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Debate 9

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Oral Answers to Questions - 07 May 2002

MBC - LAXADE, LATE MR HAROLD - CHIEF NEWS EDITOR - DEMOTION

(No. B/244) Mr X. L. Duval (Fourth Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MBC full details regarding the demotion of Mr Harold Laxade from his post of Chief News Editor at the MBC.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Questions B/244, B/245 and B/246 together as they all concern the late Harold Laxade.

I am informed by the MBC as follows: Following its constitution on 06 October 2002, the new Board of the MBC decided to carry out a Human Resources Audit with a view to rationalising the Human Resource and to ensure that equity, fairness and effectiveness reflect the Corporation Human Resource Policy.

This exercise was considered as priority taking into consideration the declared policy of Government regarding the liberalisation of airwaves on the one hand and the catastrophic financial situation of the MBC on the other.

The Human Resources Audit revealed *inter-alia* that several persons who do not hold the basic qualifications at entry point were offered promotion just before the general election of 2000. The late Harold Laxade was among them.

According to records available in the file, it was noted that he was appointed News Editor in March 1988 notwithstanding the fact that he did not hold the prescribed qualifications at entry grade. Subsequently in July 1995, he was promoted to the post of Senior Editor, and in August 2000 to that of Chief Editor.

During the Human Resource Audit exercise, the late Harold Laxade was requested to submit the originals of his academic qualifications, as they were not available in his personal file. He did not produce same despite several requests made.

The Board, therefore, decided to revert him to his former post of Senior News Editor in August 2001. However, he was advised to obtain the qualifications as prescribed in the Scheme of News Editor so as to enable him to qualify for eventual promotion.

The late Harold Laxade entered a case against the MBC on 14 September 2001 which has been fixed for hearing on 24 September 2002.

In regard to his salary and benefits, I am further informed by the MBC that the late Harold Laxade was entitled to a gross monthly salary of R 22,755 and R 9,780 as other benefits.

However, upon his reversion to the post of Senior News Editor, he was drawing a gross monthly salary of R 21,555 and R 10,780 as other benefits. Following his suspension on 18 February 2002, he was paid a gross monthly salary of R 21,555.

Like other officers in public service, he was entitled to passage benefits at the rate of five per cent of his annual salary, end-of-year bonus and unused sick leave payable in cash.

Mr Duval: I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the scheme of service for News Editor was not in fact amended on 30 May, 2000 withdrawing any need for required academic qualifications where experience had been acquired by the person.

The Ag. Prime Minister: This is not the information I have, Mr Speaker.

Mr Duval: For the information of the Ag. Prime Minister, I can table it. May I get a clarification from the Ag. Prime Minister? I would like to know whether in fact late Mr Harold Laxade was demoted on the basis of a supposed *vice de procedure* which happened thirteen years before he was performing the job of News Editor, Senior News Editor and then Chief News Editor, and that in fact the supposed *vice de procedure* happened thirteen years before.

The Ag. Prime Minister: It was not on this basis that he was demoted, Mr Speaker. I have said that the Board decided to revert him to his former post of Senior News Editor in August 2001 when it was found that he did not have the entry qualification. I gave all the information.

Dr. Chady: Mr Speaker, I would like to know from the Ag. Prime Minister on what date did they find out that he did not have the required qualification.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I did say so; it was whilst the Audit was carried out.

Dr. Chady: In 1988 as the Ag. Prime Minister said. Is it not true that they were referring to 1988?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It was last year and not in 1988.

Dr. Chady: Yes, it was when he was appointed Chief Editor in 1988 that they found out that it was not done on a proper ground.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Can I appeal to the hon. Members? I have personally looked into this case very deeply. First of all, they tried to give the impression that late Harold Laxade was persecuted. I have given all the facts and this is not the case. Even worse, it was suggested that maybe he died and so on, because his disciplinary case was unduly postponed. Again this is not correct. A first meeting of the disciplinary meeting was called; neither late Harold Laxade nor his lawyer turned up. And then a date was mutually agreed upon. This is a very sad history. I think hon. Duval should know that late Harold Laxade had very serious personal and medical problems. I do not think we should try and go round and round like that. I am sure he has left the family and friends behind. I do not think anybody should try and play politics on a sad case like that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: I agree with the Ag. Prime Minister and this is why the questions are at the tone that they are. However, the record should also be straight. The late Harold Laxade could not come on that day because his Attorney was not available. He wrote to the MBC to tell them that. Nevertheless they heard the English woman.

The Ag. Prime Minister: This is not the case.

Mr Speaker: This matter has been thrashed out last time. It was about his suspension. Now we are speaking about his demotion.

Mr Duval: Yes, but the Prime Minister did not have the answer!

Mr Speaker: This was the last time and not this time.

The Ag. Prime Minister: This is not true what has been said, Mr Speaker. I repeat: a first sitting was fixed, they did not turn up. Alright, that is not the end of the world. Another date was mutually agreed upon. I have checked the file. Unfortunately for late Harold Laxade it was his lawyer that could not find an earlier date. But the case had to sit, because that British was going to leave Mauritius, and has left Mauritius. So, a statement had to be taken from her. I am given to understand that the Chairperson of the MBC invited Mr Harold Laxade if he wanted to be present, although his lawyer could not be present. So, the lady was interviewed and has left us for London. This is a sad case, I have looked into it and I think it is better to leave it to rest and not to go back on to the very painful conditions in which this happened.

Dr. Chady: It is sad that there is one case which is already behind us.

Mr Speaker: What is your question, hon. Chady?

Dr. Chady: I am just saying that we have to prevent such cases from happening. If one looks at the case of the demotion of late Harold Laxade, there are three other people who have been appointed ...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Dr. Chady: My question is whether there are other people who were appointed in 1987 on the same criteria as late Harold Laxade and will the Ag. Prime Minister verify whether they have been penalised in the same manner?

The Ag. Prime Minister: If there is anybody who wants to talk in full confidentiality about this very sad case, I am prepared to meet him and give the information. But don't provoke me to come out with information that should not come out concerning somebody who has left us! I am sure hon. Duval knows what I am talking about. That is why I appeal to Members. Late Harold Laxade must have left a family and friends behind. Let us leave things as they are!

Dr. Chady: I just want to ask the Ag. Prime Minister to look into the cases – there are about 43 cases - of demotion so that we do not have a repeat of this tragedy.

Mr Speaker: This is not relevant to the question.

The Ag. Prime Minister: On the eve of the general election, scandalous promotions have taken place there. When we set the house in order, we are told that we are persecuting people. The scandal was the promotion of people who were not qualified on the eve of general election. This is what the MBC has set back in order, Mr Speaker. And we will keep on doing that!

MBC – LATE MR HAROLD LAXADE – DEMOTION IN

AUGUST 2001

(No. B/245) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether, in regard to late Mr Harold Laxade, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the MBC as to the reasons why he was demoted in August 2001.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/244)

MBC – LATE MR HAROLD LAXADE – CHIEF NEWS EDITOR - SALARY

(No. B/246) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether, in regard to late Mr Harold Laxade, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MBC information as to the salary he was drawing and any other benefit/s he was entitled to -

(a) when he was in post as Chief News Editor, and

(b) after his suspension on 18 February 2002.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/244)

DISTRICT MAGISTRATES – SUPPLEMENTARY POWERS - CASES OF DEATH IN PRISON/POLICE CUSTODY

(No. B/247) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether Government will introduce legislation in order to provide for supplementary powers to District Magistrates to deal with cases where a person has died in prison or whilst in Police custody and to empower the District Magistrates to handle such cases right from the outset to ensure the independence and impartiality of the inquiry and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, as stated in paragraph 23 of the Address of the President, Government proposes to introduce legislation to provide for supplementary powers to District Magistrates to deal with cases where a person has died in prison whilst in Police custody.

Legislation to that effect is being discussed with all the authorities concerned.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the increase in number of cases of Police brutality being reported ...

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, this is a comment again - I take a point of order. It is false. I do not know how you can allow the hon. Member to come out with a statement of fact, as if the cases of Police

brutality are increasing. This is a statement of fact. This is not a question, Mr Speaker, and this is wrong.

Mr Dulloo: I have the floor. The Ag. Prime Minister has made a statement ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dulloo, you know whenever there is a point of order, you have to resume your seat and let the Member raising the point of order speak.

Mr Dulloo: The Ag. Prime Minister has not said that he is rising on

a point of order.

Mr Speaker: He said it.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Dulloo: He made a statement. What is happening in this House! In view of the number of cases of Police brutality being reported, I am asking whether Government will consider extending such powers of magistrates, as has been stated, to cases of Police brutality generally where persons have been assaulted, even seriously injured, at times, not resulting in death, but where in prison or in custody, persons have been injured. This is my point.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dulloo, I do not understand. When you have put a question, you should allow the Ag. Prime Minister to answer, then you can come with a second question. You should not put three questions at a time. How do we go about it?

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, it is one question which I have put.

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is a fact that the number of cases of Police brutality is on the decline, Mr Speaker, and this is no coincidence. This is because we have a Commissioner of Police and his Assistant who are doing their best to eliminate that culture of brutality in the Police, and great progress has been achieved. On top of that, there is now a Human Rights Commission. Any case of Police brutality, violation of human rights or alleged violations must be reported to the Human Rights Commission. And when I say that the legislation is being discussed with all the authorities concerned, this includes the national Human Rights Commission. I am glad to report that the National Human Rights Commission has made representation in relation to what we are discussing through this question, Mr Speaker.

SCUBA DIVING – LEGISLATION

(No. B/248) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether he intends to introduce legislation to regulate the practice of scuba-diving so as to ensure the security of same and the safety of participants.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that consultations are being held with all stakeholders with a view to making regulations under the Police Act so as to effectively control the different types of diving activities namely leisure and sports diving, scientific research diving, professional diving, and Police and military diving.

Mr Speaker Sir, as the House is aware, the Tourism Bill is on today's Order Paper for first reading. This Bill makes provision for the regulation of the activities of tourist enterprises which also comprise scuba-diving centres.

I am informed by the Ministry of Tourism that at present scuba-diving centres are required to register with the Ministry of Tourism on the basis of criteria that has been worked out with the collaboration of operators and the National Coast Guard. These criteria are meant to ensure that adequate safety and security measures prevail during scuba-diving operations.

Under Section 27 of the Tourism Bill, Mr Speaker, the Minister may make regulations for standards to be maintained by tourist enterprises.

Mr Collendavelloo: Will the Ag. Prime Minister consider in that context a requirement that qualified scuba-diving instructors be present on all sites where scuba-diving is being carried out, not only through safety hazards etc, but qualified with certificates and probably with additional training?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am certainly not qualified to say what kind of supervising must take place and so on. The Police and the tourism authorities are there for that. I am sure they will prescribe in the law or in regulations all that needs to be prescribed. I must say that there will need to be a lot of collaboration between the Ministry of Employment and the Ministry concerned, because I understand that, as far as professional diving is concerned, when you get to the depth - unfortunately, we lost two professional divers very recently - very specialised considerations have to be taken on board, especially, as far as professional diving is concerned. The House will be glad to know also that when the new Government took over none of the decompression chambers was functioning. We are seeing to it that now the National Coast Guard and the Special Mobile Force decompression chambers have been made reoperational since October 2001

and February 2002; and at Candos Hospital, we are going ahead with a modern installation both for decompressing purposes and for health purposes in general.

Mr Paya: Will there be a legislation to regulate the depth that divers can go? In the harbour, the two divers who lost their lives went to a depth of 60 to 70 metres.

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I said the urgency is, precisely, that. What I said is that we will need professional advice from overseas. As far as I am concerned, we do not have the professional people required to advise us on, precisely, the different depths as we go deeper and this will have to be provided for in the law or regulations.

SAUDI ARABIA DELEGATION – ACCESS TO VIP LOUNGE

(No. B/249) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether on 15 March 2002 a party of 25 persons led by Mr Abdul Rahman Abdul Azize had access to the VIP lounge without any authorisation from his Office and, if so, will he make a statement thereon.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, I wish to inform the House that His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Rahman Bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Minister of Defence and Aviation of Saudi Arabia led a delegation to Mauritius as from 17 March 2002. They were authorised by the Prime Minister's Office to have access to the State Lounge. His Royal Highness and his delegation landed in Mauritius in the early morning on 17 March 2002 and not on 15 March as mentioned in the question.

Authority to use the State Lounge was given by the Prime Minister's Office to the AML on 15 March. At that time there was no indication of the composition of the delegation. It was only on arrival that we took cognizance of the size and composition of the delegation.

As is usually the practice, a VVIP is as far as possible not separated from his delegation.

Dr. Boolell: Is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that the emergency gate at the airport is kept open against orders and usually when Minister Soodhun is at the airport to welcome people from Saudi Arabia or elsewhere?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Minister Soodhun is a VVIP and it seems that he penetrates from the other side. I am given to understand that everything was in order and I think that we should not *manquer de respect* to distinguished guests by putting such nasty questions.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is worse. Lorries are allowed to go to the plane and suitcases are loaded on the lorries without any check. I would like to know whether...

Mr Speaker: This question is not relevant to the original one, which is limited to the visit of Mr Abdul Rahman Abdul Azize.

Dr. Boolell: But we are told...

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, let me say something. Can I react? He is saying a lot of things and you are not saying anything, Mr Speaker.

Dr. Boolell: This is very serious, Mr Speaker...

Mr Speaker: Order! I have drawn the attention of the Member to the fact that his supplementary question is irrelevant and he went on speaking and said that he had other points to raise.

Dr. Boolell: I would like to know the number of times people have been seen off and welcomed at the airport by Ministers.

Mr Speaker: But this is not relevant...

Dr. Boolell: It is very important. There is an abuse of access to VIP lounge; there is an abuse of the number of suitcases being unloaded...

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, you are allowing comments to go on and on like that? These are comments!

(Interruptions)

I have to react. You are allowing the hon. Member to go on saying things and we are not allowed to react. This is not possible.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Boolell, please!

The Ag. Prime Minister: The impression is being created that there is no law and order at the airport. This is a *manque de respect* to VVIP guests like the one we are talking about, Mr Speaker. Let me tell you something. We have all means to accompany VVIPs when they leave the country, but not when they arrive. We have solved that problem recently. We have made arrangements for VVIPs to be received as VVIPs when they arrive in Mauritius and not only when they leave. We all agree that the arrangements in force until recently were not satisfactory. That situation has been prevailing for years. Now we have sorted out the problem and VVIPs are treated as VVIPs while, at the same time, taking on board security and customs matters.

Dr. Ramgoolam: The Ag. Prime Minister is saying that the arrangements in force until recently were not satisfactory. I would like to remind him that when I was Prime Minister and my office had to give permission, we asked for the names of all the people on the flight and made sure that there was somebody to welcome the VVIPs and to see them off at the airport.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, either we welcome a VVIP as a VVIP or we do not welcome him at all. If we want very distinguished VVIPs to come to Mauritius, we must give them adequate treatment while, at the same time, taking into consideration security and customs matters. But if we don't treat VVIPs as VVIPs, they'll go elsewhere.

RULES OF DEBATE - OBSERVATION BY HON. MEMBERS

Mr Speaker: Let me draw the attention of hon. Dr. Boolell to the fact that he is repeating the same thing every time. This question deals particularly with one event. I have noted that hon. Boolell deliberately goes away repeatedly from the question. When I called him to order, he just sent me away and continued. This is very serious, and I am giving him a very serious warning. I hope that the next time I call him to order, he will understand.

I would like to make another point. I had drafted an announcement earlier on, but I have not made it because I thought Members had understood. Let me draw the attention of hon. Members to our Standing Orders. Our Standing Orders relating to rules of debates in the House are very important, and it is the duty of every Member of this House to know those rules of debate. The rules provide that a Member desiring to speak shall rise in his place and, if called upon, shall address his observations to the Chair. In other words, a Member can only speak in the House when he has the floor and not from a sitting position. I am, however, sad to say that some hon. Members have developed the bad habit of speaking and making unwarranted observations from a sitting position, and this in disregard of the rules. I urge hon. Members to observe the rules that they have made for themselves.

Hitherto, I have been following the precedents set by my predecessors to the effect that the Chair cannot pay heed to words or expressions uttered by Members from a sitting position, that is, by those Members who are not, for the time being, having the floor. The reasons for such a stand were probably grounded on the assumption that no Member should speak unless he has the floor and also on the difficulty in identifying the Member uttering those words or expressions.

Lately, I have realised that some hon. Members are taking advantage of this situation to unnecessarily interrupt the proceedings of the Assembly and abuse the process of the Assembly. In the light of the above, I have decided to reconsider my position and henceforth the Chair shall try to pay heed to words and expressions uttered from a sitting position and to take action, as appropriate. And, I must say that the word "*batiana*" uttered by hon. Boolell is not parliamentary.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, I bow to your ruling...

Mr Speaker: You cannot comment on my ruling!

ASBESTOS - HEALTH HAZARDS - SURVEY

(No. B/250) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment whether he will state if a study regarding the use of asbestos has been conducted and, if so, will he state-

- (a) by whom;
- (b) who financed the study and at what cost, and
- (c) the outcome of the study.

The Minister of Health & Quality of Life (Mr A. Jugnauth): Sir, with your permission, I am answering this question.

A ministerial committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was set up in July 2001 to assess the health dimension of asbestos in Mauritius.

Following the recommendations of the inter-ministerial committee, Government decided in September 2001 that the Ministry of Economic Development, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs should approach the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation for the provision of the services of an expert to carry out a survey and to make recommendations as local expertise is not available.

Mr John Addison, a Scientific Consultant in Mineralogy, Occupational Hygiene and Environmental Health and Safety, was designated by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation to undertake the survey. Mr Addison was in Mauritius from 5 November 2001 to 22 December 2001. The survey was financed on a cost-sharing basis by the Mauritian Government and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

Mr Von-Mally: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the survey concerns Rodrigues also?

Mr A. Jugnauth: Rodrigues is not included in the survey. Mr Addison did not even go to Rodrigues. Most probably we will have to take this into account in the future.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, part (c) of my question concerning the outcome of the study has not been answered.

Mr A. Jugnauth: Concerning part (c) of the question, we have set up a ministerial committee to look into the recommendations contained in the report of Mr Addison.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, will it be correct to say that this report was made, in fact, to know what is the situation with regard to asbestos? Has this study been carried out also to assess the impact of asbestos on the health of those people affected by it, either living in the EDC houses or elsewhere?

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his report, Mr Addison has identified a number of problems that could be caused by asbestos. But, as far as EDC houses are concerned, the report states that the risks of the occupiers in Government buildings and residents of EDC houses are minimal. However, he has suggested remedial actions, and precautions have to be taken. There are also a number of recommendations and safeguards that have been mentioned in his report, like legislation, support services, awareness campaign in respect of different items. The ministerial committee will look into all these, and then take the necessary decisions. The report is available.

Mr Dowarkasing: What remedial actions will be taken in those places where we have asbestos, be it at Brown Sequare Hospital or even in the Emmanuel Anquetil Building?

Mr A. Jugnauth: As I said, the ministerial committee has already met twice, and now they will implement the decision that they have taken in respect of all these situations.

Mr Dulloo: The Minister has said that the report is available. Is there any impediment that it be circulated to hon. Members, so that we could make suggestions and draw attention wherever necessary?

Mr A. Jugnauth: It has been made public at a press conference. We can place a copy of the report in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Dowarkasing: Will the hon. Minister consider the possibility of legislating against the use of asbestos in the future?

Mr A. Jugnauth: As I said, there have been recommendations on new legislation and so on and so forth. This is why we have set up this ministerial committee to look into all these, and then come up with the necessary legislation.

NHDC HOUSES – CITE MALHERBES & 16EME MILLE

(No. B/251) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the NHDC as to the number of units constructed at Cité Malherbes and 16eme Mille respectively, together with the size of a unit, its cost and the terms of payment of same.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the NHDC Ltd has constructed 50 housing units (25 blocks of 2 units each) at Cité Malherbes and 54 housing units (27 blocks of 2 units each) at 16eme Mille.

The net floor area of a unit is 40.2m².

The price of a unit varies from R 280,000 to R 330,000.

The terms and payment of the housing units of the NHDC depends on the household income, the age of the beneficiary, the periods of repayment to be granted by the NHDC and the interest rates to be charged. The household income determines whether the beneficiary is eligible for a Government grant and the rates of interest applicable. For households earning up to R 7,500 monthly, the interest chargeable is 6.5% for the first five years, 8% for the second five years and 10% for the remaining period, and they are eligible for the Government grant of R 30,000. For those earning R 7,500 to R 10,000 monthly, the interest is 10% for the first five years, 12% for the second five years, and 14% for the remaining period. And, finally, for those earning more than R 10,000 monthly, the interest is 13% for the first five years and 14% for the remaining period. The last two categories of households, that is, those earning above R 7,500 monthly are not eligible for the Government grant of R 30,000.

In addition, the deposit to be made also determines the monthly repayment. The higher the deposit, the lesser the repayment term.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the hon. Minister state why there is a variation in prices? He stated three different prices, and I understand that the size of the units is the same. So, why is there a difference in prices?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I stated that the price varies from R 280,000 to R 330,000. The price varies depending on the siting of the unit. If it so happens that it is at a corner and there is more land available, of course, the price increases. If the houses are squeezed in between two blocks, then the rate is less. If a house is at one extremity, then, again, the price varies.

Dr. Chady: Can the Minister tell us whether the interest rates are fixed? The Minister mentioned interest rates of 10%, 12% and 14%, depending on the income. Does they remain fixed or do they vary with bank interest rates?

Mr Choonee: As far as NHDC is concerned, the rates have been fixed.

Dr Chady: In view of the fact that bank rates are decreasing, is it not appropriate that, accordingly, the rate of interests should be revised? We cannot keep it at the fixed rate of 14%.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that question pertains more to the Minister of Finance. However, wherever possible, the NHDC makes concession, because it has, very often, been dealing with social housing units for the vulnerable groups. We are already very flexible on interest rates.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, since these houses have been constructed on State lands and have been sold to the NHDC à *un prix dérisoire*, does the Minister find it reasonable that different rates are fixed on houses in respect of the land allocated to each unit?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the NHDC is concerned, it is true that it pays a nominal rent for the State lands leased to it. However, we have to agree that the NHDC has been making great losses in the past, which we have got to remedy. Previously, there was mistargeting, and now that we know exactly in what direction we are going, definitely the rate is the same for the vulnerable groups, i.e R 650 per month. But, for those who can afford to pay, I think there is logic behind their paying more when they occupy more land.

MILLENNIUM TOWER, WOOTON – VISIT BY PUBLIC

(No. B/252) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether he will state if the Millennium Tower at Wooton is opened for visit by the public and, if not, why not.

Mr Ramdass: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the monument which was inaugurated on 31 December 1999 was not officially opened to the public immediately since traces of humidity were noticed on the internal and external walls of the building. Repairs were effected during the maintenance period and completed in September 2000. The final handing over was effected on 16 October 2000, and the monument was opened to the public as from 01 November 2000. The monument site is being managed by the Mauritius Museums Council.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this monument is a legacy of the previous Government which, unfortunately, we have to manage. It is a massive structure and there is not much to visit inside and outside.

As the House is aware, this monument, besides being an eyesore, is also costing Government approximately R 40,000 per month as running costs, i.e. half a million rupees yearly.

In addition, it is located on prime agricultural land, which could have been put to better use by Government.

I have, nevertheless, set up a committee, comprising the Mauritius Museums Council and the National Heritage Trust Fund, to look into ways and means of enhancing the public appeal of the monument as well as the area surrounding it, and to make it more attractive to the public.

Although the advice of NGOs has also been sought, no concrete proposals have been made to date.

In the light of the feedback received and the recommendations of the committee, a decision will have to be taken shortly on the fate of the Millennium Monument.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a pure coincidence, the House will be surely interested to learn that I have been informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping today, just before coming to the National Assembly, that complaints have been received at their end as regards loose blue-basalt cut stones in the monument, and that this was confirmed by a site visit on 06 May 2002, that is, yesterday. A complete survey of the loose stones is being undertaken, in order to ensure safety of the building and the visitors.

Mr Abdoola: Can I ask the hon. Minister what was the cost of the monument?

Mr Ramdass: R 16 m.

Mr Chumroo: Being given that the running cost is going to be even more expensive, is it advisable to demolish the monument?

Mr Ramdass: The decision will be taken shortly Mr Speaker, Sir.

PEL ACCOUNTS – INCOME TAX - DEDUCTION

(No. B/253) Mr A.K. Gungah (Second Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether contributions to PEL accounts was an allowable deduction for income tax purposes and, if so, will he state –

(a) when it ceased to be so; and

(b) if he will consider the advisability of reintroducing in his forthcoming budget such deduction in respect of savings on a regular basis with a view to boosting up the housing scheme.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, contributions made during a year to the Plan Epargne Logement (PEL) accounts operated by the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd (MHC) were in the past deductible from income tax by way of a 10% tax credit, up to a ceiling of R 8,000. This tax credit which was introduced in the Finance Act 1990 was withdrawn in 1995 when the Income Tax Act 1995 replaced the 1974 one.

The withdrawal of the tax credit was done in the context of a rationalisation of personal reliefs and deductions when other allowable deductions such as entertainment expenses and expenses for travel abroad were also withdrawn, and also in view of abuses noted. The most common abuse was opening a PEL account on the last days of an income year to benefit from the tax credit, closing it after 30 June and opening another account in June of the following year.

As regards part (b) of the question, the matter was looked into last year in the context of the budget preparation. I did, in fact, receive a memorandum from the MHC requesting, *inter alia*, the reintroduction of the PEL tax incentive to encourage households to save for their housing needs and help the MHC mobilise more financial resources.

Mr Speaker, we have concluded that those objectives could be better attained through the use of instruments other than taxation. As I then announced in the 2001/02 Budget Speech, Government has, instead, decided to grant an interest bonus of 3 per cent per annum over and above the basic interest rate on PEL deposits, to regular depositors who take a housing loan from the MHC. It should be noted that any interest and bonus derived from housing savings schemes of the MHC are already fully exempt from income tax. I am informed that since 30 June 2001, deposits in PEL accounts have increased from R 483.3 m to reach R 522.3 m as at 30 April 2002.

I wish to add that, as an additional measure to help the MHC mobilise resources for housing, Government also decided in the 2001/2002 budget to provide an interest bonus of 2 per cent over the rate offered by MHC on its Housing Deposit Certificates with maturity exceeding three years.

RAMCHURN, MRS R. – SUGAR BEACH RESORT - DISMISSAL

(No. B/254) Mr A.K. Gungah (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour & Industrial Relations whether he is aware of the case of Miss Reena Ramphul who has been dismissed from Sugar Beach Resort by reason that she was wearing a *phuli* and, if so, will he make a statement thereon.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, with your permission, I propose to reply to PQ Nos B/254 and B/275 together.

On 16 April 2002, Mrs Reena Ramchurn, born Ramphul, made representations at Rose Hill Labour Office that she was employed at Sugar Beach Resort as Housekeeping Clerk since 12 August 2000 and was dismissed on 12 April 2002. She had been offered a sum of R 9,474.25 representing severance allowance at the normal rate plus wages as indemnity in lieu of notice, which she had not accepted.

The main reason for her dismissal was, *inter alia*, that she had infringed the rules of the grooming standards of the hotel by wearing a *phuli*.

On 23 April, my Ministry convened a meeting with the management and the employee. Mrs Ramchurn requested that the case be kept in abeyance as she was consulting her legal adviser.

Sir, I wish to point out that my Ministry was not made aware at any time that the grooming standards of the hotel required that employees should not wear a *phuli*. Mauritius being a country with a diversity of cultures and religions, we believe that employment practices should not infringe on the right of employees to express their cultural identity insofar as such cultural expression does not hinder the smooth running of the enterprise. Government strongly believes that enterprises should ensure that their rules and standards are based on mutual respect and understanding.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad to hear that the Minister has said that employment practices should not infringe upon cultural practices and values. Can I ask the Minister whether complaints have been made to his Ministry in respect of those who wear *sutha* and that these people also have been asked to vacate? Can I impress upon him to see to it that corrective measures are taken and, if need be, can he look into these cases? If they have to be reinstated, please do so.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I have not received any complaint, but the Member can rest assured that we will take his request into consideration.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES – STAFFING, TRAINING, ETC.

(No. B/255) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will inform the House of the measures he intends to take to improve the physiotherapy services, especially in relation to staffing, training and equipment.

(Withdrawn)

VICTORIA HOSPITAL ORTHOPAEDIC OUTPATIENTS DEPT.- PATIENTS

(No. B/256) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether he will give the number of patients attending Victoria Hospital Orthopaedic Outpatients Department during the month of March 2002 and will he make a statement on the workload and quality of services available under prevailing circumstances.

(Withdrawn)

HOSPITALS – TELEMEDICINE FACILITIES

(No. B/257) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health & Quality of Life whether, in regard to telemedicine facilities within the hospital services, he will state –

(a) their location;

(b) how often they have been used during the past one year and for what purposes.

(Withdrawn)

BATIMARAIS – STATE LAND OCCUPIERS – TITLE DEEDS

(No. B/259) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will consider issuing the title deeds to the occupiers of State land of Batimaraï in view of the fact that they are facing difficulties to raise loans from banks for the extension of their existing houses.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to records available at the Ministry there are only four cases where lessees of State land of ex-CHA Estate at Batimaraï have applied for their survey plan. Two of these plots have been surveyed and they will receive their plans shortly.

The other two cases are pending as surveyors could not get access to the land because the owners were absent during the site visit. Consequently, the surveyor will arrange with the owners for site visit in their presence and the survey plans will be finalised soon afterwards.

Mr Dowarkasing: Sir, if you will allow, may I seize this opportunity to request the Minister to extend same facilities to the 24 CHA house holders in Dubreuil also?

Mr Choonee: Sir, when the survey work is completed, we will proceed to the other sites.

BEAU BASSIN, CITE BARKLY & POPE HENNESSY STREETS – WATER NETWORK

(No. B/262) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether the water network along Pope Hennessy Street, Cité Barkly, Beau Bassin will be upgraded and, if so, will he state when works is scheduled to start.

Mr Ganoo: Sir, I am informed by the CWA that there are some 700 m of pipeline to be renewed along Pope Hennessy Street.

The Road Development Authority is presently upgrading some 400 m of the Pope Hennessy Street from junction Napier Broome Street to junction Serge Alfred (ex Lavoquer) Road. The CWA in agreement with the Road Development Authority will renew the pipeline along this junction. The pipelaying works are scheduled to start this week in conjunction with the Authority's roadworks.

As regards the remaining stretch of 300 m from Serge Alfred Road to Colonel Maingard Road, the CWA is preparing the tender documents and works are scheduled to start in June and completed by August this year.

BEAU BASSIN - WOMEN CENTRE

(No. B/263) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare whether she is contemplating to create a women centre in Beau Bassin and, if so, when.

The Minister of Civil Service Affairs & Administrative Reforms (A. Jeewah): Sir, there are at present 12 women centres operating throughout the country including one in Rodrigues. In addition, a women centre will soon become operational at Floreal, and two projects are in the pipeline for the construction of two additional women centres at Camp Levieux and at Notre Dame.

The Ministry does not have any project, at this stage, for the setting up of a women centre at Beau Bassin as the centre at Rose Hill is catering for the inhabitants of Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Belle Rose, Quatre Bornes and neighbourhood.

However - hon. David can open his ears - I am sure that the substantive Minister will, on her return from mission, look into the advisability - which he never did when he was Minister for five long years - of setting up a women centre at Beau Bassin, taking into consideration all implications thereof.

NHDC - SLAB CASTING FACILITIES - AMOUNT DISBURSED

(No. B/264) Mr J. C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he will state the amount disbursed to the National Housing Development Co. for slab casting facilities during financial year 2000/2001 and from 01 July 2001 to date and whether he will make a statement thereon.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, under the scheme for the casting of roof slabs, households drawing a monthly income of up to R 7500 per month are eligible for a maximum Government grant of R 40,000 for casting a roof slab not exceeding 100 m². For roof slabs of a lesser area, beneficiaries receive an amount which is proportionate to the slab size. Payment is effected after construction has reached beam level. The amount disbursed by Government to the National Housing Development Company (NHDC) under the scheme amounted to R 155,104,579 for the financial year 2000/2001 and R 142,360,600 from 1st July 2001 to date. Since financial year 2000/2001 a total amount of R 297,465,179 has thus been disbursed in respect of 9174 beneficiaries.

The National Housing Development Company currently receives some 250 applications for casting of roof slabs and for building materials every fortnight. Presently, there are some 700 applications which are being processed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government also provides a maximum grant of R 40,000 through the NHDC for disbursement to households earning up to

R 4,000 monthly for purchase of building materials for the construction of a housing unit not exceeding 100 m². As regards payment of the grant, beneficiaries receive an amount which is proportionate to the house size. Payment is effected after construction has reached plinth level.

Since 2000/2001, a total of R 302,111,079 has been disbursed for both the casting of roof slabs and for the purchase of building materials. This represents a significant contribution of Government towards not only the increase in the housing stock, but also the

improvement in the quality of life of 9306 low income households over a period of less than two years.

In addition to the above schemes, the National Housing Development Company is proceeding with the construction of Firinga type core housing units which are financed by Government, and the construction of 1522 units financed partly by the Export Import Bank of China. A first batch of 524 Firinga core housing units will be available as from December this year. A second batch of 529 Firinga type housing units will be ready as from March 2003. As regards the housing units to be built with Chinese assistance, it is expected that they will be available as from September 2003.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Ag. Prime Minister for his valuable information. May I ask him whether he is aware that there are many files at the NHDC concerning requests for slab casting? My information is that the NHDC is awaiting funds to issue payments. Would he see to it that the necessary funds be disbursed so that those files be activated at the NHDC?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not agree with this comment which tends to give the impression that things are getting from bad to worse at the NHDC. This is not the case. The NHDC has been streamlined recently. There have been changes at management level and I am satisfied that the NHDC is performing more and more efficiently, including in the assessment before paying for slabs, there are all sorts of measurements that have to be taken. Inspectors have to go on site. There is a lot of information that is required. I am satisfied that things are improving and will keep on improving. I am not in a position to say whether there is a lack of funds. Of course, the NHDC must manage its finances as best it can, but I shall look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Barbier: I thank the Ag. Prime Minister. This was the information I got from the NHDC. I am sure that he will agree

Mr Speaker: No comments! Questions please!

Mr Barbier: There is improvement at the level of the NHDC. Everybody agrees with that. As far as management of funds for casting slabs is concerned, this is the information I have got from the NHDC. I am asking the Ag. Prime Minister to look into this specific problem at the NHDC.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have already replied, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MONTEBELLO - ROAD CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/265) Mr J. C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Montebello for the construction of a road to alleviate their burden and, if so, will he make a statement thereon.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the proposed access road at Montebello being an unclassified one does not fall under the responsibility of the Road Development Authority.

My Ministry has contacted the National Development Unit of the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues which has advised that the construction of the proposed road would cost approximately R 7 m. to R 8 m. The National Development Unit may consider implementing the project during the project during the next financial year subject to the availability of funds.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

CITE LA BUTTE, PAILLES - STATE LAND - RENT

(No. B/266) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will make a statement on the claim for State land rent that has been sent on 09 April 2002 to the inhabitants of Cité La Butte, Pailles.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the houses constructed by the ex-CHA for the La Butte landslide victims were financed by the Ministry of Local Government. The sale of the houses and management thereof was entrusted to the ex-CHA.

The land rent claims issued to debtors of Cité La Butte, Pailles include arrears of unpaid monthly instalments on loan repayment advanced for the purchase of their houses. In fact, the State land rent varies from R 12 to

R 150 per annum whilst the monthly loan repayment varies from R 149 to

R 554.

Unfortunately, the title of the form used and the non-insertion of details of the claims therein, have created some confusion to the debtors. Corrective actions are being taken and details regarding the rent and loan repayment will henceforth be inserted on the claims.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he envisages to sell the CHA houses to the actual occupiers? These occupiers have not paid their instalments because there was a Government policy to the effect that these houses would be sold to them.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information that the hon. Member is providing us with is that the houses were to be sold to them, but because of delay in the process the houses have not been sold. What can be done at our end, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that we could visit the sites, reassess the houses and see whether they should be sold or demolished, because I am told that there are some problems with the housing units in that region.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that actually these houses are in a deplorable condition and, in fact, the slabs are falling down. The occupiers of these houses would like to buy the houses and carry out the repair works themselves.

RIVERSIDE LANE, PAILLES - CABINETMAKER WORKSHOP - OPERATION

(No. B/267) Mr J.C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if the cabinetmaker workshop situated at Riverside Lane, Pailles, is still in operation, despite a closing down order of his Ministry against the same for dust and noise nuisances.

The Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues (Mr J. Lesjongard): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I would like to reply to this question which is addressed to my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

I am informed by the Black River District Council that one Mr Nareshwar Seebaruth was prosecuted by the Council for illegally operating a Cabinetmaker workshop at Riverside Lane, Pailles, without the appropriate licence in accordance with the Trade and Industries Classification Act and for undertaking development without the relevant permit under the Town and Country Act. Mr Seebaruth was convicted by the District Court of Moka on 17 January 2002 to close down his cabinet workshop. Site visits effected by officers of the council on 02 April 2002 have revealed that the cabinet workshop was not in operation.

I have also been advised that Mr Seebaruth has, under the Town and Country Planning Act, been fined with costs and has been ordered to pull down his building. A notice has been served on Mr Seebaruth by the Legal Adviser of the Council as the former pretended not to be aware of the Court judgement.

Mr Seebaruth has been granted a delay of one week which will expire on 10 May 2002 to pull down his building, failing which the Council will have no alternative than to demolish same on that day at his own costs as prescribed by law.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, the difficulty faced by Mr Seebarith is one being faced by many small entrepreneurs. In fact, they are a little bit like *juifs errants* being sent here and there and all over the places. Can I impress upon the Minister, together with the help of SMIDO, to see to it that specific areas be identified where building sites can be put up or erected for these people to move in so that they are taken care of and not be harassed?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I inform the hon. Member that this is being looked into in the new Local Government Act and will be taken care of.

LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL - CONVERSION INTO AREA HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/268) Dr. J.B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether it is the decision of his Ministry to convert Long Mountain Hospital into an Area Health Centre.

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, all the buildings housing the Long Mountain District Hospital are of wooden structure clad with wooden planks and covered with shingles and partly with corrugated iron sheets. In fact, the buildings are more than a century old. One of the buildings, used as the Administrative Block, has been condemned by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure since October 2001. The female ward is closed since November 1997 and renovation works are being carried out to that ward.

Following the passage of cyclone Dina in January this year, emergency services have had to be transferred to the male ward, which has ceased to operate as such.

At present, in addition to the services provided by the area health centre which is found within the compound of the hospital, a round-the-clock accident & emergency service and outpatient clinics are being provided at the hospital. There are no in-patient services, for both male and female patients. All patients requiring admission are being transferred to the SSRN Hospital by ambulance.

As part of a global exercise to make optimal and judicious use of available resources in the health sector, my Ministry has conducted a study on the cost-effectiveness of Long Mountain District Hospital. The report is currently being examined and no decision has been taken yet regarding its future. My Ministry will definitely take into account the interest of the population of that region as well as the cost-effectiveness of the service when taking a decision on that matter.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether we have a repeat of the Mahebourg Hospital?

Mr A. Jugnauth: The answer is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. David: The answer is not clear. I would like to have a clear answer, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr A. Jugnauth: A decision has not yet been taken, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MANIKAM, MR RAMAKRISHNA - DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - DRUG PRESCRIPTION

(No. B/269) Dr. J.B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state what steps he has taken following the statement of the 69-year old patient, Mr Ramakrishna Manikam at the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital Police Station in April 2002 to the effect that he was given drugs different from the ones prescribed by the doctor.

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that an investigation has been carried out at the level of Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital into the allegation made by Mr Ramakrishna Manikam to the effect that he was given drugs different from the ones prescribed by the doctor.

According to a report received from the Regional Health Director of Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, Mr Manikam was seen at Volcy Pougnet Community Health Centre for epigastric and abdominal pain in the afternoon of 01 April 2002. He was prescribed four different drugs. At the request of the patient, the doctor on duty prescribed Actal tablets for him as the patient claimed that that the MMT tablets had no effect on him. He subsequently called at the Pharmacy of Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital and enquired from the dispenser on duty about the availability of that drug without presenting the prescription form. On being told that the medication was not available, he angrily walked away.

The pharmacist and the dispenser concerned at the pharmacy of Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital have confirmed that no drugs were dispensed to Mr R. Manikam on 01 April 2002, or any other day in April. Therefore, the question of issuing the wrong drugs does not arise.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wouldn't like to use the word 'misleading', but may I request the hon. Minister to go deeper in his enquiry and find out whether a drug against hypertension and heart problem was not given to this patient instead of Actal tablet?

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was clear about the answer. The enquiry can be conducted only when people who are called come forward. In this case, at the request of the Director of the hospital, Mr Manikam didn't even come forward. He has given a statement to the Police in which he has alleged that he was given the wrong medicines, but he didn't even produce those medicines as exhibits.

Secondly, he said it was a lady, but that he cannot identify who she was. Thirdly, he gave such a declaration as a measure of precaution. When he was called to come and substantiate his complaint, he didn't turn up. Now, the evidence received are only from the dispenser and the doctor. I think the logical conclusion that they reached was that the complaint was unwarranted.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, for example, in the case of Pavaday, we have had two versions. Could the Minister go deeper in his inquiry and find out whether really that man was not given drugs against hypertension and heart problem while he was suffering from digestive or abdominal difficulties?

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot go deeper than this

Bon Accueil Village Council - list of projects - financial year 2001/2002

(No. B/270) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues whether he will state if the Bon Accueil Village Council has provided his Ministry with a list of projects that could be carried out on a priority basis for the welfare of the inhabitants of Bon Accueil village to improve their quality of life and, if so, what action he has undertaken thereon and the progress achieved on each project.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that no formal list of projects was submitted for Bon Accueil Village Council Area for financial year 2001/2002.

However, a number of projects amounting to approximately R 1 million have been awarded by the National Development Unit during financial year 2001/2002 in that Village Council Area.

The following works have been completed -

- (a) construction and tarring of Jadoonandan Lane;
- (b) supply of 18 sodium vapour lamps, and
- (c) construction of handrails Latapie, Parboteeah Lane and Grand Bas Fond.

As regards ongoing projects, land is being identified for the construction of a children's garden near Bon Accueil Football Ground and a survey is being carried out by the Central Water Authority for the laying of water pipes at Grand Bas Fond.

Mr Dulloo: I have a correspondence between the Village Council and the Ministry and even the PPS. A list has been forwarded, but I am asked specifically to request the Minister to look into two distinct projects - the extension of the village hall itself, to put a storey for the library and the computer room and a kiosk in the yard. Apparently, tenders have been issued and already awarded, but the project is not going ahead at all. Secondly, there is the open market fair, multi-complex. So, these are two urgent projects. Apparently, everything has been done, but the projects are not being implemented.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said, we have not received any formal list of projects from the Bon Accueil Village Council. I have taken note of the projects mentioned by the hon. Member. As far as priorities are concerned for projects in different areas, it is for the PPS together with the inhabitants of the area to define the priorities.

Mr Dulloo: Sir, is the hon. Minister asking me to put the question to the PPS of the region?

BON ACCUEIL GOVT. SCHOOL - COMPUTER ROOM AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

(No. B/271) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he has received representations from the inhabitants of Bon Accueil for the urgent implementation of their project for the extension of the Bon Accueil Government School, especially to solve the problem of scarcity of rooms and to provide for a proper computer room and space for the carrying out of extra-curricular activities.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. Sir, my Ministry received a letter from the chairman of the Bon Accueil Village Council around a month ago stressing the need for an extension to Bon Accueil Government School.

Since May 1999, the Ministry of Education had requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to construct four additional classrooms at the school. Tenders were floated in March 2000, but I am informed that the tender exercise was then abandoned owing to lack of funds. The project was revived at the beginning of the current financial year. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is attending anew to the project and DWC has been requested to submit a quotation for the construction works.

Negotiations were held between the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and DWC, and I am informed that the quotation has now been finalised. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure proposes to award the contract to DWC by mid May this year and the contract period will be of 5 months duration. Works will begin at the end of this month and will be completed at the end of October 2002.

These works will consist of the construction of a two-storey block with two classrooms on each floor, that is, a total of 4 classrooms, a staircase, a covered verandah as well as other ancillary infrastructural amenities.

The four classrooms to be built will include one classroom for Standard I and one for Standard VI as well as a staff room and a computer room.

L'ESCALIER TO LA SOURDINE - ROAD NETWORK

(No. B/272) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in view of the fact that the road leading from the village hall in L'Escalier to La Sourdine is very narrow and dangerous for pedestrians, he will state if his Ministry is planning in the near future to have drains and pavements put up along the said road.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the road from L'Escalier Village Hall to La Sourdine (about 1 km) is part of La Barraque Road. This section is narrow, but is highly residential.

The construction of footpaths and drains will necessitate land acquisitions at certain places before implementation can be considered.

The estimated cost for providing footpaths and drains on both sides of the road is about R 9 m and will also involve the displacement of private boundary walls and services such as CEB and Telecom poles.

The Road Development Authority will include this project in its programme of works for the next financial year.

MOTOR VEHICLES (NEW) - IMPORTATION - YEARS 1999, 2000 & 2001

(No. B/273) Mr X. L. Duval (Fourth Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Industry and International Trade whether, in regard to the importation of new motor vehicles into Mauritius, he will state -

(a) the amount of foreign exchange involved for the calendar years 1999, 2000 and 2001;

(b) the mark-up applied on the sale of new vehicles and related spare parts, and

(c) if he will set up an inquiry to determine whether the sale of new motor vehicles and spare parts should be subjected to a maximum mark-up.

The Minister of Commerce and Co-operatives (Mr P. Koonjoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to the question -

The answer is as follows -

(a) the information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as it is available;

(b) the importation of new motor vehicles and related spare parts are not controlled under the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 1999 and as such do not carry any mark-up. As the liberalisation of trade is a worldwide trend, the Maximum Mark-Up System is maintained only on essential commodities;

(c) it is not intended to provide a Maximum Mark-Up System for sale of new motor vehicles and spare parts as the current liberalisation of import offers a wide choice to consumers for products sourced from both European Union, Japan and South East Asian countries. Even for brand new cars, consumers may choose from nearly a dozen different makes. Moreover, the importation of second hand cars provides consumers with additional choice.

EBÉNE HOTEL SCHOOL - TRAINING FACILITIES

(No. B/274) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Training, Skills Development and Productivity whether he intends to liaise with the Hotel School to ensure that the youngsters of the south get the specific and appropriate training in view of the fact that new hotels are being built in the south.

Mr Fowdar: Sir, we are currently faced with a great demand for training in the hotel sector.

With this in view, the Government has taken the commitment to expand the Hotel School of Mauritius in Ebene at a cost of R 63 m so as to increase the annual intake of the trainees from 850 to 1400.

In an attempt to provide greater access to training in this sector, the IVTB Hotel School has decentralised training facilities in collaboration with certain hotels in the different regions whereby IVTB training programmes are being conducted in the different regions by using existing hotel facilities. At present, working arrangements exist with 3 hotels, namely La Croix du Sud for trainees in the south, La Plantation for trainees in the north and Le Sofitel for trainees in the west.

Moreover, the Appavou Group which will be launching the opening of its hotel at Le Morne in October this year, is planning to recruit around 700 people. It has been decided that the Hotel School of Mauritius would provide training to the prospective employees as from June 2002. Here, it will be an opportunity for people in the south and south west region to join the Hotel School.

sugar beach resort - ramphul, miss reena - dismissal

(No. B/275) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether he has been made aware of the reasons as to why Miss Reena Ramphul had been sacked by the Sugar Beach Resort.

(Vide reply to P.Q. No. B/254)

NATReSA - NAIK, MR V. - DISMISSAL

(No. B/276) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the NATReSA information as to whether Mr Vedant Naik, its Director, has been sacked and, if so, will he ascertain the reasons therefor.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Mr A. Ganoo): Sir, I am informed by Natresa that at a Special Board Meeting held on Friday 19 April 2002, the Board unanimously decided to terminate the services of Mr Vedant Naik, Executive Director, with immediate effect, by paying to him the equivalent of one month's salary, as provided for in his contract of employment.

I am further informed that the decision of the Board was motivated by the following -

(i) Mr Naik was appointed Executive Director on 01 October 2001. However, soon after his appointment, he started making unwarranted remarks on the incompetency of the Board Members.

(ii) When the Board asked explanations from him, he refused to answer, stating that he would not give any explanation whatsoever.

(iii) He even wanted to be consulted on the composition of the Board, which is contrary to ethics, as the Board is his employer.

(iv) On 26 February 2002, Mr Naik made some severe criticisms against the Mauritius Institute of Health, a collaborating agency of NATReSA, treating the organisation to be a money making institution. The Mauritius Institute of Health has collaborated with NATReSA to carry out the first ever KABP survey among our youth to enable the Board of NATReSA, as policy-maker to be aware of the degree of knowledge, the attitudes, the beliefs and the practice of our youth on the use and misuse of drugs among our youth. When asked to give explanations about his negative attitude towards the Mauritius Institute of Health, the Executive Director started denying the facts and he refused to abide by the decision of the Board to present his apologies to the Mauritius Institute of Health.

(v) His lack of communication skills has resulted in tense relationship with NGOs running prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes. The atmosphere of trust and mutual respect established between those NGOs and NATReSA since the new Board took over in December 2000 has been replaced by a climate of distrust.

(vi) On several occasions, the Board requested the Executive Director to improve his attitude towards the Board members as well as the various partners or NATReSA. However, the Executive Director failed to do so. On one occasion, he even went to the extent of adopting a threatening attitude towards the Board members.

Taking the above into consideration and in the interest of NATReSA and all those involved in the fight against substance abuse, the Board of NATReSA had no alternative, Sir, but to terminate the services of the Executive Director.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister be able to tell the House which body was responsible for the recruitment exercise?

Mr Ganoo: From the information I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Board of NATReSA allocated the assignment for the selection exercise for the post of Executive Director to de Chazal du Mée in a spirit of transparency. Forty-nine candidates applied. There was finally a shortlist of four candidates made by de Chazal du Mée and, of course, Mr Naik was among the four shortlisted candidates.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Naik was one of the candidates shortlisted. How was the interview conducted? Was he asked to come to Mauritius or was it conducted by video conference?

Mr Ganoo: I do not have the exact information with me, Mr Speaker, Sir. If the hon. Member puts a substantive question, I am sure the hon. Minister will give him the reply.

Mr Speaker: Dr. Boolell, your question refers to the sacking of the Director not to recruitment?

Dr. Boolell: He was recruited supposedly on the basis of his merits and then overnight he was sacked! We want to know why?

Mr Ganoo: It was not overnight.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo: He took up employment on the 01 October 2001, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it was on 19 April 2002 that the Board unanimously took the decision.

SEBASTOPOL/BELLE RIVE, CLAVET VILLAGE - ROAD SAFETY

(No. B/277) Mr R. Daureewoo (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in view of the absence of pavement at Clavet village and of the narrowness of the 2-way traffic road from Sebastopol to Belle Rive, he will consider the advisability of expanding and increasing the width of the aforesaid road for the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, the road from Sebastopol to Belle Rive through the village of Clavet is not a classified road and is presently under the responsibility of the Moka/Flacq District Council. The road Development Authority does not have any plan to widen the road for the time being.

The road is more than 3 km long and less than 6m wide. It is not provided with footpath or shoulders and has a sinuous alignment. Its improvement is a major project which can only be carried out following a detailed engineering survey and design. It will necessitate substantial land acquisition and financial investment.

CAMP DE MASQUE PAVE - FOOTBALL GROUND - GRASS MOWING

(No. B/278) Mr R. Daureewoo (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues whether, having regard to the frequent requests of the football clubs of Camp de Masque Pavé, he will consider the advisability of requesting the relevant authorities to mow the grass on the football ground of the aforesaid village and indicate what measures his Ministry proposes to take to ensure that football grounds of the villages within the jurisdiction of the Moka-Flacq District Council are mown at regular intervals.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that it is the responsibility of the Council to undertake the mowing of all football grounds in the various villages under its jurisdiction.

I am also informed that the lawn mower of the Council which is an old one has undergone a major breakdown, resulting in the disruption of the overall programme of mowing of the football ground, including that of Camp de Masque Pavé. However, pending the acquisition of a new tractor with bush hog by the Council in replacement of the existing one, arrangements are being made with private contractors for execution of these works.

I have been assured by the Council that the situation will return to normal in the coming weeks and the football ground of Camp de Masque will be mowed this week.

CARS (STOLEN) - IMPORTATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA - HORSEPOWER DOCUMENTS

(No. B/279) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether, in regard to the importation of stolen cars from South Africa, he will ascertain from the Deputy Comptroller of Customs whether the horsepower documents of those cars were original ones and whether any other documents have been falsified in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, with your permission I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/279 and B/280 together.

In my reply to Parliamentary Question B/16, I informed the House that, after investigation, the Revenue Authority found that 21 vehicles reported stolen in South Africa had been imported into Mauritius without being detected by the authorities.

In the course of its investigation, the Revenue Authority received documents from the car manufacturers in South Africa. The documents showed that the dates of first registration appearing on the Certificates of Registration (commonly referred to as horsepower) submitted to Customs in respect of 12 of these vehicles were not correct. This is an indication that those Certificates of Registration were not original ones.

As regards other documents submitted, it was found that, in respect of 17 of those vehicles cleared from Customs, the Chassis Number and the Engine Number appearing on the respective Bills of Lading do not tally with those mentioned on the ship's manifests.

As the House is already aware the report of the Revenue Authority has been sent to the Police for inquiry and appropriate action.

As regards the officers involved in the case, Mr Speaker, I am informed that 3 Customs officers have been arrested and bailed out during the month of April 2002. They have subsequently been interdicted on 23 April 2002.

The information sought for in part (a) of Parliamentary Question B/280 is being circulated. **(Appendix 1)** I am informed that the schedule of duties of the officers concerned were not drawn up by Mr Gooly, but were issued by the Customs administration in December 2000.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that a provisional charge of "conspiracy" to import stolen cars has been preferred against the 3 officers.

Dr. Chady: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning PQ No. B/280, I would like to know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether it is true that there were three officers namely Messrs. Malliard, Gokool and Seebah who have been interdicted and arrested and that their supervisor, Mr Dookia, was not treated in the same manner.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, there are the Customs authorities, the Comptroller of Customs and the Police who are inquiring into the case. The DPP is consulted. I am not the one to decide who is to be arrested and interdicted. It is done by the authorities concerned.

Dr. Chady: Mr Speaker, Mr Dookia is the Principal Customs Officer and his assistant is Mr Malliard. The work that is carried out by Mr Malliard is usually verified by Mr Dookia. It is for that reason that I am asking whether the inquiry has been carried out by the same investigator. I do not want to blame or to condemn anybody. But I would ask the Ag. Prime Minister to find out whether the same inquiry has been carried out as far as Mr Dookia is concerned.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, it is very sad that hon. Members should mention names like that. I have refrained from mentioning the names of the officers who have been interdicted, who have been arrested and bailed out. I have refrained from mentioning their names, because they are entitled to be considered innocent until they are proved guilty. But, at the same time, we have been ruthless. I have asked the Commissioner of Police and the Comptroller of Customs to apply the law and be ruthless. And that is what they are doing. They are doing their duty!

Dr. Chady: Of course, it has been very difficult for me to mention names because of the status of those officers. I would like to know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether it is true that Inspector Ruhomah inquired into the cases of Messrs. Malliard, Gokool and Seebah and that Inspector Jootun inquired into the case of Mr Dookia.

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is shameful. I find that really shameful to have officers' names mentioned in that way, clearly allegations made. This is a shameful Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir! All I shall add is - everybody respects the Commissioner of Police - I have asked him and his officers to be ruthless and they are doing that. The Revenue Authority on its side has been asked to be ruthless and it is doing its job, independently, professionally; and I have requested the Comptroller of Customs to be ruthless also. The DPP is advising. All this is taking place. We are doing our job. And, here, names are just thrown left, right and centre, the way this irresponsible Opposition is now used to do, Mr Speaker!

Dr. Chady: The Ag. Prime Minister has referred to the Commissioner of Police. I have a pertinent question and I hope, Mr Speaker, you will not prevent me from asking it. Has the Deputy Comptroller of Customs been questioned? From what I gather, he has not even been questioned.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Shame! I am not replying to that.

Dr. Chady: This is obvious! I am going to ask another question. The perception is that there are certain officers who are being spared. This is what my question is all about. *Il y a définitivement une perception ...*

The Ag. Prime Minister: Shame! *Bandit!*

Dr. Chady: The Ag. Prime Minister can say whatever he wants. No, he is the bandit, not me!

I will reframe my question. I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister if he would find out if in certain cases, cars which have not been stolen, have been seized. The CID and Police officers have landed in houses of people and have seized their cars. I would not like here

to mention names or to table any paper. But I think he should, at least, find out whether this is the case.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not hold a brief for anybody the way clearly the hon. Member is doing! The Police is doing its work, the Comptroller of Customs is doing his work and the Revenue Authority is doing its work. If the hon. Member has any information, he should come forward and go to the Police, to the Revenue Authority and give the information instead of coming here and mentioning names and holding brief for others, Mr Speaker.

Dr. Chady: I am not putting the question in thin air. There are cases which are already in court where people are protesting about the way their car has been seized and, in fact, I am putting the question as per the information.

Mr Duval: On a point of order, Sir. I would like to know whether it is proper for the Deputy Prime Minister to impute motives to the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member remind me which words he is referring to?

Mr Duval: I understand that the Ag. Prime Minister mentioned that the hon. Member is holding a brief, is working for someone or has an improper motive.

Mr Speaker: I think it is not proper to accuse a Member of holding a brief. I think the Ag. Prime Minister has to withdraw it?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, I withdraw it. The Member says that the cars of some people have been seized when they should not be seized. That is all I meant. If that is the case, it should be reported. I am in presence of no such case and no names are being given. That is what I meant. The hon. Member should not put himself in the place supposedly of somebody who has a car which has been seized. He should come forward with information.

Mr Speaker: From the reply of the Ag. Prime Minister, I understand that the inquiry is still going on. Now the hon. Member is putting questions about the inquiry. I think it is not proper. How can the Ag. Prime Minister reply to those facts and details which are not within his cognizance?

CARS (STOLEN) – IMPORTATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA – CUSTOMS OFFICERS - ARREST

(No. B/280) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether, in regard to the importation of stolen cars from South Africa, he will ascertain if officers have been arrested and released on bail and, if so, will he –

(a) state their respective ranks and schedules of duty as drawn up by the Assistant Comptroller of Customs, Mr K. Gully and

(b) state the charges, if any, preferred against them.

(Vide reply to P.Q. No. B/279)

GRAND GAUBE II FISH LANDING STATION – FISHERS - OPERATION

(No. B/281) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to fish landing station No. 2 at Grand Gaube, he will state –

(a) the number of fishermen registered to operate thereat;

(b) the number of boats registered to operate thereat; and

(c) whether the said fish landing station is being closed down and, if so, the reasons therefor and the arrangements being made for the fishermen and boat owners to continue their activities.

Mr Michel: Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the number of registered artisanal fishers for Grand Gaube II Fish Landing Station is 56, out of which 13 fishers operate regularly from this station whilst 43

operate from the coast in front of Cité EDC.

As regards part (b), there are 26 fishing boats attached to Grand Gaube II Fish Landing Station.

In regard to part (c), Grand Gaube II Fish Landing Station is a prescribed fish landing station and is currently operational. However, there is a request from a developer (Le Grand Gaube Hotel) to have the said Fish Landing Station displaced. In consultation with various stakeholders, a new coastal site has been identified near Cité EDC, Grand Gaube. The Ministry of Housing and Lands has been requested to vest a plot of State land with my Ministry for relocation of the Fish Landing Station.

The developer has made an *ex gratia* payment to most of the fishers. It has also agreed to bear the costs for the construction of a fish shed together with all other amenities on the new site. In this exercise only artisanal registered fishers are concerned and boat owners other than artisanal registered fishers are excluded.

Mr Dulloo: From the answer of the Ag. Prime Minister, it seems there are about 56 fishermen. May I ask him whether he has checked well? Because all those fishermen are registered at Grand Gaube II Fish Landing Station and they regularly do their activities there. Why is it that only 13 fishermen have been awarded a compensation of R 100,000 whereas the others are being given different treatments?

Mr Michel: Sir, when I assumed office, I understand that this question had been taken up by the former Minister of Fisheries, hon. Obeegadoo, and then by the former Minister Beeharry. At that time, I understood all fishermen who were registered had been asked to vacate because of development on this coastal area. Sixteen fishermen did not vacate while the others did. An agreement was reached between the developer and the fishermen. The Ministry, in fact, has nothing to do with the payment. It was the developer who made the payment.

Mr Dulloo: It seems that the Minister is being misinformed. There are fishermen who have been plying there for over 25 years and they are being given a different treatment. May I ask the hon. Minister to inquire into the matter and check the list of those fishermen again from his officers.

Mr Michel: I can give the hon. Member a list of all the fishermen and he will show me the names of the fishermen who have not been paid.

Mr Dulloo: I thank the hon. Minister. I will certainly like to have the list. I would like to ask the hon. Minister another question. The fishermen will be displaced to another site, but this site is ideal because of the number of passes whereas the other site is very dangerous. I would ask the hon. Minister to reconsider the whole thing again.

Mr Michel: Forty-three fishermen have been operating near the Cité EDC for years and I do not think there is any danger there.

Mr Dulloo: The hon. Minister is being misinformed, but I will come at Adjournment Time on all these issues, Sir.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

The Ag. Prime Minister: 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.

Mr Cuttaree rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

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REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

Ministry of Housing and Lands

Office of the Vice-Prime Minister

Communiqué – Désamiantage des maisons EDC/Ex-CHA

Le Vice-Premier Ministre et Ministre du Logement et des Terres, Showkutally Soodhun a eu une réunion avec le Ministre des Finances, Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, en présence du Secrétaire Financier, ce matin.

L'objectif de la réunion était de venir de l'avant avec des solutions pour des familles qui résident dans des maisons EDC/Ex-CHA, contaminées à l'amiante. Le Vice-Premier Ministre, Showkutally Soodhun a expliqué que 2137 maisons EDC/Ex-CHA, à travers 59 endroits du pays contiennent de l'amiante. Construites dans les années 60, ces maisons se trouvent principalement dans des cités ouvrières.

L'amiante étant un matériau toxique, le Ministre du Logement a plaidé pour un plan de désamiantage. Le Ministre des Finances a agréé à cette demande et il déboursa le budget nécessaire pour enlever de l'amiante dans ces maisons EDC/Ex-CHA.

Pour la bonne marche de ce grand projet d'envergure, un comité national a été mis sur pied. Une première réunion sous la présidence du Vice-Premier Ministre, Showkutally Soodhun aura lieu la semaine prochaine. Les Ministères de la Santé, de l'Environnement, des Finances, des Infrastructures Publiques, ainsi que des ONGs et d'autres associations participeront à cette réunion.

Ministère du Logement et des Terres

22 Juillet 2015

-----Original Message-----

From: R. Lallah

Sent: Monday, October 01, 2018 12:41 PM

To: rnursing@govmu.org

Subject: Request for copy of Addison Report

153, Main Rd

G.R.N.W.

To the Senior Chief Executive

Ministry of Health

Emmanuel Anquetil Building

Port Louis

27 September, 2018

Dear Mr. Nursing,

I would be grateful if I could obtain a copy of the “Report on the Assessment of the Health Dimension of Asbestos in Mauritius” that was released to the public by a Cabinet Decision of 19th April 2002. (See below the extract of the said Cabinet Decision). I have already contacted the Occupational Health Unit and they do have a copy. I have tried the National Archives, but they were not given a copy (even though the law requires that a copy be given to them) and are thus unable to assist me.

I, as a LALIT member, am active in grassroot joint LALIT- asbestos house inhabitant committees in some 50 EDC sites in the country and am requesting this document for use by the committees so that we can disseminate official information about asbestos so that inhabitants are aware of the dangers, precautions and recommendations made in the said report.

I will of course, bear the costs for photocopying the document. I can be contacted on 52534378.

I sent a signed copy of this letter by registered post on Thursday 27th September and am sending you this letter for easy reference.

Thanking you in advance,

Kind Regards

Rajni Lallah

Prime Minister's Office

Cabinet Decisions – 19 April 2002

1. Cabinet has agreed to:-

(a) the release of the Report on the Assessment of the Health Dimension of Asbestos in Mauritius by Mr John Addison, Consultant of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation;

From: Public Health MOH
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2018 11:48 AM
To: R. Lallah
Subject: Re: Cabinet Decision on Asbestos Report

Madam

Re: your email below.

Your request is being processed.

we shall revert to you in due course.

Regards

R.Nursing

From: R. Lallah <raj8@intnet.mu>
Sent: 04 October 2018 09:27
To: Public Health MOH
Subject: Fw: Cabinet Decision on Asbestos Report

From: R. Lallah
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2018 1:47 PM
To: rnursing@govmu.org
Subject: Cabinet Decision on Asbestos Report

To the Deputy Permanent Secretary
Mr Nursing
Ministry of Health
Emmanuel Anquetil Building
Port Louis

3rd October, 2018

Dear Mr Nursing,

This morning in our brief exchange, you informed me that there seems to be some problem with the referencing of the Cabinet Decision taken on 19th April, 2002 for the release of the "Report on the Assessment of the Health Dimension of Asbestos in Mauritius" which you inferred was the reason why the Ministry has not acceded to my request yet. This cabinet decision is on the Prime Minister's Office – Cabinet office website. It is only a click away. Here is the internet address in case you might have missed it: <http://pmo.govmu.org/English/cabinetoffice/Pages/default.aspx>

There is a National Action Plan on Asbestos available on the Ministry of Health's website, but it is not the said Report. I will contact you tomorrow to know whether it will be made available or not as members of all asbestos housing estates will be gathering in Port Louis on Friday morning and will wish to know the contents of the said Report or if it is not being made available, why it is not being made available despite a Cabinet Decision to this effect.

Hoping to hear from you tomorrow morning,

Rajni Lallah
for the Komite Konzwin LALIT-Abitan lakaz lamyant