

PRIMARY

INFRASTRUCTURE

YEAR 2022

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ABDOOL RAMAN ABDOOL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS – COMPLETION DATE

(26/04/2022)

(No. B/459) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the infrastructural works being carried out at the Abdool Raman Abdool Government School, she will state where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated in my reply to a Parliamentary Question B/366 on the Abdool Raman Abdool Government School, the infrastructural works thereof consisted of two phases.

Phase one of the project has been completed. Phase two of the project consisting of the demolition of the remaining old buildings and construction of classrooms and administration blocks as well as the setting up of play fields is still to be pursued.

I am informed that for this phase, two bidding exercises had been carried out at the level of the Central Procurement Board. No bids were received for the first line. Following the second bidding exercise, the CPB submitted its recommendations to my Ministry in October 2020. The Ministry issued a notification of award to the bidders and initiated action for the award to the selected bidder, namely Super Construction Co. Ltd.

However, the latter submitted a request for an increase in the contract price stating that there is a rise in costs, freight costs and other direct charges. The request could not be acceded

to as it was not in line with the provisions of the billing document which does not provide for price adjustments at the time of awarding the contract.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development has been requested to review and prepare fresh bidding documents. I am informed that the bidding documents are being finalised.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very sad that up to now the works have not been started for the second phase of the project. The first phase was in 2017 and referring to the same PQ that the hon. Minister just referred to, that is PQ B/366, where she stated that works will start in December 2019 and completion date was scheduled for July 2021. May I ask the hon. Minister what was the contract amount when the contract was awarded and what amount is the contractor now requesting?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract amount was Rs55,268,888. I understand that he had asked for an increase, but the request could not be acceded to because it was not in line with the provisions of the bidding documents. So, that is why it was not acceded to. But, now that we have already asked the MNI to prepare the documents for the new bidding exercise, I am told that it is being finalised. I do agree with you that it has taken a long time and I am also very unhappy about this particular issue. But, as I have just stated, there were problems initially and I remember in the initial phase, the Contractor had passed away and we had to wait a long time to get someone to complete the work. So, I totally agree with you that we should have completed this work long time back. But, as I have just explained, there were certain issues that cropped up that have delayed the process.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister, what is the specific problem with this school, with these contracts? Because normally when there is a public tender, a public bid, you have several companies which bid for the contract. Why is it that in this case, you have only one company which had made a bid?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. There were a number of companies that had made bids. We have five companies. You want me to name them? There were five companies which bid for that and we have noted that we could not move onto the next because the validity period had lapsed.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Minister, can you please inform the House after the bid was launched on 25 April 2019 for the project, which was non-responsive, why did it take 14 months for a new bid to be launched?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will just give the dates, Mr Speaker, Sir. The bid was launched in 2019; there were no successful bidders for that. So, finally, it was relaunched in October 2020 and letters of notification were dated 10 November 2020. So, we had to go to the State Law Office, get information and advice on the way forward, and finally we were asked to relaunch the bids and MNI has been working on the bid documents. I cannot explain the long delay in the preparation of the papers, but I have been told that the papers are getting finalised and the bids will soon be launched.