

Debate No. 26 of 25.07.06
ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

DRUG COMMISSIONER - POST

(No. 1074) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asks the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if the post of Drug Commissioner has been filled and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the names of the appointed person;
- (b) the terms and conditions of his appointment;
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- (c) the measures he has taken as at to date to combat drug trafficking, and
- (d) his achievements since he assumed office.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the post of Commissioner, Drug Assets Forfeiture, has been filled since 01 December 2005.

With your permission, I am tabling a copy of the terms and conditions of the contract of employment of Mr Seegobin Nunkoo, Commissioner, Drug Assets Forfeiture.

With regard to part (c) of the question, Mr Nunkoo, is required by virtue of his duties to enquire into the possessions of traffickers and to report thereon to the DPP, this is provided for under the Dangerous Drugs Act. He is not required to take measures to combat drug trafficking per se. This is by and large the responsibility of the Police.

As regards the last part of the question, the Commissioner had to grapple with a backlog of 537 cases on his assumption of duty. For the period 01 December 2005 to date, 79 new cases have been referred to the Commissioner. The number of cases reported upon by the Commissioner to the DPP since his assumption of duty is 38. In four cases he has made recommendations for the forfeiture of the possessions of traffickers.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Drug Commissioner is complying to the circular letter issued by his Ministry regarding attendance?

The Prime Minister: Can the hon. Member clarify what exactly he wants to know?

Mr Dowarkasing: In fact, there was a circular letter that was issued to all departments regarding attendance which applied also to those being employed on contract. Being given that the Commissioner has not signed this attendance, the Secretary, Mr Ujodha, was transferred.

The Prime Minister: I am not sure whether this is the reason, but I can look into it.

PRB – SALARY REVISION EXERCISE – TRADE UNIONS - CONSULTATIONS

(No. B/1077) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the forthcoming salary revision exercise to be carried out by the Pay Research Bureau for the public service, he will state when the consultations with trade unions will start.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the next PRB report will be published in or around May 2008.

However, consultations with the Federations of Trade Unions have already started since Monday 17 July 2006 on the different methods, methodology and the programme of work in respect of the next pay review exercise. Preliminary meetings have been held with the following Federations –

- Federation of Civil Service & Other Unions
- State Employees' Federation
- Federation of Parastatal Bodies and Other Unions
- Mauritius Labour Congress
- Federation of Progressive Unions

PRIVATE TELEVISION BROADCASTING CHANNELS - LICENCES

(No. B/1078) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the issue of licences to private television broadcasting channels, he will state where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I informed the House in reply to PQ IB/335 in October last year, the analogue broadcast frequency spectrum currently used in Mauritius is overcrowded and does not offer scope for expansion. Besides, analogue technology is being phased out as we all know and replaced by digital broadcasting. It is, therefore, not possible to issue any new licence for analogue broadcast.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with the Government policy, we have introduced digital terrestrial television in order to facilitate the advent of private television in Mauritius. As the House is aware, the Digital Video

Broadcasting-Terrestrial platform is currently being used by the MBC to broadcast free-to-air programmes from UK, France, India and China.

I am also informed that MultiCarrier (Mtius) Ltd is considering the installation of other digital terrestrial television multiplexes in order to pave the way for the transmission of more digital terrestrial television channels licensed by the IBA.

Apart from the installation of digital television multiplexes, one factor that has so far inhibited the advent of private television is the clause in the Independent Broadcasting Act restricting the limit of foreign shareholding in a company applying for a licence to 20%. This will have to be looked at again.

POLICE & PUBLIC OFFICERS - RETIRING AGE

(No. B/1084) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, following Government decision to raise the retirement age to 65 years, he will state if the number of years of service required by Police Officers and Public Officers to be eligible for full pension will be increased.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Budget Speech 2006-2007, the normal pension age would be raised from 60 to 65 years. I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir - because I see that some people do not realise it - that this does not start immediately. The retiring age is a gradual

process, which will start in August 2008 to achieve the target of 65 years in 2018. The computation of the amount of pension and the qualifying period to benefit for full pension would also need to be adjusted accordingly. The new scheme would apply to all employees with transitional measures to secure acquired rights.

The Pay Research Bureau would work out details of the modified Defined Benefit (DB) Scheme, as announced in the Budget Speech, for inclusion in its next Report which is due, as I said earlier, in 2008, after consultation with all parties.

JOOMUN, MR. F – BOOKMAKER – FLOPPY DISCS - SEIZURE

(No. B/1088) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the decoding of

the CD-ROMs secured in the course of the inquiry in the recent case of illegal betting in the horseracing sector, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the decoding of ten floppy disks seized during the raid at the place of Mr Farook Joomun, bookmaker, started on 04 July 2006 by the IT Unit of the Police.

Before the retrieving exercise, each floppy disk was “write-protected” to prevent any modifications or intrusions whatsoever to the contents thereof.

The Police has so far been able to read eight out of the ten floppy disks seized. According to the Commissioner of Police, one of the floppy disks was not formatted while the data recorded on the other one was damaged.

CITE RICHELIEU - MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

(No. B/ 1089) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any incident was reported to have taken place during the musical performance organised

by the Black River District Council at Cité Richelieu on Saturday 16 July 2006, and, if so, the nature thereof and the actions taken, if any.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no incident whatsoever has been reported to the Police regarding the musical performance organised by the Black River District Council at Cité Richelieu on Saturday 15 July 2006.

However, I would suggest that if the hon. Member has any information, to communicate it either to my office or to the Police with specific information.

HORSERACING SECTOR - ILLEGAL BETTING - BOOKMAKERS

(No. B/ 1090) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Police inquiry in the recent case of illegal betting in the horseracing sector, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if bookmakers have been requested to give statements.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Tuesday 18 July 2006 at 11 10 hours, acting upon information in respect of credit betting on horse races, the Police des Jeux raided a shop situated at Jummah Mosque Street, Port Louis in virtue of a search warrant.

Messrs. Mamad Ajmal Goolamy, caller at Gopaleea bookmaker and Lee Chan Yui Tze Chan also known as Guy, son of bookmaker Ah Luk Tze Tchan also known as Ah Lee Seng, were arrested for inquiry.

At 13 45 hours on the same day, Mr Goolamy was interviewed and he confessed having placed a credit bet on Saturday 15 July 2006 with bookmaker Ah Luk Tze Tchan also known, as I said, as Ah Lee Seng. He said he placed that bet on his mobile phone for the first race of the twelfth race meeting. He was released on parole after being warned to complete bail procedures on the following day.

On 20 July 2006, Mr Ah Lee Seng has, in the presence of his barrister, denied the charged levelled against him by Mr Goolamy following which he was released on parole.

On 21 July 2006 Mr Ah Luk Tze Tchan known as Ah Lee Seng, as I said, appeared before Port Louis Court on a provisional charge of 'Allowing credit betting'; he was released on bail after having furnished a surety of Rs20,000 and entering recognizance of Rs50,000 in his own name.

The inquiry is still under way.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether any arrest has been made subsequently?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware, except that there was a provisional charge as I said, but the inquiry is still under way. Probably they are proceeding with the arrest if they feel there is need for.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether any of the betters have been arrested following the inquiry?

The Prime Minister: As I said, first of all, Mr Goolamy was interviewed and he confessed having place a credit bet on Saturday, 15 July. He was released on parole after being warned to complete bail procedures the following day, that is what he was supposed to do and that is the better that is involved.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in all these cases it would not be advisable to suspend the permits of the bookmakers, pending the inquiry?

The Prime Minister: There is a problem with the suspension, Mr Speaker, Sir. At this point, it might give the impression that the parties have been found guilty. Maybe, we have to let the inquiry finish. But, I don't think the inquiry will take that long to finish.

MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY, FRANCE
– MAURITIAN ART WORKS

(No. B/1094) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if Mauritian art works are found at the Musée du Quai Branly in France and, if so, will he state the number and state if any of these objects are listed as the national heritage of Mauritius.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Musée du Quai Branly has objects coming from four continents, namely Africa, Asia, Oceania and America.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as Mauritian art works are concerned, yes, there are two art works, "Tambour sur Cadre" (Ravan), which are damaged and presently kept in the reserve collection.

There are also some 88 items in the history collection related to Mauritius. They include engravings, lithographs, drawings and water colours which are also presently kept in the reserve collection.

These objects are not listed as national heritage.

The names of the donors of the two musical instruments are not known. The 88 other items have been donated by individual parties.

However, I am informed that the Mauritian art works, originated from the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie and the Laboratoire d'Ethnologie du Musée de l'Homme.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether these objects form part of the permanent exhibition?

Mr Gowressoo: As I just replied, it is presently kept in the reserve collection. I have no information as to whether these objects form part of the permanent exhibition.

NATIONAL HERITAGE – GOVERNMENT POLICY

(No. B/1095) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state

Government policy in regard to redeeming part of its national heritage found in various parts of the world.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the 185 heritage sites, buildings and monuments listed as our National Heritage are all found in the territory of the Republic of Mauritius.

According to section 6(k) of the National Heritage Fund Act 2003, one of the functions of the National Heritage Fund Board is to work in collaboration with the international community to trace and recover any national heritage which may be outside the territory of Mauritius and to restore foreign heritage or to jointly manage shared heritage.

Section 16 of the Act also provides that “no person shall export, or cause to export a national heritage without the prior approval of the Board.” Furthermore, since 1978, Mauritius is a party to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import,

Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. According to this Convention, any State party undertakes to take the necessary measures, consistent with their national legislation, to prevent museums and similar institutions within their territories from acquiring cultural property originating in another State party which has been illegally exported.

It is the policy of Government to bring back to the country any item having the potential of being listed as national heritage and in case of shared heritage, to have access to the heritage for joint management and use. I have been informed by the National Heritage Fund that to date it has not received any representations in respect of items of potential national heritage found outside Mauritius.

I take this opportunity to invite Members of the House, who have any information on any such items, to forward same to the National Heritage Fund, so that relevant action could be initiated accordingly.

Mrs Martin: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. However, may I inform the hon. Minister that some parts of our national heritage may be found abroad, especially in some of the neighboring islands. Could he inquire into the matter?

Mr Gowressoo: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**MRA – MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT - STAFF**

(No. B/1096) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, In regard to the employees from his

Ministry who will join the Mauritius Revenue Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, state -

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) their terms and conditions of service, and
- (c) the mode of selection exercise.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen) : Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows –

- (a) The number of staff under the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development who have joined the MRA is 1,031, out of a total of 1,104 previously employed. In addition, there are 120 support staff on temporary loan to the MRA for a period of six months.

The terms and conditions of service are as follows—

Directors and Section Heads (Top two levels):
Recruited by selection on a three-year fixed term performance contract.

Team Leaders (Middle Management): Recruited by selection on permanent and pensionable basis.

Other staff: Recruited by transfer on permanent and pensionable basis.

I wish to point out that the terms and conditions of service are, as per section 6 (4) of the MRA Act, determined by the MRA Board. The detailed terms and conditions are set out in the Human Resources Management Manual, which has been provided to the staff in bound copy, and which is also available on the intranet.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Ag. Minister of Finance to PQ B/982.

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27 AFRICAN JUDO CHAMPIONSHIP - ATHLETES - TRANSPORT

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(No. B/1097) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if his Ministry has received a claim of Rs50,000 from the Mauritius Judo Federation for the transportation of athletes and, if so, will he

state if it is justified and, if not, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is not in presence of any claim of Rs50,000 from the Mauritius Judo Federation for the transportation of athletes.

In fact, for the 27th African Judo Championship for Judo held in Mauritius from 29 May to 06 June 2006, all arrangements regarding transport had been made by my Ministry. Following a tender exercise the contract for hiring of buses was awarded to the National Transport Corporation for an amount of Rs52,200.

MAURITIUS NATIONAL WRESTLING AND ALLIED GAMES ASSOCIATION

(No. B/1098) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if the wrestling group which is led by Mr Dev Anand Sungawon is recognised by his Ministry.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry recognises a Sports Federation as an entity and as such, does not deal with a specific interest group within a federation.

In the case of wrestling, my Ministry deals with the Mauritius National Wrestling and Allied Games Association as the national governing body.

In its recent dealings with my Ministry, the Mauritius National Wrestling and Allied Games Association was represented by Mr Dev Anand Sunjawon as its president.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the wrestling team led by Mr Dev Anand Sunjawon is recognised by the Registrar of Associations?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot confirm at this stage. This is official and the hon. Member can check.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, I should have asked the hon. Member to check the information himself. I should not have allowed this question.

Mr Jhugroo: Est-ce qu'il y a un rapport négatif de la part du CONFESJES sur ce wrestling team?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: So far, no.

RICE (RATION)/FLOUR - CONSUMPTION BY TOURISTS - SURVEY

(No. B/1099) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will state if any survey has been carried out to ascertain the quantity of ration rice and flour consumed by tourists visiting Mauritius since July 2005 to date.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Household Budget Survey is the only survey done to ascertain consumer spending habits. However, I need to set the record straight regarding any misperception on the issue of subsidy on rice and flour as raised in the question. Prior to the reorientation of the policy on subsidy in relation to both commodities, hotels and restaurants were purchasing flour at subsidised rate for the production of a number of flour based products. Since the beginning of July 2006, hotels and restaurants are made to pay the market price of flour. The question of rice does not arise.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, le ministre avait mentionné que les touristes consomment le riz ration et la farine et c'est la raison pour laquelle on a enlevé les subsides. Est-ce que...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, today he is telling that it is not true.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, let me read the reply again to the hon. Member, and I quote -

"For rice and flour, previously Government was subsidising the price of ration rice and flour to the tune of Rs500 m. including Rs100 m. by the STC. And as it has been mentioned in the Budget Speech, two-thirds of wealthiest Mauritians absorb over Rs200 m. of the subsidy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under conditions of scarcity of resources, we cannot think of extending subsidy to the 800,000 or so tourists that visit Mauritius annually."

Here it was mentioned that we were giving subsidy to rice. This is just his hallucination.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister the total quantity used by hotels and restaurants?

Mr Speaker: Of which commodity?

Mr Guinness: Obviously, I am talking of flour.

Dr. Jeetah: I just replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are surveys carried out by the Household Budget Survey. I can table this document.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister give us the total amount of flour consumed in the country and the amount consumed by hotels and restaurants?

Dr. Jeetah: If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I can give him the total amount consumed by all the citizens. With regard to the survey, he has to refer to the document laid.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister when we are going to get the report of the survey?

Dr. Jeetah: I have just tabled the report.

**INDUSTRIAL ESTATES, TOURIST RESORTS & HOTELS –
PROPERTY TAX**

(No. B/1102) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether he will state if Government proposes to introduce a property tax relating to industrial estates, tourist resorts and hotels.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic

Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Residential Property Tax being introduced this year as part of the reform of the Income Tax system, as its name implies, is meant to cover only residential properties. The precise definitions and scope of the tax have been laid down in the Finance Bill already circulated.

At the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, a Temporary Solidarity Levy has been introduced on hotels to finance the Empowerment Programme to help the most vulnerable groups help themselves. Regarding industrial estates

that house mainly EPZ enterprises, the advisability of introducing a property tax thereon must be considered in the light of the current difficulties faced by that sector.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS – MARK-UP

(No. B/1103) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether, in regard to the proposed maximum mark-up on pharmaceutical products, he will state where matters stand as at to date.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the matter is still under consideration. However, the House may wish to note that Government will take appropriate steps to boost up competition in this sector.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister what has been the outcome of the Court case that was scheduled on 29 June 2006?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will gladly answer.

Mr Speaker: How can the Minister be aware of a Court case? The hon. Member should put a substantive question.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/846, the Minister said that he is waiting for the outcome of the Court case to take any decision.

But, then, 29th June has lapsed and today we are in July. Can we know, in the light...

Mr Speaker: The Minister is not aware. He has been taken by surprise in the House. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, then the Minister may reply.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS & RAPE – VICTIMS - ASSISTANCE

(No. B/1104) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection whether she will state the assistance that is provided by her Ministry to victims of sexual assaults and rape, indicating if any follow-up action is carried out.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry provides psychological and legal counselling to victims of sexual assault and rape through its six family support bureaux.

However, since February 2006, we have put up our protocol of assistance to victims of sexual assault and rape. We do realise that, in the past, victims of sexual assault and rape had to undergo a great ordeal by going to the Police Station to give all statements, and sitting on a bench for long hours. This was as though undergoing through another rape.

In the light of these problems, the Police Department, the Ministry of Health and my Ministry met on two occasions, on 20 and 24 February, whereby we set up a protocol, which allows any victim just to call on our hotline 119. The Police Department would convey the victim right to the special ward.

We have five Sexual Assault Units in our five regional hospitals. The victims are driven directly to the ward, where they are given necessary care. All statements are given in a very warm atmosphere at the hospital, instead of lengthy, tiresome statements being given at the Police Stations. Once the victim is taken on board at the hospital, the care and all statements are done simultaneously.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of psychologists attached to her Ministry and to the Assault Unit, as well as the type of psychologists? Are they clinical psychologists or therapist psychologists?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have half a dozen of clinical psychologists, who can give necessary support to the victims.

PRIVATE TUITION (PRIMARY & SECONDARY) – REGULATION

(No. B/1105) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if Government proposes to regulate the practice of private tuition to students at primary and secondary levels.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to PQ B/369, to which I replied on 25 April 2006.

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

A study was carried out by the University of Mauritius in 1984 regarding private tuition at primary level. The report, although dates as far back as 1984, still holds substance, as it concluded that for any approach to succeed, it must be based on social and economic reality. It must be consistent with the desires of parents and children and with the realities of

the job market. Any imposed solution which ignores these factors will be doomed to failure.

Some causes of the need for private tuition were found to be as follows –

- (i) parents considered that private expenditure on education as an investment with a high rate of return;
- (ii) raising the standard of requirements for different levels of jobs, leading to an increase in the demand for higher educational qualifications.

Some policy options were identified –

- (i) lengthening the school day;
- (ii) institution of remedial classes for slow learners, and
- (iii) enactment of legislation, imposing controls over private tuition.

At primary level, section 37 A of the Education Act prohibits the giving of private tuition to students of Standards I to III. The Ministry has established clear guidelines and criteria for the practice of private tuition. They are as follows –

- (i) school premises are not to be used for private tuition during the following periods:
 - in January and December;
 - on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, and
 - the last week of school holidays.
- (ii) only three days of private tuition per week during school holidays, 9.00 to 12.00 a.m.;
- (iii) no private tuition in the morning and after 5.00 p.m. on school days;
- (iv) size of private tuition group not to exceed classroom capacity;
- (v) not more than six hours of private tuition per week;
- (vi) pupils should have a break of at least half an hour between the end of regular lessons and private tuition;
- (vii) all pupils taking private tuition with class teacher on school premises after school hours are under the custody of the teachers concerned;

- (viii) the teacher may be liable for any accident that may befall on any pupil on school premises before, during and immediately after private tuition;
- (ix) tuition facilities should be extended to pupils who cannot afford to pay.

However, in order to improve conditions in which tuition is given, as well as for security reasons, teachers are permitted to use school premises for giving tuition to pupils of Standards IV, V and VI.

At secondary level, there is no legal provision which either allows or prohibits private tuition. There is no policy to encourage private tuition at secondary level, neither are schools placed at the disposal of teachers for private tuition. If there is private tuition at secondary level, it is done outside school hours and outside school premises.

As stated earlier on, it is not envisaged to unilaterally regulate or to take sanctions regarding private tuition, as the responsibility rests also with the parents. However, my Ministry has set up a team to study all the various implications of private tuition in State primary and secondary schools. The team has conducted preliminary assessments and has submitted their interim report, which is still being studied at the level of my Ministry.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether competition for the 1,260 seats will not, in fact, force the students to have recourse to private tuition, thus putting undue pressure upon them?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the practice of private tuition exists in our system. It is also the responsibility of parents to guide the students in terms of what is best for them.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether the teachers who give private tuition in Government schools pay a rent to Government?

Mr Gokhool: This is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister prepared to table copy of the interim report?

Mr Gokhool: As I said, this is an interim report, and it is being studied. Discussions with stakeholders will take place. This is not a final report, and I don't think that it is advisable to table the report at this stage.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister consider regulating private tuition for practical classes, particularly at secondary level? Because we are aware that, now, teachers give tuition for physics or

chemistry practical classes. Will the hon. Minister consider looking into this aspect of practical classes?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, at this stage, it is not proposed to regulate private tuition. But, in the light of the work that is being carried out, this point can be taken on board.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are a few cases - I don't say that it is general - where Standard III students are having private tuition, and we know that it is illegal to do so. But in some cases because of the A + now, parents are starting giving tuition to their children.

(Interruptions)

Is the Minister prepared to put notices in schools in order to notify parents that this is illegal?

Mr Gokhool: I think the hon. Member is a very experienced parliamentarian and he should not put a question on the basis of hypothesis.

(Interruptions)

I think the whole question is based on hypothesis.

Mrs Martin: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has a definite time frame as to when the negotiations with the relevant stakeholders will finish?

Mr Gokhool: Well, I think I indicated the next phase is to consult those stakeholders and then as we proceed, we will have to take into account what developments are taking place. I cannot put a fixed time frame at this stage.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has talked about the parents' responsibilities. Maybe in view of helping parents to take their responsibility, will the Minister consider putting clear notices that private tuition is illegal from Standard I to Standard III?

Mr Gokhool: This is a valuable suggestion which we have to take on board. At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

FIRST CITY BANK – TAKING OVER FROM DELPHIS BANK (No. B/1106) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the taking over of the First City Bank, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if prior consultations have been held with the shareholders.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to the takeover of the Bank, I am informed that there have been consultations, and discussions and decisions taken at the Board level where the main shareholders are represented.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, when there was the taking over from the Delphis Bank to the First City Bank, all the shareholders' money were shifted to what we call the Central Depository and Settlement Company Ltd. Now, since the First City Bank will be taken over by another institution, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister – if he has the information - what will happen to this Company Ltd.?

Mr Sithanen: The information I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the shareholding is as follows –

51.56 % DBM,
39% Global Direct Finance,
7% State Investment Corporation Ltd.

So, if we add these three, what I would call the main shareholders, it constitutes 97.56% of the shareholders. I presume the hon. Member is referring to the shareholders of the ex-Delphis Bank; and the information I have is about 1,591 shareholders. I presume if they are selling 100%, their shares also will be sold.

Mr Dowarkasing: Eventually, there is a case in Court. The case has just been filed recently; it seems that the evaluation of the assets of the then Delphis Bank has not been made properly and it has been contested. Can I know from the hon. Minister what will happen...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. There is a case which is pending, it is sub judice; it will be difficult for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to answer. The case is sub judice. Next Question!

PLASTIC BAGS – TRADERS' PUBLICITY

(No. B/1107) **Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the sale of plastic bags in the shopping centres, he will state if it is proposed to take measures to prohibit the sale of bags bearing the publicity of these shopping centres.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for drawing attention on this issue.

Following the recent tax on plastic bags, customers are now required to pay and, therefore, decide whether to buy or not. It is debatable as to whether a customer should be required to pay for a plastic bag which bears the publicity of traders. In this respect, officials of my Ministry will have consultations with all stakeholders shortly.

MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY – RECRUITMENT – JULY 2005 TO JULY 2006

(No. B/1108) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the persons recruited at the Mauritius Ports Authority since July 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to their names and addresses together with their respective titles.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, since July 2005 ten persons have been recruited at the Mauritius Ports Authority and six persons have either retired or have resigned.

With your permission, I am tabling the information requested.

All the vacancies were advertised as appropriate in the press and the most suitable candidates have been selected by the Board.

PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTORS - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/1115) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the posts of primary school inspectors, he will state if there exist any vacancies and if so, the steps that are being taken to have them filled.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the staffing position of Primary School Inspectors is as follows –

No. of posts of Primary School Inspector on the Ministry's Establishment as at today	No. of Primary School Inspectors in post as at today	No. of vacancies as at today
48	47	1

My Ministry is fully aware of the important role of the primary school inspectors in providing World Class Quality Education. To this end, my Ministry has been proactive and I am pleased to inform the House that twenty-six primary school inspectors have been appointed on 21 July 2006

Mr Mohamed: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he would kindly lay on the Table of the House the names of those people who have been recruited?

Mr Gokhool: There is no problem. I'll do that.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN – FREE TRANSPORT

(No. B/1116) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity

and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to handicapped children travelling to school by bus and who need to be accompanied, she will state if the accompanying person equally benefits from free transport and, if not, why not.

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

LE MORNE - WORLD HERITAGE SITE

(No. B/1134) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state the progress achieved in regard to the nomination of Le Morne as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that following the submission of the Nomination Dossier of Le Morne to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in January 2006, the latter has, on 01 March 2006, informed that the Dossier was incomplete and advised that the revised Dossier should be submitted before 30 September 2006 so as to enable the centre to respond and allow the State Party to make any necessary changes before 01 February 2007.

In this context, as advised by UNESCO, a request was made to the World Heritage Centre in April 2006 for the services of an expert to work on the Nomination Dossier and the Management Plan.

On 19 July 2006, the World Heritage Centre has recommended that a South African Consultancy firm be approached for the assignment.

My Ministry is presently having necessary consultations with that firm so that an expert could be delegated to Mauritius in August 2006 so as to meet the deadline of 30 September 2006.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, the Ministerial Committee and the Technical Committee are having regular working sessions and with the arrival of the UNESCO expert, the Committee will finalise the Dossier so as to meet the deadline of 30 September 2006.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what does he mean when he says that the Dossier was incomplete?

Mr Gowressoo: The Dossier was incomplete, so...

(Interruptions)

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Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that necessary changes should be brought to the Dossier. Can he inform the House what are those changes?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are still working on it. We have got two meetings. Last week, we had a Ministerial Committee and this week

also we are going to have a Ministerial Committee and a Technical Committee to process the Dossier.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll get back to the question again. Cabinet submitted the Nomination Dossier in January this year; and now, I understand from the Minister that we have to work the Dossier again because there are revisions that have been put forward and that necessary changes have to be brought in the Dossier. May I know what are those changes?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many changes. So, I will lay it on the Table of the House.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to tabling of documents, in an answer given by the Minister on 21 March this year, he...

Mr Speaker: Can I ask the hon. Member whether it relates to this question, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

Mr Speaker: All right.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are still awaiting the final report of Dr. Abungo on Le Morne since March this year. We haven't had that document placed in the Library.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we'll send the document shortly.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to be informed of the progress also. The Minister made some statements and now he is telling the House that changes have to be brought to a Dossier that was approved by Cabinet and submitted to UNESCO. What are those changes?

Mr Speaker: I understand the point of the hon. Member. On this question, hon. Lesjongard, the Minister has said that he is going to table the changes that he has brought. Is the hon. Member satisfied? I hope he is satisfied. Any other supplementary questions? Hon. Ganoo!

REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRE - INMATES – VOCATIONAL TRAINING

(No. B/1136) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether she will state if any vocational training is provided to the inmates of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I appreciate the interest of the hon. Member on the Rehabilitation Programme being carried out at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre.

As mentioned in my answers to previous Parliamentary Questions, a complete programme of activities have been worked out for the Rehabilitation Youth Centre, in collaboration with various NGOs, a list of which has been circulated last week. Vocational activities such as sewing, cookery, embroidery, gardening, arts and crafts have been included in the programme, but, however, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are simultaneously looking at the possibility of enrolling both the male and the female inmates of the RYC for courses at the IVTB.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Bappoo: We are actually carrying out an aptitude identification survey to assess their fields of interest. Transport facilities will be provided by the Ministry to convey them to and from the institutions and they will be accompanied by both male and female RYC officers.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether they are going to be enrolled in the institutions that are already providing vocational training, and whether these courses will be professional ones and not simply hobby classes provided formerly?

Mrs Bappoo: This will depend on what the IVTB will suggest to us, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are in discussion with the IVTB on that.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun : Mr Speaker, Sir, as per the information I have, boys have the possibility of having training in fields such as woodwork and so on, whereas for girls no such provisions were made. They were solely given courses in embroidery. The hon. Minister will agree with me that, nowadays, having in mind that Mauritius is putting itself forward as a cyber island, girls should be given chances to follow all types of courses, namely computer studies and so on and so forth.

Mr Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this also will be taken into consideration. But, we are also going according to the interests of the inmates also.

Mr Speaker: I wish to inform the House that PQ B/1137 has been withdrawn.

LA TOUR KOENIG FOOTBALL PITCH – SPORTS ACTIVITY

(No. B/1137) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the sports activity organised at La Tour Koenig football pitch on 17 July 2006 by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to the amount spent thereon, indicating if any other contributions were received and, if so, obtain details thereon.

(Withdrawn)

PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – WORKERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/1138) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if general workers have recently been recruited thereat and, if so, the categories involved and the addresses of the recruits.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that general workers and refuse collectors have, in fact, been recruited by the Local Government Service Commission on behalf of the Municipal Council of Port Louis. However, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the replies I made to PQs B/796 and B/1029, where I informed the House that, since appointments and promotions in the Local Government Service fall under the sole responsibility of the Local Government Service Commission, which is an independent body, it would not be proper to give the particulars of the candidates.