library, on the table of the Assembly, the Minutes of the Board Meeting on the day that decision was taken?

Mr Jugnauth: *M. le président, s'il y a maldonne, bien sûr on va enquêter là-dessus. On va voir s'il y a maldonne.* If the hon. Member is aware of anything that he is suspicious, I am willing to take that information and have a look at it.

Mr Bérenger: He did not ask for the name. I asked the hon. Minister and I think he should know that we are talking about more than Rs300 m. Was that evaluation done by the Government Valuer; the number one? Or by some Government Valuer?

Mr Jugnauth: I have just said in my reply that I do not have the name. The name will tell us whether it is the number one or not. But I can check and I will, of course, provide this information to the House.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the learned Minister has stated that Infinity had reached the original terms of disbursement by putting only Rs3 m. instead of Rs12 m. Would not he agree

that instead of putting people's good money after bad money and risking the same fate as R. S. Denim, would not it be wiser to put the company in receivership and allow the market to take over the company?

Mr Jugnauth: No. Actually, the commitment that was taken was for Infinity BPO to inject Rs12 m. over time. But, unfortunately, they had just been able to furnish Rs3 m. That is the situation. Now, whether, it is a question of throwing good money after bad money, the MTSP has done its work, on the basis, also, of the IFA. I do not see the reason why we should not because he has satisfied all the criteria. This is what I am told.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Chief Executive Officer, Special Adviser to the hon. Prime Minister, flew to South Africa, according to my information, on a special jet chartered?

(Interruptions)

Your special adviser! He has travelled to South Africa. Tell us when he stopped. We are entitled to know because of all this generosity! But is he aware that supposedly he fell ill, flew to South Africa - I know the real reason - according to my information, on a specially chartered plane and can the hon. Minister tell us whether the bill was paid for by Infinity?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware whether he has flown to South Africa in a specially chartered jet and, of course, I will look into that matter.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, at that particular Board Meeting of that company where the decision was taken to purchase that unfinished building, any directives coming from Government was given to the Chairperson representing the Government on the company, to go along with the purchase of that unfinished building?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware of any directives, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister look into the Minutes and inform the House accordingly?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, of course, I take this matter seriously. Now that there has been some information that have been provided by hon. Members of the Opposition I will, definitely, look into those matters.

Mr Speaker: I will suspend for one and a half hour.

At 12.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

LES SALINES – NEOTOWN PROJECT

(No. 1B/82) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Neotown Project at Les Salines, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to –

- (a) the names of the promoters;
- (b) the details of the project, indicating -
 - (i) the estimated amount of inflow of Foreign Direct Investment;
 - (ii) whether any deposit has been made and, if so, state the amount thereof and when payment has been effected
- (c) whether any proof of payment has been submitted to the Board, and (d) state when works are expected to start.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this Question.

“Neotown” is the appellation given to the Waterfront Development Project at Les Salines by its Promoter.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the promoter of this Project is the “Les Salines Development Limited”, a company duly registered in Mauritius since March 2008 under the Companies Act 2001. This Company is wholly owned by Patel Engineering Limited of Mumbai, India, which has engaged in infrastructure development and construction since 1969. The company which is ranked among the top 5 in the construction sector in India has a wide portfolio of activities including areas such as power sector and irrigation, and real estate construction spread over Asia, Europe, America and Africa.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, the Project, mainly, will comprise hotels, commercial outlets, residential complexes, office buildings, a luxury condominium complex, marine gardens, leisure parks and tourist attractions. The Foreign Direct Investment for this Project is estimated to be Rs16 billion.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, the Company has effected the following payments to Government, that is, the Ministry of Housing and Lands -

- Rs8,749,500 deposited as reservation fee on 06 April 2009
- Rs117,660 as survey fee on 07 May 2009
- Rs25 m. as advance rent at time of signature of Lease Agreement on 11 December 2009
- Rs1,205,340 as registration duty on 11 December 2009

In regard to part (c) of the question, cheques/receipts prove that these payments have been effected as follows -

- Sir William Newton Street, Port Louis Barclays Bank Cheque No. 0000002018659 drawn to Government by Les Salines Development Limited on 06 April 2009 for the amount of Rs8,749,500 as deposit required as reservation fee
- Receipt No. 2008020002 for the amount of Rs117,660 for the survey fee issued by Government to the Company on 07 May 2009
- Receipt No. 2009016519 for the amount of Rs25 m. for advance rent, issued by Government to the Company on 11 December 2009
- Receipt No. 2009016520 for the amount of Rs1,205,340 issued by Government to the Company on 11 December 2009

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am advised that the Company has already started works, including work of site development since 13 March 2010, and following the preparation of preliminary plans, it has submitted, as required, and for scrutiny, the Master Plan of its Project to the Planning Division of my Ministry on 17 May 2010. I am advised that its Master Plan is in line with the guidelines of Les Salines Master Plan prepared by Messrs Stauch Vorster

Architects, commissioned in December 2002 by the Mauritius Ports Authority, and which submitted its report in 2004.

Once the Master Plan has been approved, the Company is expected to accelerate the implementation of its Waterfront Development Project in three phases over a period of some five years. And I have absolutely no doubt that this Company, owned by a Group which is internationally known, reputed, and respected, will implement its Waterfront Development Project as fast as it can, within the set time frame.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister, the extent of land which has either been leased to the company by Government or Mauritius Ports Authority and whether same has been approved by the Board of the MPA or Government.

Dr. Kasenally: The extent of the land is 25 hectares, that is, about 58 *arpents*. This land is reclaimed land in the port area belonging to the MPA and in February 2008, Government approved the leasing of the land by the MPA to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for eventual sublease to Les Salines Development for a period of 99 years.

Mr Bhagwan: This duration of lease for 99 years, is it a new policy of Government or this policy has been approved by Government for that specific company?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a mega project with a lot of implications for the future development of the city of Port Louis and I think Government took the decision with the Mauritius Ports Authority together with the Minister of Housing and Lands to extend it exceptionally to 99 years.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Minister who negotiated with Government on behalf of Patel Engineering? Or is it Mr Bell, who is sort of *courtier* for the project, who has discussed with Government? That person has met hon. Ministers other than the Minister of Housing and Lands in the course of the discussion for Government approval for the allocation of land.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have never met Mr Bell. I have not seen him. I don't know his shape or size and most certainly he was not the one. The top team of Les Salines Development represented by its Chief Executive and other members of the administration negotiated directly.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has stated that work has started. Is it site works or has Government received an indication from that promoter? Have firm commitments been obtained by prospective investors to come and invest in this project or is he aware that this company is having dealings with other people with such an extent of price which has not been given to Government? The sublease is being given by that company to other persons.

Dr. Kasenally: We have got a firm commitment from this company to develop it on the lines of the Master Plan. Obviously, this company is a well-known company which has its records all over the world and we have good reason to believe that it will deliver and this is a one-off opportunity which this country has got to develop Port Louis.

Mr Bhagwan: Has any deadline been given to the promoter in terms of implementation of project on a phase basis?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, the project would be in various phases and would comprise *inter alia* a hotel, casino, night clubs, gaming centres, broad walks, marine gardens, tourist heritage centre and a luxury condominium complex, as I mentioned earlier, with a boutique hotel.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly it is the property of the Mauritius Ports Authority which has leased it to Government, which has subleased it to the promoter. Can I know the sublease is for what duration and whether that sublease allows the promoter to sublease to others and, if yes, what control Government keeps?

Dr. Kasenally: As far as this land is concerned it has been subleased to Patel Engineering Limited and we are going to monitor and master the project. Although there may be other people coming in but the lease would be to Patel Engineering Limited as far as I know.

Mr Bérenger: Are they allowed to sublease, and for how long has that lease been given to the promoter? Is it for 99 years?

Dr. Kasenally: The 99 years lease is to Patel Engineering Limited. There is no indication that they are going to sublease it and to whom. Whatever subleasing is going to be done will be with the consent of Government and Government alone will decide on the lease.

Mr Bhagwan : Can the hon. Minister inform the House the date that final approval was given to the promoter?

Dr. Kasenally: The lease was signed in December 2009.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is confirming now that we have departed from the normal lease whereby we have included subleasing for the first time in a lease agreement signed between Government and a third-party. May we know why in this particular case we have departed from the normal lease agreement?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a one-off project, a megaproject which may never be coming to this country again and if we are hoping to achieve the development and this is why Government decided in an exceptional case to do that. There is no departing in policy. We have to take things as they come and these are opportunities which we have to grab otherwise there would have been no development.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has just stated the mega project - I am not pointing fingers at the Minister. We have seen mega projects turning into mega scandals. We have it seen here. We have had the opportunity to discuss, ask questions and see by ourselves. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, from what I have heard, whether Government of Mauritius has already earmarked space in that project?

Dr. Kasenally: Speaking about mega scandals, the hon. Member can rest assured that there is going to be no mega scandals, however his wishful thinking might be. I think he should not be that negative. You know this Government has just been elected with a clear mandate and we have been asking for transparencies. We can assure the hon. Member that this Government will ensure that there is no mega scandal. I don't know of what mega scandal the hon. Member is speaking about, but....

(Interruptions)

I have said that Mr Bell is not here or Mr Bellbell is not here. I don't know him. I have said I don't know his size, shape or colour. I don't know why this Mr Bell is being thrown down my throat.

(Interruptions)

This project would be monitored very closely by Government and by my Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan : I asked whether the Government has earmarked space in that complex or in that project for Government. Am I wrong or am I right?

Dr. Kasenally: Government has not earmarked space especially for that, but as the project goes on and if there is a need for it...

(Interruptions)

There will be no infinity. Excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If there is a need for it, we shall look into it. In other words, when we will come to the bridge we will cross it.

Mr Baloomoody: In view of the fact of this mega project and the special lease agreement, specifically this agreement which has been tailor-made for this project, is the hon. Minister prepared to lay on the Table of the Assembly a copy of that lease agreement between Government and the promoter?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if there is no legal impediment, I see no reason why we should not do that but, first of all, we must see how the clauses are before I can pronounce on that.

Mr Lesjongard: In a normal lease agreement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that we have a standard period of implementation. May we know for this mega project, what will be the implementation period?

Dr. Kasenally: The implementation schedule is in the lease agreement and will be maintained. We have to stick to that implementation schedule. Obviously when you're doing a mega project, some of the projects may come beforehand; some will come a bit late - we need to have a bit of flexibility, but the rule of the game is: it has to be implemented according to schedule.

Mr Bhagwan: Have discussions been made with the promoters? This project is situated in Les Salines in the region of Port-Louis as part of a corporate social responsibility as the Government has been talking about. We all know for hotel departments, a specific amount is always kept for the surroundings. Have discussions taken place with the promoters for the necessary funds to be made available to the local authority of the region in terms of social responsibility of the company for the people of Les Salines?

Dr. Kasenally: Obviously, this project is in its infancy, but I know for sure that this company will live up to its commitment for social responsibility and Mauritius, especially the surroundings in Port Louis and the deprived areas of Port-Louis, will benefit fully. This

Government, the Prime Minister and myself will ensure that Port-Louis benefit from it especially the regions, I have mentioned, of Roches Bois, Pointe aux Sables and even Vallée Pitôt and Plaine Verte.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

JIN-FEI PROJECT - LAND LEASE

(No. 1B/83) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Jin-Fei Project, he will state –

- (a) the extent of land leased, indicating the conditions of the lease, and
- (b) whether all the former lessees have been compensated and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

The extent of land leased to Jin-Fei for the proposed Trade and Cooperation Zone is 500 Arpents and the conditions of the lease are as follows –

Period of lease: 99 years as from August 2009;

Purpose: Development of an Economy Trade and Cooperation Zone;

Rental: eight million six hundred and forty five thousand and one hundred rupees (Rs8,645,100) per annum for the first five years with regular increases to reflect the anticipated increase in market value of the land.

In year 2054, the rental will be more than Rs38 m. per annum and will reach Rs129 m. per annum in the year 2099.

Other conditions are usual conditions normally provided in the industrial site leases.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the former agricultural lessees at Riche Terre; I am informed by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security that as at to date out of the 120 former lessees, 92 have collected their cash compensation.

In respect of the remaining ones, the recommendations made in the Noël/Ramkissoon Report are being looked into by my colleague, the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there was any other interest from other countries?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has never been any interest from any other countries. In fact, we are particularly privileged for this again yet mega project which has led to a 99-year lease. This mega project has been made possible thanks to the very special relationship which this country and the hon. Prime Minister has had with the President of the Republic of China and following his visit, Mauritius has been preferred to other African countries which have been trying to bid for this sort of mega project.

Mr Fakeemeeah: I am given to understand that the project was initially Tianli. And then, in the course of events, the project turned to be Jin-Fei. Given that this is a matter of public interest, can the hon. Minister table the lease agreement with Tianli and that of Jin-Fei?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Jin-Fei and Tianli are both Government owned companies in the Republic of China. Because the project has evolved to such a statute that the bigger company, Jin-Fei, which is a much larger company with much more responsibility in the Chinese industry has taken over with the blessing of both Government and the Republic of China. As far as tabling the lease agreement, I will reiterate, if there is no legal impediment to doing so, we will do that.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I am not mistaken, the lease agreement with Tianli was for 60 years. Now, we hear that the lease agreement with Jin-Fei is for 99 years, if I heard the Minister correctly. Is that correct? Was that change - from 60 years to 99 years - done at the request of Jin-Fei?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this was changed after discussions with the company, and we brought it in line with what was obtainable at that time.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House how many jobs will be created in total, and when? I would also like to know what measures are being taken to the effect that many of our citizens will lose job?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question is a bit ambiguous, but I shall answer it. As far as the number of jobs is concerned, I don't have the exact figures with me - it will be fairly a large number of jobs - but if a proper question is put to me, I will probably answer it. As far as how many jobs will be lost, I think it is very difficult to procrastinate on that. In fact, the net increase in jobs will far outweigh what we have lost. I am told that about 35,000 jobs will be created.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any outstanding payment left with regard to the transfer of lease from Tianli to Jin-Fei?

Dr. Kasenally: I have to look into it, but I am pretty sure that no outstanding is left. I'll have to check and have the information available.

Mr Baloomoody: I have one supplementary on part (b) with regard to the question on compensation. The hon. Minister replied that the 92 ex-lessees have been compensated and the rest are being considered following the Noël/Ramkissoon Report. May we know whether any offer has been made subsequently following the publication of the Noël/Ramkissoon Report and, if so, what is the quantum which has been offered to the rest of them?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this matter - as I have said - is being looked after by the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and if a proper question is put to my colleague, the Minister, he would be able to enlighten the house better.

ST PIERRE – SHUTTLE SERVICE

(No. 1B/84) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed provision for a shuttle service from St. Pierre Traffic Centre to L'Agrément St. Pierre, Ste. Catherine, Circonstance St. Pierre and back to St. Pierre Traffic Centre, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that the road network within Cité Ste Catherine is narrow and therefore not convenient for large buses.

However, a road test was carried out recently and it was observed that a minibus of dimensions 2.5m by 7.5m may be introduced in the region provided that the road sides and corners are cleared.

The National Transport Authority is examining the introduction of a bus service by 25 seater minibuses between Moka and St Pierre Traffic Centre, and which pass through Petit Verger Branch Road, Cité Ste Catherine and Residence Vignol.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he can give a time frame within which the needful is done and the best services can be made operational?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of the opinion that within a few months it will be done because we have, first of all, to enlarge the road a little bit and then we have to invite applications. That will take not less than three months.

Mr Dayal: Can I also ask the hon. Minister whether it is envisaged to extend the road till Moka?

Mr Bachoo: I am not in a position to answer it right now, but I can assure the hon. Member that the needful will be done.

BOMBAY ROAD, PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - HUMP

(No. 1B/85) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Public infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether in regard to the levelling of the blind hump near Bombay Road, Providence, Quartier Militaire, he will state if there is any delay in the execution of the works and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the works order for the sum of Rs3.05 m. has been issued to the District Contractor on 02 October 2009.

Authorisation has been requested from the adjacent land owner. i.e. FUEL for the laying of the water pipes and underground telephone cables. This authorisation is still awaited. The works will be done as soon as the necessary way leave is obtained.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have followed the answer given by the hon. Minister attentively. In fact, it was issued on 02 October and was supposed to be over by 30

November. Till to date, I think the necessary permission has not been obtained by the relevant authorities. Therefore, I should like to impress upon the hon. Minister to speed up matters because the situation is really chaotic, accident prone.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, legally it is not within my responsibility, but we have already sent a reminder to FUEL. And then, I will try to see if I can call those responsible in office and try to persuade them to return it. Or else, if they fail to do so, then we have to move for acquisition of that plot of land.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if the pavement and drain from there be extended towards the community centre of Providence?

Mr Bachoo: It forms part of the project.

QUARTIER MILITAIRE – BUS SERVICE

(No. 1B/86) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bus services in the region of Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire, Camp Thorel and La Laura, Malinga, he will state if he is aware of the irregularity thereof and, if so -

- (a) indicate the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NTA that the localities of Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire, Camp Thorel and La Laura/Malinga are served by individual operators.

Releases vary between 10-25 minutes during peak hours, and 30-40 minutes between off-peak hours.

However, I have been made aware of certain irregularities in service delivery. Complaints are regularly received in connection with non observance of time-table. According to the NTA, operators who wish to maximize revenue, forego trips during off-peak hours. They also fail to perform late trips with a view to reaching home early. They are sometimes held up in traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, and thus fail to observe the time table. In addition, my attention has been drawn to the fact that individual bus operators fail to pick up

students and old aged persons at bus stops, and behave uncivilly towards them as they benefit from free travel scheme. 222 cases of disciplinary actions have been taken against defaulting bus operators during period January 2008 to date.

In this context, the NTA carries out regular checks on its own and on receipt of complaints, during peak and off-peak hours, to ensure that buses comply with current policy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have requested the NTA to be more vigilant and to take severe actions against recurrent defaulters. I am chairing a meeting regularly with inspectors of the NTA to monitor the situation island wide.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the operators act according to their whims and caprices, and this question has been raised many times. Like from Camp Thorel via Vuillemin to Curepipe, I think that no bus is operating actually, though this line is very much alive. Then, there is Camp Thorel to Flacq and Camp Thorel to Rose Hill, and also from La Laura. It means that the transport service is very erratic, chaotic and irregular. I would like to impress upon the hon. Minister to see to it that the matter be taken up seriously and sped up.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are taking the matter seriously. Government is really seriously about it, and we are trying to review the whole system. I can assure the hon. Member that we are taking action against those defaulters, and we are not going to delay in bringing forward additional measures in order to cope with the situation.

Mr Dayal: Justice delayed is justice denied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

CAMP THOREL - ADSL FACILITIES

(No. 1B/87) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to internet and ADSL facilities in the region of Camp Thorel, he will state if he is aware that the inhabitants thereat are being deprived thereof and, if so, will he state the remedial measures, if any, taken to address the issue.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom Ltd that it is providing telecommunication services to 431 residential and four business customers in the Camp Thorel area. 54 of these customers are provided with broadband services

(which include ADSL services). As at date, there are 14 candidates waiting for broadband service in that area.

Besides, I am informed by Emtel Ltd also that it provides internet facilities through its 2G and 3G networks. Being given that there is a 2G/3G cell site in Camp Thorel, the inhabitants should be able to use the Emtel mobile broadband service in the region, and thus enjoy the required facilities.

Still, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the situation will improve considerably by the end of this month when Mauritius Telecom Ltd will, with a view to providing improved broadband services throughout the island, upgrade the services in Camp Thorel area with the introduction of Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) Technology by the end of June 2010.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants and the students there use to complain to me almost regularly, and I have got many representations as well as my colleagues. I should like to impress upon the hon. Minister to look into the matter. At times, we get answers from the officers, but in real terms and practice it is not so.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I would like to inform my hon. friend that, by the end of June, the needful will be done.

RICHE TERRE HIGHWAY - ROUNDABOUT

(No. 1B/88) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the roundabout presently under construction on the highway at Riche Terre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to -

- (a) whether it meets the established international norms, and
- (b) whether any modification to the original layouts is being envisaged, and, if so, the costs thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of the roundabout presently under construction on the highway at Riche Terre, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the roundabout complies with the same standard as the Federal Highway Administration of

the US Department of Transportation. I am submitting two documents, namely the codes for the construction of roundabouts, as in USA and that of UK. These are international standards. When the Jinfei had submitted its project, it had proposed the roundabout. An extract of the master plan is being submitted as well. The geometric design of Jinfei roundabout conforms to international codes of practice.

For roundabouts, minor fine-tuning in order to adapt to site constraints should, however, be expected during the setting out exercise. No increase in the original contract value is expected.

To assure the House, I am submitting a report on the roundabout by the Road Development Authority, a second report by Dr. Reesaul, Principal Traffic Engineer attached to the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, and a third report on the same issue by the consultant Luxconsult Ltd. All the three reports conclude positively on the standard and safety of the roundabout at Riche Terre.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm, as per the report that he has mentioned, that 500 metres from the two roundabouts is within international norms?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am talking about the construction of a roundabout. We have observed the international norms. It is a fact that we have got 500 metres on both sides. But the hon. Member should not forget that, with the development of Jinfei, the traffic will be so dense that we did not have any other way than to put up a roundabout. There are three things we could have done -

- (1) we could have put up an acceleration and deceleration lane. But, by doing so, we are transferring the problem in the roundabout of Terre Rouge, and it would have been impossible for that roundabout to cope with the density of the traffic. That was out, and it was not acceptable either by the RDA, TMRSU or even by the consultants;
- (2) the second issue would have been a great separated junction. But, we would have had to relocate the Ramnarain Government School which is by the side. It is not possible to put up a great separated junction because of lack of space, and
- (3) the third issue was only a roundabout, which is according to international norms. At the same time, we have got the consultant, Luxconsult Ltd, which is working

on the project, and they have proposed that, later on, a flyover over the roundabout can be constructed. It will be just like any other flyovers which we have been constructing, but that will not be in the years to come. It may come afterwards, once the Jinfei development has already taken place.

So, there was no other way than to go for the roundabout.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister seems to say that it is normal practice and as per international standards that we have three roundabouts on a highway, within a distance of less than one kilometre.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that, being given that such a big development is taking place in that particular region, there are only three solutions, and we have to select one which is the best and most appropriate. Government has felt that it is the most appropriate, and that is the reason why I have submitted three reports: one from the RDA, properly prepared by the technicians of the Ministry in whom we have got full confidence - we trust them - because they have been looking over all our road networks; second by the TMRSU, by no less a person than Dr. Reesaul who is an eminent research scholar in that field and, third, from the consultant. We are convinced that the action that we have taken is the appropriate one.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the congestion problem that people have to face during the morning and evening peak hours in that area?

Mr Bachoo: I am fully aware of it, and that is the reason why - probably the hon. Member is not aware - we have already started the construction of a third lane. The works order was given on 25 March. Works have already started, and it will be completed by the end of October. The third lane is going to link Jinfei roundabout to Terre Rouge roundabout, and the traffic moving towards Triolet and Trou aux Biches will take that road. Ultimately, this third lane will be extended till Quay D roundabout.

HERMITAGE -FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/89) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground at Hermitage, in Constituency No.15 – La Caverne and Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, information as to whether the

football ground has been handed over by the Highlands Sugar Estate to the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, and, if not, the reasons therefor, indicating the measures to be taken.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in reply to a Parliamentary Question addressed to me on 23 March 2010 by hon. Soodhun, I stated that no upgrading works on the football ground at Hermitage had started because the land was not yet vested in my Ministry for the use by the Council.

Today, I wish to inform the House that the portion of land of the extent of 4020.46m² at Hermitage on which stands the football ground has been vested in my Ministry on 07 June 2010, to be put at the disposal of the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix for its upgrading.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister mention the date that the land was vested to the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix?

Mr Aimée: I just mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it was on 07 June 2010. It is the Municipality that I am talking about.

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: Can the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

Dr. Sorefan: Can the hon. Minister confirm the date on which the land has been vested to the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix?

Mr Aimée: I have already answered that question. It is on 07 June 2010 to the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix.

CITÉ RICHELIEU - VOLLEYBALL PITCH

(No. 1B/90) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the volleyball pitch situated at Cité Richelieu, he will state -

- (a) when it was commissioned;
- (b) if it has been handed over to any Local Authority, indicating the name thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor, and
- (c) the actions being taken to ensure proper maintenance and fencing of the pitch.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the project of a contract value of Rs10.5 m. includes the construction of a sports complex, a leisure park and upgrading of a volleyball pitch. The volleyball pitch project was commissioned on 23 March 2006 and handed over to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund on the same date.

The volleyball pitch which is maintained by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is not being fully utilised following severe acts of vandalism. Part of the fencing and the gate has been damaged and all electrical installations have been stolen.

As the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is not able to repair the vandalised volleyball pitch because of scarcity of funds, I have requested the NDU to study the possibility of repairing the volleyball pitch.

Mr Baloomoody: Can the hon. Minister confirm that, in fact, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund has never even put a watchman or maintained anything there? The door is permanently closed and this is why people have to break into the fencing to get inside the yard to play matches.

Mr Bachoo: I get the impression that the hon. Member is condoning such acts of vandalism; one thing is clear, we have already handed over the volleyball pitch ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take exception to what the hon. Minister has said regarding the fact that I am condoning acts of vandalism. What I am saying is that people have to force through the fence to get to the volleyball pitch because it is permanently closed. There is no one to open the door, so it is permanently closed.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in any case we would like to condemn such acts of vandalism because we had them in many places. There are places where we have put people to look after them, but despite that there have been acts of vandalism which need to be condemned. That is why I have mentioned that I have requested the NDU to study the possibility of repairing the volleyball pitch. This is taxpayers' money and every cent spent must be properly spent. I have requested the officers of my Ministry to have a look at it and see how we can repair things.

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the hon. Minister why such an important complex has been vested with the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund rather than the district council which has the labour force to run that type of complex?

Mr Bachoo: It has already been vested with the Sugar Industry. I will talk to my colleague of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and see the possibility of transferring it to this district council. We have no problem in that.

NRPT - REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. 1B/91) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Residential Property Tax, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of revenues collected therefrom, on a yearly basis since its introduction to date, and
- (b) state whether it is proposed to -
 - (i) abolish the tax and, if so, indicate its effective date or
 - (ii) restructure the tax and, if so, the reasons for each proposal.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

TAX ON INTEREST

(No. 1B/92) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to tax on interest, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount collected on a yearly basis since its introduction to date, and
- (b) state whether it is envisaged to have it abolished and, if so, indicate if it will still be in force in the current fiscal year.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

NATIONAL ECONOMY- EURO CRISIS

(No. 1B/93) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the national economy, he will state if since his assumption of office –

- (a) a study has been carried out in regard to its vulnerability to external shocks, including the Euro crisis
- (b) if it is proposed to review Government's fiscal strategy towards the Private Sector and
- (c) whether the Additional Stimulus Package will be extended to the year 2011.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry keeps a daily watch on developments on international financial and money markets, on forex markets, and global economic growth and the economic performances of major economies across the globe. There is also a constant monitoring of main economic indicators in Mauritius, namely GDP, consumption, savings, investment, balance of payments, inflation, unemployment, job creation and the performances of the key sectors of the economy. We also watch very closely on a monthly basis the evolution of public finances, in particular the deficit and debt.

There is a Macroeconomic Coordination Committee (MCC) at the Ministry that comprises the Bank of Mauritius and the CSO and that monitors all macroeconomic indicators on a regular basis with a focus on the various vulnerabilities and how local and external events are impacting on them. This Committee also monitors changes in behavioural patterns that can lead to major structural changes in the economy.

For example, the MCC is now focusing on studying the declining national savings rate and movements in the Balance of Payments with emphasis on the impact of the euro crisis. The MCC is also studying how the impact of the Euro crisis is working its way through the economy.

When there are external shocks or unexpected economic events, more specialised committees are set up to assess the impact. In fact, my first priority since assuming office was to set up a Technical Working Group to study and monitor the Euro crisis, fully assess its impact on our economy and to recommend appropriate policy responses. That Technical Working Group is

working with the Bank of Mauritius, the Joint Economic Council and various Ministries, namely the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agro Industry and the Ministry of Labour amongst others. I will soon be making an announcement on the policies and actions we will take to build resilience against this crisis.

As regards part (b) of the question, if there is to be any change in fiscal policy towards the private sector, it will be announced in the next Budget. However, I can give the House the assurance that with regard to fiscal policy, we will implement all the pledges we have made in our electoral manifesto and in the President's address. I can also assure the House that any change in fiscal policy will be made in the best interest of the broader economy and the population and to ensure that there is higher and better quality growth and more equity.

As regards part (c) of the question, it has already been replied in the PNQ.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the past criticisms levelled by the hon. Minister himself on the former Government, would he be able to table a report on the evaluation of the state of the economy since his assumption of office, so that we can cross-check whether all his criticisms were justified?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I think any new Government will make a *constat* of the economic situation and, therefore, I have no problem – in fact, we are working towards making a *constat* of the economic situation, the economic indicators, and shortly I will go public.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Will the hon. Minister also be in a position to tell us whether the result of his study on the job creation situation or employment situation is worse than what has been expected or in the light of the downside revision of the economic growth, the impact on the employment situation can be weathered through?

Mr Jugnauth: I have just said that there is a technical working group that is looking into the matter and shortly I will be coming with a number of measures. I think the hon. Member has to be patient. Of course, I will be open to address any issue that need to be covered.

MONT ROCHES-CHEBEL - ROAD HUMPS

(No. 1B/94) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport

and Shipping whether, in regard to the link road Mont Roches-Chebel at the rear of the Beau Bassin Prisons, he will consider putting up road humps thereat to ensure road safety.

Mr Bachoo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TMRSU that there already exist two road humps on the link road of Mont Roches-Chebel at the back of Beau Bassin Prisons. I have also been informed that the vehicular traffic volume on that road is very low and, therefore, the putting up of additional speed calming devices is not warranted.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this road starts from Mont Roches and ends up at Cité Chebel, passing through Cité Barkly. The problem exists at Cité Barkly; there are a lot of houses and all the children go to Mont Roches School. It is true that there are two humps, but they are at the beginning of Mont Roches and not at Cité Barkly which is a very dense region and I think it is essential for his Ministry to find ways and means to protect the children of the region.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take note of the request of my friend, but at the same time I would like to say that the road humps are not deterrent to accidents. Besides, we have got emergency services; they are always requesting us not to go ahead by placing too many humps. I have recently received many requests for removal of humps, because that create too much of noise and particularly for those people who are sick. And, secondly, we have also seen cracks appearing on the walls of houses also. So, all these create big problems and I am going to request officers of my Ministry to have a look at it.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In order to avoid future accidents waiting to happen, could the hon. Minister carry out an in-depth study of the situation there because there are schoolchildren and other people using this road?

Mr Bachoo: In a small island like ours, we have got 3,800 humps now. We have to see places where we intend to remove these and, when necessary, in extremely important places we can put up a few humps.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - QUALITY CONTROL

(No. 1B/95) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products, she will state –

- (a) the steps taken by her Ministry to ensure the quality and effectiveness thereof in the health sector and more particularly in the public sector, and
- (b) whether the products are subject to an independent control by an accredited laboratory.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to PQ Nos. 1B/95 and 1B/97 together.

With regard to pharmaceutical products used in Mauritius, my Ministry takes all the necessary steps to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the products in the health sector, including the public sector.

The quality and effectiveness of any pharmaceutical product depends on the process of manufacture and quality control based on international standards.

A manufacturer is required to submit to the Pharmacy Board its drug manufacturing licence, a certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) as well as a Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (COPP) issued by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin. These certificates testify that the manufacturing plant is regularly inspected by the National Drug Regulatory Authority and meet all the international standards.

I also wish to inform the House that all pharmaceutical products have to be registered with the Pharmacy Board prior to their import and sale on the local market. Pharmaceutical products manufactured on the local market, have also to be registered with the Pharmacy Board before they are put on sale.

All pharmaceutical products registered with the Pharmacy Board have to meet the same criteria as I have just mentioned in order to ensure their quality and effectiveness.

As regards the control of the pharmaceutical products by an accredited laboratory, I am informed that up to July 2009 pharmaceutical products were sent for analysis to a laboratory in South Africa which is a World Health Organisation accredited Quality Control Laboratory. Due to its prohibitive cost and the long time taken for analysis of the drugs, my Ministry has, since July 2009, upgraded the services of the Government Analyst Division by setting up a modern Pharmaceutical Quality Control Laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment. All the samples

analysed so far by the Government Analyst Division have met the relevant international standards.

Dr. S. Boolell: In view of the fact that registration of pharmaceutical products in Mauritius is free and lifetime, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform me about the process of continuous sampling, random sampling, batch control, shelf control at the end of the chain, especially in view of the fact that most of us who consume pharmaceutical products in hospitals are not even aware of the expiry date and also taking into consideration the climatic conditions for storage of pharmaceutical products in our pharmacies - Government or public - whether, there is this continuous process of control sampling? And, if there has been, could the hon. Minister table the products which have been sampled by the famous lab in South Africa and let us know what action, if any, has been taken towards deregistration?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that continuous sampling is done and, up to now - this year - 43 pharmaceutical products have been submitted and analysed. Let me also inform the hon. Member that with respect to expiry dates, storage and so on, I am proceeding ahead with *l'informatisation de tous les systèmes pour qu'on puisse repérer à temps, les médicaments qui arrivent à leur date d'expiration.*

Dr. S. Boolell: Will the hon. Minister please confirm or otherwise, whether the compounded products which are produced in our hospitals' pharmacies are subject to Pharmacy Board control? Whether, the pharmaceutical veterinary products, pharmaceutical products as well, fall under the control of the Pharmacy Board? Whether intravenous fluids which are sold in our pharmacies also fall under the Pharmacy Board?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say that these are very technical questions but I can, again, reassure the hon. Member that all samples are done and that samples are being analysed by our lab and as I have in my reply up to now there has been no counter proposal.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that until recently, Rotaz, which is a medicine for cholesterol, for heart diseases, was dispensed in our hospital, which was of substandard and some doctors privately advise patients not to use it because it is less efficient?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware whether there has been medication which has been issued and which has been of substandard. If I am saying that regularly we have samples which are being analysed, I bet that our medicines cannot be of substandard.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister table the list of all the products which have been registered with the Pharmacy Board?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have no problem in tabling these information.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the Procurement Board bases its decision on the principle of the lowest tenderer for the purchase of medicine without any regard to the quality and efficacy of the medicine?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the procurement of any pharmaceutical product is made through tender exercise and the evaluation of the tenders are based on the following criteria: suppliers are required to submit a Certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice as well as a Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product which are issued by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin; the licence to manufacture pharmaceutical products by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin is taken into consideration; the company's capacity to supply the drug in the required

Quantity; the company's experience in the manufacture of a specific item, the delivery time as per the requirements of the Ministry; the companies' past performance evaluated on the basis of records and also the price quoted.

Mr Dayal: I can privately give the information later to the hon. Minister. But then, is the hon. Minister aware that some two years ago, I personally raised a question in this House and a Fact Finding Committee was established, chaired by Senior Magistrate Mr Raj Pentiah, and made 13 recommendations? Are these recommendations being implemented?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to look into this. I have just been in the Ministry for six weeks now; I have not taken note yet of this report.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - PHARMACOVIGILANCE PROGRAMME

(No. 1B/96) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products, she will state if –

- (a) it is proposed to re-introduce the Pharmacovigilance programme, with a view to protect, educate and update consumers thereon, and
- (b) the reasons as to why the previous programme was discontinued.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question of re-introducing the Pharmacovigilance programme does not arise, as I am informed that a Pharmacovigilance Unit set up on a pilot basis, in November 2008, at Flacq Hospital is still operational. The Unit is headed by the Regional Health Director of the hospital and comprises the Medical Superintendent, the Consultant in charge, General Medicine, the Consultant Paediatrics, the Dermatologist, the Pharmacist and the Regional Nursing Administrator.

The Unit monitors adverse drugs reaction reports and gives appropriate feedback to all concerned.

In fact, my Ministry is finalising a training programme for Government pharmacists, in Pharmacovigilance with the World Health Organisation through its Biennium Programme 2010/2011 so that they will be more conversant in all aspects regarding Adverse Drug Reporting systems, collection and analysis of data, and the subsequent interpretation of the results.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that only Flacq Hospital is pharmacovigilant and this country contains more than Flacq Hospital, I will be most grateful if this kind of programme could be extended to all hospitals, constant monitoring and information about medication being given. We have lately been informed about a lot of adverse drug reactions in Moka Eye Hospital in addition to what the hon. Minister mentioned. I would also beg the hon. Minister to look into it seriously as I do not believe and trust in all these labs of good repute from where our pharmaceutical products seem to be coming in.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said in my reply that at Flacq Hospital it was on a pilot basis and it is proposed to extend the programme to all regional hospitals after completion of training.

As regards the remarks made by the hon. Member that he does not trust our labs, let me say that MAURITAS is actually accrediting all the labs and we have to go according to certain norms.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - REGISTRATION

(No. 1B/97) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products on sale on the local market, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pharmacy Board, information as to if they are duly registered by the Board.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. 1B/95)

CITÉ JOACHIM, CUREPIPE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/98) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Cité Joachim, in Curepipe, he will state if he is aware if the water supply thereat is irregular, and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken to address the issue.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Cité Joachim is supplied from La Brasserie Service reservoir which is fed from La Marie Treatment works. The hours of supply are from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Complaints of poor water pressure at Cité Joachim, Brown Sequare, Barry streets and the adjoining areas were registered by the CWA on 05 June 2010.

CWA carried out a leak detection exercise on 06, 07 and 08 June 2010 along a stretch of 15 kms of pipeline and identified a burst pipe downstream of Cité Joachim. Repairs were completed on 09 June 2010 and the water supply was accordingly restored. I am informed that since then there has been no record of complaint.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS – CLUBS - AFFILIATION

(No. 1B/99) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to sports activities, he will give a list of the

clubs which are affiliated to the Sports Federations recognised by the Ministry, indicating, in each case, the discipline.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at date, my Ministry recognises 41 Sports Federations, under the Sports Act.

Every Federation, through its Regional Sports Committees, regroups sports clubs in respect of its sports discipline. Each club should be enrolled within its appropriate region.

A Sports Federation is required, under the Sports Act, to cover all the 13 sport regions, unless otherwise authorised by the Minister.

A list of clubs affiliated to Sports Federations, in respect of their disciplines is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as ready.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant qu'il existe des clubs qui font pression sur certaines fédérations pour être affiliées, alors que ces mêmes clubs ne respectent pas les critères d'affiliation.

Mr Ritoo: I think the hon. Member is talking about fictitious Sports Clubs, but a club which is not actively promoting sports cannot represent within a sports federation. Recently, we have clubs which were supposed to be registered with the Regional Committee and then seek affiliation with the Sports Federation. Any seven members can form a club and get registration with the Registrar of Associations and join a fixed Sports Federation. But, we are coming with the Sports Act. There will be amendments brought to the Sports Act and these amendments will give us a clear distinction of what is a fictitious club.

Mr Quirin: Dans ces conditions, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si son ministère dispose d'un moyen de contrôle pour s'assurer qu'effectivement ces clubs qui sont enregistrés auprès des fédérations sont des *genuine* clubs?

Mr Ritoo: As I said, we are coming with amendments in the Sports Act very shortly, and then we will be able to put guidelines on how to control such clubs that do not comply.

(Interruptions)

Well, actually we don't have any control over them.

Mr Bhagwan : M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'il y a une complicité entre certains au *Registrar of Associations* et certains clubs fictifs? *Zot même président, zot même secrétaire, zot même trésorier.* Finalement, ce sont ces mêmes membres des clubs fictifs qui vont voter pour les élections des fédérations. Si aujourd'hui nous voyons qu'il y a une dégradation du football et d'autres disciplines, c'est grâce à ces personnes qui eux-mêmes font la pluie et le beau temps au niveau des fédérations. Et c'est cela le déclin de notre football à Maurice.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't have any control for the time being. This has been prevailing since 2001. We are now coming with amendments in the Sports Act, and we can debate on that.

Mr Bhagwan: Est-ce que le ministre est disposé à parler à son collègue qui est responsable et qui a l'autorité sur le *Registrar of Associations* afin qu'il y ait de l'ordre au niveau du *Registrar*? Le trafic se fait - je l'ai dit dans cette Chambre - au niveau du *Registrar of Associations*. Il y a une complicité.

Mr Ritoo: I have already talked to my colleague Minister, and the hon. Minister is having the situation under control.

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES – 2011 – SPORTS DISCIPLINE

(No. 1B/100) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the forthcoming 2011 Indian Ocean Island Games, he will give –

- (a) the list of disciplines scheduled for the Games, indicating if Mauritian athletes will participate in all the disciplines;
- (b) the measures taken by his Ministry to ensure the adequate training of the participating teams/athletes, indicating the budget allocated in respect of each discipline.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Indian Ocean Islands Games, which will be held in Seychelles, from 05 to 14 August, 2011, twelve sports disciplines have been retained as follows -

1. Athletics
7. Judo

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 2. Badminton | 8. Swimming |
| 3. Basketball | 9. Table Tennis |
| 4. Boxing | 10. Volleyball |
| 5. Cycling | 11. Weightlifting |
| 6. Football | 12. Yachting |

Mauritius will participate in all the sports disciplines I just mentioned.

As regards part (b) of the question, regarding measures taken by my Ministry, immediately after the confirmation of the sports disciplines retained for the Games, in September 2009, I met all sports federations concerned to inform them accordingly and to advise them to start preparation as early as possible. They were also requested to submit their work plan to my Ministry, which they have already done.

Meetings were also held between the Federations and technicians of my Ministry in April 2010 to discuss strategies and other issues regarding the preparation of athletes.

I wish to advise the hon. Member that it is the role of the Federations to ensure proper physical and technical preparation of their athletes. The responsibility of my Ministry is to provide financial and logistics support at the request of federations, that is, we rather act as facilitator with each federation.

Sports Federations are at present proceeding with the pre-selection of athletes in their respective sports discipline and I understand that this exercise will be completed by end of July 2010.

With regard to funding, part provision for the training of pre-selected athletes has been made in the budget earmarked for each Sports Federation in the present financial year. Being given that the Games will be held in August 2011, provision for additional funds will be made in the next financial year, specifically for the extensive training of the final selection of athletes retained for the Indian Ocean Islands Games.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, vu l'importance de ces jeux, qui sont prévus dans 13 mois à peu près aux Seychelles, le ministre peut-il nous dire s'il est satisfait de la manière dont les différentes sélections nationales se préparent en ce moment?

Mr Ritoo: As I mentioned earlier, it is the Sports Federation which is supposed to make the preparation of the athletes. So far as I am concerned and as per the meetings I have had with the concerned Sports federations, I am satisfied.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais aussi savoir du ministre si les fédérations concernées par ces jeux ont obtenu un budget spécifique pour leurs préparations?

Mr Ritoo: Well, as I mentioned, I think the hon. Member should have listened properly, because part of the provision of the training of the athletes has been made in the budget earmarked for each Sports Federation in the present financial year.

As regards provision for additional funds, it will be made in the next financial year, specifically for extensive training for the final selection of athletes.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps he intends to take to ensure that the problems existing at the Head of some Federations do not impede the training of the participating teams?

Mr Ritoo: Regarding the participation in the IOIG, everything is fine as far as sports disciplines are concerned. We don't have any problem with any particular federation. If there is any problem with a sports federation, we will deal with it. Actually, there is no problem.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are preselected athletes from Rodrigues who are trained in Rodrigues for the coming 2011 IOIG. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether any specific measures had been worked out with different sports federations to extend same facilities which will be available here in Mauritius to those Rodriguan athletes who are potential medallists?

Mr Ritoo: All athletes who have been qualified to represent Mauritius through their sports federations are getting the same facilities, whether they are Mauritians or Rodriguans. Help will be given equally to the Rodriguans and we should always keep in mind that our best athletes are from Rodrigues.

Mr Bhagwan: Le ministre vient de dire que le ministère n'a pas de juridiction, mais le gouvernement donne de l'argent, il y a un budget. On donne suffisamment d'argent pour la préparation de nos équipes, mais nous avons eu l'expérience du passé. Ce qui nous intéresse, c'est la réputation de l'île Maurice. Nous ne voulons pas que l'île Maurice se trouve dans la même situation que l'équipe bleu-blanc-rouge de France ces jours-ci, avec des entraîneurs....

(Interruptions)

I have heard, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Mr Domenech would be around for holidays. I hope the Minister....

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I hope the Minister does not think of recruiting that guy for our national team. Il y va de notre réputation. Nous avons eu l'expérience des derniers jeux : *fail partout ! Pa résultat lor résultat ça !* We are nearly on the eve of the IOIG. I trust the hon. Minister personally. He has given results; he brought medals, not the other one! Can the hon. Minister give assurance to the country and the nation that, at least, the House and the country would be informed regularly of progress achieved for every discipline?

Mr Rittoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being an ex-athlete myself, I am very concerned regarding the preparation of all the athletes participating in the IOIG. I can assure all the Members here *que c'est la fierté de toute l'île Maurice d'avoir le maximum de médailles.*

SEEDOYAL LANE, BEAU BASSIN – DRAIN PROJECT

(No. 1B/101) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to drain works in front of the Beau-Bassin Swastika Mandir situated at Belvédère, he will state if –

- (a) whether any project has been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate the date of the implementation, and
- (b) whether a joint site visit has been effected by the officers of the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and that of the National Development Unit in connection therewith.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scope of work and design for a drain project at Seedoyal Lane, Beau Bassin, has been finalised and is estimated at around Rs30 m.

The implementation of the project has been delayed because of major way leave issues involving some fifty land owners, some of whom being reluctant to forego the required land which in a few cases have already been built upon.

As at now, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has constructed an absorption drain of 30 metres long which was completed on 31 May this year.

Works related to NDU's project at Seedoyal Lane, Beau Bassin would be scheduled once the way leave issues have been addressed.

Mr Bhagwan: May I make a request to the Minister? It is not only in front of Swastika Mandir, Beau Bassin, but the whole region of Belvédère. There was a drain project at the end of 2005. But, we all know what happened post- 2005, there had not been any PPS *dans l'endroit*. Can I ask the hon. Minister to have at least a site visit there – he always makes site visits – with his officers to see to it that works be done in the surrounding region also?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned, the consultants have done a good work there. They have been able to locate places where drain works have to be effected. Unfortunately, we have the problem of way leave. First of all, we have to call these people, talk to them and make an appeal to them to allow us access, otherwise if we are going to start the procedures for acquisition, it would take too much time. Secondly, we also get challenges. It is not that easy. At times, we take a decision; we start implementing, on the way we get stuck. Once we get the way leave, I will request the PPS for the region to expedite matters, but, at our end, we are willing to start the project at any time once way leave is received.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister talks about PPS, I am worried, because last time we had a PPS who spent his time in giving access to VIP's lounge. He never turned up in the Constituency.

The Deputy Speaker: Question please!

Mr Bhagwan: What I am asking the Minister is to personally see to it that work is done before the rainy season.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, once way leave is obtained, the work is going to start. For 20 years, we have waited for *Chemin la mort* and now, the hon. Member knows that the work has already started, we are completing the work.

(Interruptions)

Be patient, we are going to do the work! It takes a little bit of time, that's all!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, please!

RESIDENCE BARKLY - MARKET FAIR - TENDER

(No. 1B/102) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the market fair at Residence Barkly, Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to –

- (a) when the tender was awarded;
- (b) the value of the contract, indicating the name of the contractor, and
- (c) when works are expected to start and the duration thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that the contract for the construction of a market fair at Résidence Barkly had been awarded on 18 August 2008 to Procivil Works Co. Ltd. of 13, Prince of Wales street, Rose Hill for the sum of Rs4,979,167.88 inclusive of VAT.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that works started on 01 September 2008 and the duration period was 120 days meaning that, contractually, the works were to be completed by 21 December 2008. The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has informed that variations to the scope of works were brought to the project in September 2009 when the Works Committee...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please! No cross talking, please!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please! Please proceed with the reply!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Barbier, please! I am on my feet. The hon. Member should sit down when I am on my feet. Silence, please! I trust that when the speaker is on his feet, all Members are going to remain silent, and they are going to listen to the hon. Minister who is answering the question.

Mr Aimée: The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has informed that variations to the scope of works were brought to the project in September 2009 when the Works Committee decided to convert four spaces from offices into stalls to sell fish, poultry, beef and pork. The practical handing over of the market is scheduled for 28 June 2010 at 10.00 hours.

Mr Bhagwan: Il y a un grand scandale. Je demanderai au ministre d'aller faire une enquête. Je sais que cela dépend de la municipalité. On a cessé les travaux depuis bien longtemps. Il n'y a plus de chantier. *Can the hon. Minister ask either the Director of Audit or the Audit section of his Ministry to go through the tender procedure and to see as to whether the taxpayers of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill have value for money?* C'était le plus grand scandale que j'ai vu durant ces dernières années. I would also ask the hon. Minister to look into the question of allocation of stalls as to whether the correct procedure has been followed.

Mr Aimée: I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I will inquire with the officers of my Ministry and come back to Parliament.

FESTIVAL KREOL 2009

(No. B/103) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether in regard to the last edition of *Festival Kreol*, he will state if the services of Mrs C. H-B. and Check-in Travel were retained as Coordinator and Consultant respectively and, if so, the fees paid to each of them.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the services of Mrs C. H-B and Check-in Travel were not retained as Coordinator and Consultant respectively in connection with the 2009 edition of *Festival Kreol*.

However, with regard to Check-in Travel, I am informed that one air ticket was purchased from the Agency for one *conférencier* who was invited to participate in the *Festival International Kreol 2009* from the Seychelles. An amount of Rs17,027.80 was paid for the air ticket. However, there was no payment of any fee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that Mrs C. H-B was one of the various resource persons who have assisted benevolently in the organisation of *Festival Kreol*.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que dans un souci de transparence, le ministre est disposé de mettre à la disposition du parlement les sommes payées à ladite personne ou à ladite compagnie pour les précédentes éditions de festivals *kreols* à part celui de 2009 ?

Mr Bodha: M. le président, pour les précédentes éditions, in 2007, the MTPA paid for two tickets, one for Rs21,978; a second one Rs19,242 and there was another ticket which was paid in 2008 for a sum of Rs19,707.25 and the fees which were paid for that ticket were Rs4,280.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre si c'est la politique générale du ministère ou de la MTPA d'acheter directement avec les agences privées ou bien de donner préférence à la compagnie *Air Mauritius*?

Mr Bodha: M. le président, je pense que la pratique est d'utiliser le TSC *agreement*, mais quand on ne peut pas avoir recours au TSC *agreement* avec Air Mauritius, on achète les billets directement avec les autres compagnies.

DOGS - STERILISATION

(No. 1B/104) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the sterilisation of dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and the Tourism Authority, information as to the amount paid to PAWS in connection therewith for each of the last four financial years.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proliferation of stray dogs and cats is a serious environmental problem which represents not only serious health hazards to our tourists and to the population at large, but also impacts adversely on the image that we want to project of Mauritius as an upmarket high class tourist destination. There have been, as you are aware, many

complaints from stakeholders, from visitors to tour operators concerning the stray dogs' problem in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Members of the House will agree with me that for many years, this problem has reached such an alarming proportion that there was a pressing need to address it.

Following consultations with parties concerned, it was considered that a two-pronged approach had to be adopted to address the problem effectively; firstly, the control of stray dogs and cats by MSPCA and secondly the sterilisation of the animals by PAWS.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that it was with this objective in mind that the Ministry decided to extend its assistance to PAWS for its Sterilization Programme. The objective of the Programme is to address the problem in a humane manner and to provide a safe, hygienic and healthy environment for local people as well as for the tourists visiting the country.

Initially, the financial assistance of the Ministry, through the Tourism Authority took the form of a grant of Rs375 per animal sterilised as from December 2007. That amount represents part of the cost for the sterilisation of the animal, which comprises medication, salaries of personnel, running expenses of the mobile clinics which travel to different localities. Part of the cost was met by a foreign sponsor who was based in Mauritius. However, upon his departure from the country, the rate was subsequently increased to Rs600 to meet the totality of the cost involved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to underline that the service provided by PAWS is not only free but is accessible to a large number of people through provision of the services on site by its mobile clinics. The cost of the service is well below the rate practised by private veterinary surgeons, which is around Rs1200 and even below that of the MSPCA which is Rs700. In addition, the owners have to move their animals to these places for treatment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the total amount disbursed to PAWS by the Tourism Authority for the last four financial years amounts to Rs3,520,875 in connection with its sterilisation programme as follows -

Year 2005/2006 - Nil

Year 2006/2007 - Nil

Year 2007/2008 - Rs1,388,625

Year 2008/2009 - Rs2,132,250

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition, an amount of Rs152,317 has been disbursed by MTPA in respect of air tickets issued in favour of foreign veterinary surgeons who are called upon by PAWS to provide their services to that organisation as follows -

Year 2005/2006 - Rs50,340

Year 2006/2007 - Nil

Year 2007/2008 - Rs42,208

Year 2008/2009 - Rs59,769

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that assistance amounting to Rs11,372,816 has also been provided to the MSPCA for the control of stray dogs and cats over the years 2007 to 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that this sponsorship of the Government to PAWS dates back as far as 2002 and it is in the same spirit that the then Ministry of Environment has assisted PAWS for a total amount of Rs350,000 in 2002 and 2003.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sterilisation programme of PAWS has been effective in curtailing the population of stray animals. Up to date 10,670 dogs and 2,621 cats have been sterilised by PAWS, that is, about 300 per month, that is, about 10 per day.

Mr Ramano: Peut-on savoir du ministre s'il existe un contrat qui a été signé à cet effet avec l'organisation PAWS? Si c'est oui, est-ce que c'est possible de mettre ce contrat à la disposition de l'Assemblée ?

Mr Bodha : Oui, on n'a pas de problème pour le faire.

FOOTBALL WORLD CUP, SOUTH AFRICA – PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

(No. 1B/105) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Football World Cup in

South Africa, he will state the outcome of the actions taken by his Ministry to market Mauritius as a destination in the context thereof.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the holding of the Football World Cup in South Africa represented an opportunity for Mauritius to capitalise on the historical importance of the event in the African Continent and to attract some of the international Football fans to Mauritius.

In this regard, negotiations were held with Match Events Services Ltd in order to secure some hotel rooms for the accommodation of the international football fans in Mauritius under the Matchville Accommodation Programme Initiative.

In this regard, negotiations were held with Match Events Services Ltd in order to secure some hotel rooms for the accommodation of the international football fans in Mauritius under the Matchville Accommodation Programme Initiative.

Under the Programme, an agreement was signed with the Match Event Services Ltd for securing 3200 rooms during the period of the World Cup, that is, from 06 June to 13 July 2010. At that time the organisers expected that around 550,000 international fans would be travelling to South Africa to watch all the matches. The agreement entered into was made by Match Event Ltd on expectations that accommodation facilities in South Africa would not be adequate for the accommodation of all the football fans. In fact, they bet on the over spilling effect of the number of tourists coming. We have been advised that other agreements were made with other South African countries. However, in view of the global financial crisis, the sales of the FIFA packages have been slow and well below expectations. Accordingly, Matchville Events Ltd decided to cancel the agreement with Mauritius on 15 January 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that some 350,000 tickets had to be released by the FIFA tour operators worldwide to be sold free in the open market in South Africa as a result of reluctance of consumers to purchase packages including the Matchville accommodation. Subsequently, the agreements made with other South African countries under the Programme have had to be cancelled as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, following the cancellation of the agreement by Matchville Events Ltd, the MTPA together with Air Mauritius launched an advertising campaign 'Escape South Africa Plan' with a view to attracting people to spend holidays in Mauritius. The MTPA has invested some Rs2m. in that project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the final outcome of the campaign will have to be evaluated in due course. However, it seems that the campaign is being very effective and has had the desired impact so far. Accordingly, in the last statistical bulletin for the month of May 2010, there has been an increase of 9.2% in tourist arrivals including 8% from South Africa. From the figures available at the International Airport, passenger arrivals for the period 01 June to 20 June 2010 have recorded an increase of around 8500, representing a growth of around 19% as compared to the corresponding period of last year. It is expected that there will be an additional 1500 tourists up to the end of this June 2010 which will result in an increase of around 10,000 visitors as compared to June last year.

Mr Ramano: M le président, peut on savoir du ministre si les pays tels que la Nouvelle Zélande et l'Australie ou la Corée ont été approchés pour faire de Maurice un lieu d'entraînement pour la coupe du monde ?

Mr Bodha : Je pense que la question aurait du être adressée à mon collègue en ce qui concerne l'entraînement. *I would like to enlighten the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in the edition of Echo Austral of June...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Bodha: Dans l'édition de juin d'Echo Austral, un des principaux articles dit que déçu par le mondial le tourisme Sud Africain vise le long terme et qu'au départ on avait prévu 450,000 arrivées, puis on est passé à 375, 000 et maintenant on aura peut être que 250, 000 et il faudra rester optimiste quant à l'impact médiatique de l'événement plus tard.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que le ministre est en mesure de chiffrer le manque à gagner suite à la rupture du contrat de l'organisation Match avec les groupes hôteliers mauriciens ?

Mr Bodha : The fact that we have had 10,000 new tourists, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will bring additional earnings and I do not think that we will be able to evaluate what we have lost as regards to what we have won.

Mr Bhagwan: Beaucoup de bruits ont été fait et il y a eu des *statements in the House* concernant le World Cup et l'apport du tourisme avec des étrangers qui allaient transiter à Maurice. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire quel est le montant qui a été dépensé par le gouvernement *for that promotion campaign*, que ce soit par la MTPA ou le gouvernement *for the*

whole campaign of bringing not only clubs but also tourists to Mauritius ? Apart from what he is saying, what has been the cost of the promotion campaign as a lot?

Mr Bodha: From what I understand from the records, I think that it was in Durban in South Africa last year where the Matchville Chairman announced this programme to bring people to the Indian Ocean area zone to fly to watch the matches and back to Mauritius. I think that there was no additional cost and it was at the Mauritian stand. As regards to whether we had some promotion budget, I mentioned that there were about Rs2 m. which were spent.

TOURISM AUTHORITY – RECRUITMENT

(No. 1B/106) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Tourism Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number of employees recruited on a yearly basis since 2005 to date, indicating their place of residence, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of employment of the manual workers.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information being requested at parts (a) and (b) of the question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the additional staff recruited at the Tourism Authority since 2005 comprised mostly of the personnel recruited for strengthening the Monitoring and Enforcement Unit and manual workers for implementing the Cleaning of the Destination Programme. Initially, these manual workers had been recruited for the control of Chikungunya and subsequently the scope of works under that Programme was enlarged. The Programme is in line with the objects of the Tourism Authority which provide, *inter-alia*, for the promotion of the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Various projects have been implemented under the Programme in more than 500 sites throughout the island. These projects have contributed to the enhancement of the attractiveness of Mauritius as an upmarket tourist destination and are in line with our vision of making Mauritius an ‘Ile Durable’.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these projects are wide-ranging and include the following –

- embellishment works;
- installation of poster panels all around the island;

- upgrading works at NDHC all over the island;
- renovation works at *La Ferme des Rhums*;
- fighting of Dengue and Chikungunya and other mosquito related diseases;
- cleaning of bare lands, and
- painting and Maintenance of bus stops.

Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I am circulating a list of projects which have been implemented under the Programme throughout the island and, as I said, works have been carried out over 500 sites.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce qu'on peut savoir s'il y a eu des appels de candidatures pour tous ces recrutements?

Mr Bodha: From the records, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was an expression of interest of the manual workers and there was a bank which was created.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que le ministre compte, dans les jours à venir, renouveler les contrats de ces travailleurs manuels dont les contrats sont arrivés à expiration ?

Mr Bodha: It should be reviewed on a case to case basis depending on skill, performance and availability of funds.

Mr Ramano: Peut-on savoir du ministre si les contributions de la NPF ont été faites par l'employeur et par l'employé et s'il y a eu des remboursements pour les *sick leaves* et les différents *local leaves* ?

Mr Bodha: Can the hon. Member please repeat the question?

Mr Ramano: Si les contributions de la NPF ont été faites par l'employeur et l'employé pour tous ces travailleurs qui sont attachés à la *Tourism Authority* et aussi peut on savoir si les remboursements pour les *sick* et *local leaves* ont été faits à ces travailleurs.

Mr Bodha: As by law it should have been done, I will check that.

Mr Bhagwan: Il y a un problème, M le président, je ne vois plus les verts à l'île Maurice, ils ont subitement disparu. Où sont les véhicules, les poubelles? Mon problème c'est l'argent public et ces travaux sont inachevés - *ine fouille trou mais pas fine met pied coco*, par exemple. Le ministre Duval est en train de répondre.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Your question, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan : Ce qui m'intéresse, M. le président, c'est de savoir où les verts sont passés? Rama Valayden *ine aller*, il n'y a plus de verts, plus de MR.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Your question, please! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, où sont les verts, les poubelles, les vans, les tronçonneuses? Ces travaux sont inachevés et je demanderai au ministre de faire le suivi pour qu'ils soient complétés au plus vite dans l'intérêt du public.

Mr Bhagwan: C'est ça mon problème, et deuxièmement quand le ministre dit *case by case basis*, nous ne sommes pas étrangers à ces rouages de *pick and choose*. Je me fais le porte-parole de ces êtres humains qui ont été recrutés d'une façon ou d'une autre ; ce sont les gens des quartiers et il ne faut pas qu'on soit *unfair*. C'est cela mon message au ministre responsable, et ce qui nous est rapporté, c'est qu'il y a une politique...

(Interruptions)

Ce que je demande M. le président, *let them try to learn and then they start barking*. *Mr Deputy Speaker Sir,...*

(Interruptions)

I have said it in general...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I am not pinpointing any Member Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have said barking in general...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: What I am asking is whether there is going to be a *politique politicaille* in the choice of people who will be laid off at the Tourism Authority?

Mr Bodha: M. le président, l'unité est toujours là, l'honorable membre a fait deux bonnes suggestions et on va en tenir compte.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES – GOVT. POLICY

(No. 1B/107) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to free public transport facilities, he will state -

- (a) if the present policy is being reviewed and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the alternative measures that will be introduced in respect of
 - (i) old age pensioners;
 - (ii) students, and
 - (iii) other beneficiaries.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, free transport facilities are being granted to old age pensioners, the disabled persons and students travelling by public buses since 2005. This scheme is applicable in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The House is also aware that in the Presidential address, mention has been made to the effect that the present policy of free travel scheme will be maintained. But the mechanism for payment will be reviewed to ensure efficiency gain. In this respect, several options are being analysed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has now publicly confirmed what the MMM has been saying since 2005, regarding the lack of effectiveness of the hastily arrived at formula of 2005, that is, the wastage of public funds that have gone into this hastily arrived at formula. Will the hon. Minister agree to recommend to Government an overall assessment of the cost- effectiveness of the formula implemented since 2005 and, if not, why not?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not true to say that there has been wastage of public money, this is not the case. But, in fact, all of us know that there have been many flaws in the existing system and we have tried our level best in order to improve whatever required. For example, there have been too many problems which are created by the bus conductors, drivers, the bus proprietors and all these things have been taken care of. Despite it, we have still seen certain flaws in the system and that is the reason why Government has decided to look once

again on the mode of payment. We are looking into in and, in fact, I have with me a report which was prepared by Steer Davies Gleave and I am going to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly so that the Member can have a look at it. In fact, this has been a very interesting method which we have introduced. Unfortunately, this method has got certain flaws and that is the reason why we have instituted a Committee to look into the flaws and then to come forward with certain recommendations which we are going to implement.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since these so called flaws have been publicly known since five long years, would the hon. Minister tell us why Government has had to wait until now to agree to what the Opposition, the MMM, has been saying since long that there is a need to review this whole formula?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have taken steps in order to control the situation. For example, we have taken action concerning all those who have not been following the rules of the game properly. In the beginning, for example, in 2004, we received 440 complaints and last year we have received only 200 complaints. This means that actions have been taken and we have been able to obtain results.

In addition to these, we have got 100 cases where the conductors and bus drivers' licences were suspended. Even the traffic permit of the bus proprietors have also been suspended for many months. So, actions have been taken and the system that we have put in place has given results, but as I have just mentioned we have got certain flaws in any system. Whatever we introduce, we do have certain minus points and once we have come to know that there can be better means that can be introduced, we are going to do so.

For example, the report which I have submitted is clear that there is a distinct system which is a good one. But unfortunately, we have seen the flaws; we have taken actions that need to be taken. Last year only we have forfeited Rs5.2 m. that were supposed to be paid to the bus companies, which we have not been paid, which means Government has been very strict. Now, when Government has decided to have a look at the system over again, we are going to have a look at it, that's all.

Mr Obeegadoo: The old people are still left waiting on the bus stop!

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph 2 of Standing Order 10.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ORDERS 2010

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr A. K. Gungah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I would like to move that the two motions standing in my name and relating to the Civil Establishment Orders 2010 be taken together namely -

(1) "That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010 be approved".

(2) "That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010 be approved".

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Section 3(1) of the Civil Establishment Act 1981 as subsequently amended stipulates that the President may by order –

- (a) establish officers in the public service of Mauritius;
- (b) determine the number of persons to be appointed to such officers, and
- (c) determine the emoluments to be attached to such officers.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 reflects the changes on the approved establishments of Ministries and Departments for Financial Year 2010. The Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 reflects changes on the approved Establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Financial Year 2010.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 under Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 are therefore, now submitted for approval by the National Assembly.

With these words Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the two motions to the House.

Dr. Jeetah rose and seconded

The Deputy Speaker: I take it that there is no dissenting voice regarding both motions being taken together. The question is that this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010, be approved.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.20 p.m. the sitting was suspended.