

SECONDARY

ADMISSION

14.11.00 (1)

RODRIGUES - CPE CANDIDATES - ADMISSION IN COLLEGES

(No. B/258) Mr. J. Von-Mally (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state -

- (a) the number of students who have been successful at the CPE examinations who will be admitted in Form I in the different colleges in Rodrigues, and
- (b) the measures which have been taken or it is proposed to take to cater for the lack of places for admission in existing colleges due to the larger number of successful CPE candidates forecast for the CPE examinations of the present year as compared to that of previous years.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as the hon. gentleman is aware, the results of this year's CPE examinations are not as yet available. For 1999, the pass rate achieved on Rodrigues Island averaged 55% whereas the corresponding average for the past five years is 54%. The educational authorities in Rodrigues had set as objective a pass rate of 60% for this year. During my recent visit to Rodrigues, the motivation I noted amongst both the teaching staff and students leads me to believe that the target of 60% is indeed achievable in which case out of 1,045 school based CPE candidates some 630 (representing 60%) could seek admission to Form I next year.

However, while in Rodrigues, I was shocked to learn that only 420 places would be available for admission to Form I in the secondary schools next year. Through this blatant absence of adequate planning on the part of the previous Government, which smacks of sheer irresponsibility, we are faced with an appalling situation whereby there could be a shortfall of some 210 places. In other words, in the absence of any remedial action up to a third of the successful candidates could find themselves without a college seat. I wish to stress that even with the same pass rate as last year, that is, 55%, we would be left with a shortfall of some 180 places.

In the circumstances, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues, Urban and Rural Development my Ministry is urgently exploring all possibilities to resolve the problem.

These include -

- (i) the operation of four Form I sections of up to 40 students at the *Human* Resource Centre of Malabar as a provisional annex of Le Chou college.
- (ii) the increase of the number of students per classroom in all *secondary* schools, and
- (iii) the conversion of the State Secondary School Vocational presently *under* construction at Citrodonis into a standard secondary school upon its completion next year.

Further, whichever solution is adopted, the Rodrigues Educational Development Company will have to urgently recruit new staff and action to that effect is being initiated. In addition, considering present plans for 11-year schooling and the taking on board of so-called CPE "double failures", an additional secondary school is urgently required in Rodrigues and necessary steps, therefore, will be taken as a matter of urgency.

Mr Leopold: Is the hon. Minister aware that in 1998 it was reported in the local press in Rodrigues that a college was due to be built at Terre Rouge? Can we know what has happened to this project?

Mr Obcegadoo: Well, from the answer I have just given, I am not surprised that that would have been the case! A lot of talk and no action! As the hon. gentleman is aware, in January next year there will be four colleges operating in Rodrigues as opposed to three this year with the department of Grande Montagne now to operate as a full-fledged college and we will be trying our utmost to see to it that, as soon as possible, and hopefully by January 2002, we'll have a fifth secondary school in Rodrigues.

Mr Clair: M. le président, il y avait un projet de lancer un appel d'offres pour la construction d'un college dans les environs de Mont Lubin. Le ministre peut-il nous dire si vraiment il y a eu cet appel d'offres?

Deuxièmement, le centre de ressources humaines attend d'être opérationnel et il y a des équipements d'une valeur de plus d'un million de roupies qui sont en train de dormir depuis des mois. Est-ce qu'il ne serait pas mieux d'approcher le Premier ministre, sur un plan humanitaire, afin de considérer la possibilité de loger nos enfants à la caserne de la SMF et de rapatrier ces soldats pour permettre justement à ce centre de ressources

humaines d'être opérationnel? En fait, c'est un projet financé par l'Union Européenne. Ce qui est ennuyant, c'est qu'il y a des équipements non-utilisés - selon mes informations - qui sont là depuis des mois et des mois? Est-ce que cela ne va pas retarder justement la mise en opération du centre de ressources humaines qui est d'une grande nécessité?

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, pour ce qui est du lancement d'appel d'offres pour le nouveau collège prévu à Rodrigues, il n'y a aucun lancement d'appel d'offres actuellement effectué dans la mesure où nous voudrions réexaminer toute la situation en profondeur, d'autant plus qu'il n'est pas évident que tous les collèges secondaires du REDCO à Rodrigues doivent être concentrés dans le centre de l'île, alors qu'il y a une forte demande dans le nord de l'île, à laquelle le *Rodrigues college* n'est pas en mesure de répondre.

Pour ce qui est de la question d'avoir des classes opérationnelles dès janvier de l'année prochaine pour le nombre excédentaire de demandes, eu égard aux possibilités dans les quatre collèges existants, le représentant de Rodrigues, l'honorable Serge Clair, conviendra qu'il est beaucoup plus aisé d'aménager le centre de ressources humaines, qui existe déjà et qui ne fonctionne pas à Malabar, plutôt que d'aller envisager la conversion d'une caserne quelconque de la SMF. Donc, pour l'immédiat, nous étudions toutes les possibilités, mais il semble évident que la solution la plus simple serait d'utiliser les infrastructures déjà disponibles à Malabar.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ADMISSION IN 2003

(No. B/782) **Mr S. Sakaram** (Second Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, having regard to the decision taken by Government to abolish ranking and to grant access to secondary schools on a regional basis, he will state what action is being taken to ensure that each and every secondary school will be properly staffed by qualified Education Officers.

Mr Obeegadoo : Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/782 and B/787, which relate to the same issue, together.

mr/d29p18.04

(No. B/782 ctd....)

As previously announced, after this year, the system of ranking at the CPE examination will be abolished and will be replaced by a grading system. Further, as from January 2003, admission to form I will be made on a regional basis. In this respect, my Ministry has embarked on an ambitious infrastructural development project for the extension/upgrading/conversion and construction of secondary schools and form VI colleges. It stands to reason that the coming into operation of new schools and the expansion of others together with the development of a separate stream for CPE double failures will require the recruitment of additional teachers at secondary level.

I wish to inform the House that for the resumption of studies in January 2002, 178 additional Education Officers are being recruited. A committee at the level of my Ministry is concurrently looking into the detailed staffing requirements for 2003 and will finalise its recommendations as soon as the Secondary Education Curriculum Renewal Project and the Pedagogical Project for form VI colleges are finalised. Further, consideration is also being given to evolving a new flexible and cost effective system of Human Resource Management within the secondary sector.

Dr. David : Mr Speaker, just as an additional information, does that mean that in January 2003, there will be no form I intake at the MGI, Royal Colleges and QEC?

Mr Obeegadoo : These points have been fully canvassed in the past.

Dr. David : Do I get an affirmative or a negative answer ?

Mr Obeegadoo : The project as it was presented is maintained.

Mr Dulloo : There is no project so far. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, after year 2002, there will be admission in form I in the so-called confessional schools, if so, which schools ? He said the project is already before the House, we are not aware of this.

m/d/29p14.05

(No. B/782 ctd....)

Mr Obeegadoo : Mr Speaker, let me make it clear. We had presented a document outlining proposals for structural reforms in the secondary sector. Now that document lists the State institutions which, as from 2003, will gradually evolve into form VI colleges. So, what has been stated previously stands. As regards the confessional schools, we are finalising the practical arrangements which will tell us which of these schools will become form VI colleges and which will not.

11 Dec. 2001

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**SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ADMISSION -
REGIONALISATION**

(No. B/905) Mrs D. Perrier (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether in view of the future regionalisation which will occur in 2003 in the secondary education sector, he will state whether he would be agreeable to bring back to their respective catchment areas the pupils who have passed the CPE examination this year 2001 and who have been allocated a school far from their residence, according to their rank.

Mr Obeetadoo: Sir, one of the most abhorrent features of the present system of admission to secondary schools is the fact that at least for the best CPE performers, i.e the so-called ranked candidates, the identity of the secondary schools to which they are admitted is determined by one criterion and one criterion only: ranking. As a result, in total disregard of the student's state of health, of the transport network or of basic security issues, a young child of 12 may be compelled to cross the island to attend school. Apart from the physical stress it entails, such a system can prove financially very costly to the parents. Unfortunately, this year again, such a system has founded the admission exercise.

However, as from next year, following the historic decision of Government, ranking is being supplanted by grading within a new scheme of regionalisation of secondary admissions. Accordingly, all Form I seats in the State-owned secondary schools and half of the Form I seats, subject to demand, in private secondary schools, will be allocated on a regional basis. Parents will be free to select a secondary school for their child within the educational region where they reside. For recall, the regions are -

- (i) Port Louis/North;
 - (ii) Beau Bassin /Rose Hill and the East;
 - (iii) Curepipe/South;
 - (iv) Quatre Bornes, Vacoas/Phoenix and the West; and
 - (v) Rodrigues
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This is the system, which will be in place; when I mean next year, I am referring, of course, to 2003. If I correctly understand the question put by the hon. Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, the point is that once each one of the 35 new secondary schools are built around the country, it will have classrooms to accommodate not only Form I students. Thus, why should a Form III student of Riviere des Anguilles have to continue travelling to Chemin Grenier or Curepipe to attend the nearest State secondary school whereas a new State secondary school will have been built at St. Aubin or why should a Form II boy of Baie du Cap continue travelling to Quatre Bornes whereas there will be a new school at La Goulette. The question is a very pertinent one to say the least.

However, any decision to make new secondary schools immediately operational at all levels from Forms I to V will entail major implications in terms of staffing and provision of equipment by the State while having a definite incidence on private secondary schools. Therefore, any such major policy decision will have to be thought through in detail and discussed with our partners of the private sector.

Let me assure the hon. lady that the matter will receive our full attention with the wellbeing of the Mauritian child remaining our paramount consideration.

Mr Dulloo: Sir, listening to the hon. Minister, it seems that the only criteria for allocation of seats in secondary schools would be on the basis of regionalisation, i.e. the catchment or regional areas. Therefore, would grading of the students not to be taken into consideration at all for allocation of schools?

Mr Obeegadoo: What I said, and I repeat, ranking is being supplanted by grading within a new scheme of regionalisation of secondary schools. For instance, the parent of a child residing in Phoenix will have the choice of any State secondary school or private secondary school in the region of Quatre Bornes, Vacoas/Phoenix and the west. At least, for places in State secondary schools and up to half the places in private secondary schools. Now if a school is oversubscribed, that is, there is a demand in excess of the supply of seats, grading will determine which of the students will obtain admission. The point raised by the hon. lady was another point altogether, which is that once a new school is created, will it open its doors to Forms II, III and IV students who are already attending another school, but who may want to come to the new State secondary school because it is closer to their place of residence. I outlined the implications and said that we are going to study that closely.

(P.Q. No. B/905 ctd....)



Mr Dulloo: The hon. lady was right in asking this question because this is going to create a confusion. Everybody will aspire to be in their region. Somebody, living in Plaines Wilhems and going to a former star school, would like to join in because of the regional basis. Now, we have the ranking of the students and then there is grading of new students. When there is a rush everybody would like to go to a school, how would you determine, apart from regionalisation, the allocation of seats where there is a high demand for a particular college? Would you not have to go by the performance of the student gradingwise, therefore, a sort of disguised ranking? This is my question.

Mr Obeegadoo: This point has been canvassed many times in the past. Let us make the difference clear. Are we talking about form I admissions or are we talking, as did the hon. lady, of forms II, III, IV, V. For the upper classes - when we are not referring to form I but the other levels of secondary schooling - there is no policy decision as yet. The point raised is a very pertinent one which we shall study, in due course and any suggestions from the hon. Member as usual will be most welcome. As regards form I, we will say it again; as within a region, parents will express their choice freely. If and when a school is oversubscribed, grading will determine who will be admitted.

Mr Dulloo: There is a very high preoccupation in the minds of people whose children are already attending certain colleges right now. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will come very quickly with a public communiqué in order to guide parents and reassure them on this issue which has also been raised by the hon. lady?

Mr Obeegadoo: As usual, Mr Speaker, for any major policy decision in education, we will have a meeting open to all Members of Parliament.

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(P.Q. No. B/905 ctd....)

Once again, the hon. gentleman will be invited to attend that meeting. But it is certain that, as from January next year, we will be embarking upon a major communication exercise to explain clearly to the public how admissions will be carried out in 2003, being given that this is indeed a fundamental change.

Mrs Perrier: Le gouvernement aura à prendre des mesures pour accommoder les enfants, qui seront en forme I en 2003 dans le cadre de la régionalisation et qui passeront en forme II en 2004. Le ministre et son ministère pourraient essayer de prévoir dès 2003, des classes de forme II pour les enfants qui sont en forme I en 2002 et qui auront été envoyés de par leurs rangs dans une école loin de leur résidence comme spécifié dans ma question.

Mr Obeegadoo: The practicability of this suggestion will be considered, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Chumroo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether distance will be used as one criteria in the allocation of seats within the region?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, as we had explained clearly, ever since the reform proposals were made public. If exceptionally, you have, in a secondary school, the last two or three places to be allocated and there are ten students with exactly the same grades, then priority will be given to the students residing closer to the school, but these are very likely to be exceptional cases.

YEAR

2002

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - PUPIL VACANCIES (23/04/02)

(No. B/209) Dr. R. Beebejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will make a statement on pupil vacancies still awaiting to be filled in secondary schools.

The Minister of Economic Development, Financial Services & Corporate Affairs (Mr K. Khushiram): Mr Speaker, Sir, it is assumed that the hon. Member is referring to State secondary schools. Ever since the appointment of the substantive Minister as Minister of Education, a new procedure has been adopted, whereby at the beginning of each year, all vacancies in State secondary schools in Forms I to IV and in Lower VI are filled by an open and objective selection process, through public advertisement, based on CPE and SC results respectively, as the sole criteria.

Insofar as filling of vacancies in Form I is concerned, following the resumption of studies in January 2002, 402 vacancies, which existed in 32 State secondary schools, were advertised in the press on 11, 12 and 13 January 2002, and were filled according to the CPE ranking of the students. As a result of the filling of these vacancies, 77 consequential vacancies arose in 12 other SSS, and these were advertised on 29 March 2002. The exercise has been completed, and letters are being issued for admission at the beginning of the second term.

As regards vacancies in Forms II to IV, in order to obviate the subsequent exercises arising out of consequential vacancies, an open advertisement, irrespective of the number of existing vacancies, was issued on 05 and 06 February 2002, inviting applications from parents who wish to admit their wards in Forms II to IV in any SSS. The vacancies were, subsequently, filled by 11 March 2002 on the basis of CPE ranking.

Finally, regarding vacancies in Lower VI, again an open advertisement was issued on 02 March, and the exercise for the filling thereof has been completed on 12 April for admission as from the beginning of the 2nd term.

At this point in time, all remaining vacancies in State secondary schools in Forms I to IV and Lower VI have either been filled or in the process of being filled. In exceptional cases, where the demand is less than the offer of seats, a few places may remain unfilled. The said process will be completed this week.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, it confirms once again the impression that we have that such a *gouvernement à deux vitesses* is a *gouvernement* with no *vitesse* at all. Two weeks ago there was a scandal of primary school children who had to wait for one term and were not admitted. This time...

Mr Speaker: I am awaiting a question hon. Beebeejaun!

Dr. Beebeejaun: So, I'll ask the question: when was the CPE exam held last year and for what reason was it held at the time it was done?

Mr Khushiram: Sir, it does not have much to do with the filling of vacancies this year and the process by which these vacancies have been filled which I have assured the Member has been based on strict criteria.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I can understand the Minister is not aware of the dossier. Exams were held last year one month in advance of previous years so that vacancies could be filled early and now there are students who have missed one whole term. This is the point that I am trying to make. In Form I there are still vacancies at the beginning of the second term. I think this is scandalous. Can the Minister inform the House when did the results of SC come in?

Mr Khushiram: The Member is trying to make a point that the filling of vacancies has been taking an unduly long time. I assure the Member that it has been processed as expeditiously as possible, from the information I have been given, and in the beginning of the second term all vacancies will be filled and all students will resume studies in the filled vacancies at the beginning of the second term.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I think the Minister has made the point. There has been undue delay in filling the vacancies. Results of the SC exams came in during the first week of February. Why has it taken so long to be filled?

Mr Khushiram: If the Member would come back with a subsequent question specifically aimed at criticising the Minister for the undue time he has taken in filling these vacancies, I am sure the Minister will have a pleasure to reply.

12 Nov 02
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DR/D33/P12/4

RODRIGUES - STUDENTS - ADMISSION IN FORM I

(No. B/686) Mr G. Leopold (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether his Ministry is responsible for the admission of students in colleges in Form I in Rodrigues for the year 2003 and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the mode of admission;
- (b) the number and location of colleges which will be operational as from 01 January 2003; and
- (c) if any memorandum of understanding has been signed so far with any private/confessional college, and whether he will make a statement thereon.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes Sir, my Ministry will, with the collaboration of the Education Centre at Port Mathurin, be responsible for admission of students in Form I in secondary schools of Rodrigues in January 2003.

The procedures for admission will be as follows -

Immediately after CPE results, parents concerned will be called upon to collect and fill application forms indicating their preferences in respect of secondary schools in order of priority.

For next year, there will be at least four (4) secondary schools offering Form I, both mainstream and pre-vocational classes, namely Grande Montagne Secondary School, Le Chou Secondary School, Marechal Secondary School and Rodrigues College. In addition, we are expecting confirmation shortly as to whether or not the Phase I of construction of the two new secondary schools at Mont Lubin and Songe would be ready before second term 2003. If so, Form I places in these two schools will be advertised to parents and students admitted thereto temporarily accommodated at Le Chou Secondary School for the first term. If not, these two schools will only be advertised in 2004.

Application for admission to these schools will be processed on the basis of parental choice, CPE grade aggregate and exceptionally if and where necessary, residential proximity.

As regards part (c) of the question, discussions with the Catholic and Anglican churches in connection with a Memorandum of Understanding for Rodrigues are ongoing.

YEAR 2003

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - PROMOTION TO LOWER VI - CRITERIA (25/03/03)

(No. B/64) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to Lower VI classes in State secondary schools, he will state -

- (a) if students with 3 credits have been admitted to Lower VI classes in 2003, and
- (b) if students without a credit in a given subject at SC level have been authorised to offer that subject at principal level and, if so, will he state if the same principle applies to students in private secondary schools.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question I am going to state the existing criteria, in terms of number of credits, for promotion to Lower VI.

According to PSSA regulations and to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research practice, having regard to State secondary schools, the criteria for promotion to Lower VI in both private secondary schools and State secondary schools, in so far as the number of credits is concerned, are as follows -

- (a) The student should have passed the Cambridge School Certificate with at least four credits at one and the same sitting; or
- (b) The student should possess the Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE - Ordinary Level) in five subjects (including English Language) at one and the same sitting with at least Grade C, (that is, equivalent to the SC credit) in four subjects.

Moreover, under the PSSA Regulations, the Minister of Education has a discretionary power to allow a student with less than 4 credits to be promoted to Lower VI.

Such discretionary power may be exercised where a deserving student who has sat for School Certificate examinations once or twice, but has obtained only 3 credits and by virtue of his age will be over aged for eventual promotion to Lower VI should he repeat Form V.

The said discretionary power may also be exercised in the case of students who hold 4 credits, but cannot avail themselves of any Form VI subject combinations offered by their school for lack of a credit in one of the relevant subjects.

I have just been informed that two students holding only three credits have been promoted to Lower VI in State secondary schools. These have not been cleared with the Minister of Education and the matter is being investigated to establish the circumstances thereof and appropriate remedial action will be taken.

With regard to part (b) of the question, neither Cambridge nor any local regulations require a credit in the subject to be taken at 'A' level. Both the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the PSSA have been guided by the limited number of seats available at Lower VI level and have applied the criteria of a qualifying credit in any subject to be offered at Lower VI in the past. For English and Mathematics, the student must have a credit in either English or Literature in English and Mathematics or Additional Mathematics respectively.

In the State sector, for the 2003 admission exercise, there have been a few cases where students moving from a Form I-V secondary school to a Form VI college have found their preferred combination not being offered by the Form VI college to which they have been admitted. In such cases, the students, having their basic 4 credits, have been exceptionally allowed to offer a subject at Lower VI in which they do not hold a credit. I wish to stress that such students do hold the four qualifying credits for promotion to Lower VI.

In the private sector, schools are similarly free to allow a student to opt for an 'A' Level even if the student does not have a credit in the subject - but I understand that in order to ensure a high pass rate at HSC examinations, private secondary schools have almost invariably insisted on the four credits criteria. I am, in fact, informed, that in some private secondary schools only those who have five credits are allowed to go up to Lower VI.

The PSSA is aware of the above and will advise private Managers accordingly upon request.

Mr Chumroo: Would the hon. Minister consider cases of students with three credits, who will be over-aged for promotion to Lower VI be admitted to Lower VI so that they may not lose their chance to take part in Higher School Certificate examinations?

Mr Obeegadoo: I would suggest that any particular case, the hon. Member may know of, be referred to the Ministry or to myself. However, we should be very careful to guard against any perception that we should be lowering standards. That being said, the issue of the age bar is a different matter in itself and in this day and time where we talk of

lifelong, flexible, open learning, there may be a case in future to review this age bar qualification.

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LOWER VI - VACANCIES AND ADMISSION**

(No. B/216) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to admission in Lower VI classes for the present year, he will state -

- (a) the number of subject-combination vacancies which existed in Government secondary school, and
- (b) the number of vacancies which was filled up, indicating -
 - (i) the names of the schools accommodating those vacancies, and
 - (ii) the aggregate of those students who have filled up those vacancies.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, there has been a major change this year with regard to admission procedures in Lower VI. State secondary schools were divided into two distinct categories -

I - V schools and
Form VI colleges.

This year admissions to Lower VI were limited only to the following existing colleges and new colleges.

FORM VI COLLEGES

	Existing	New
1	Royal College, Port Louis	Piton State Secondary Schools
2	John Kennedy College	Port Louis Form VI College (Colline Monneron)
3	Sir Leckraz Teelock SSS	Bon Accueil State Secondary Schools
4	Royal College, Curepipe	Nouvelle France State Secondary Schools
5	Sir Abdool Raman Osman	Rivière des Anguilles
6	Sookdeo Bissondoyal SSS	
7	Mahatma Gandhi Institute	
8	Droopnath Ramphul SSS	
9	Queen Elizabeth College	
10	Dr Maurice Curé SSS	
11	Gaetan Raynal SSS	

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P.Q. No. B/216 (cont'd)

Secondly, all students from State secondary schools qualifying for Lower VI were guaranteed a seat in a State Form VI College.

The above arrangements allowed for a larger intake of Form I in those schools which stopped offering Lower VI and a larger intake in the Form VI colleges which did not have a Form I intake.

Thirdly, the subject combinations usually offered by the host college as well as the expected combination of students in schools which did not have a Lower VI intake were taken into consideration.

A first admission exercise was carried out by the MES and on the basis of (i) eligibility criteria (ii) preferred subject combination and (iii) choice of school and 1645 vacancies were filled. A second exercise was immediately carried out to address protest cases and 59 vacancies were then filled. A third exercise was carried out offering remaining vacancies to students of private secondary schools and 54 places were thus filled.

The specific information requested is now being compiled and will be laid in the Library as soon as possible,

Dr. Chady: I would like to ask the Minister whether a student with an aggregate of 33 has been allocated a seat at Queen Elizabeth College?

Mr Obeegadoo: I cannot reply offhand, but that is theoretically possible. Assuming there is a vacancy in a combination advertised and there is nobody with a better result, the student with an aggregate 33 who applies will obtain the place. As I explained, this was a very complex exercise. On the one hand, the Form VI colleges were made to continue offering the combinations they previously offered, but we try to rationalise. Some colleges had 50 or more combinations. There was need to rationalise and, at the same time, we had to take into consideration combinations which might

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P.Q. No. B/216 (cont'd)

not be offered at all so that everybody could obtain a place if that student was in a State secondary school and qualified for entry into Lower VI. I do not have the specific information, but I can assure the hon. Member that what is now being compiled is that, in the first column, there will be the name of the school, in the second column, the different combinations offered, and, in the third column, the best aggregate obtained by students gaining entry and the lowest aggregate, if I can use the term. There will be the range of aggregates held by students admitted, number of vacancies and number of vacancies filled. All the information will be provided.

Mr Dulloo: The hon. Minister is telling us things that we already know. We are asking specific questions. May I ask him whether he is aware that many students in the north of the island with very good results at the SC have not been able to find a seat in a Form VI college in their region because of the combinations they have been offered and are being sent to far distant places, in the south even?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, we have done our very best to address all requests that come to us. In fact, there have been protest cases that have been taken on board. There have also been vacancies remaining which have been advertised. I cannot exclude the possibility that, in a few isolated cases, there might have been hardship cases, that is quite inevitable in an exercise of such a dimension. If the hon. Member has any specific case, I would be quite happy to look into it and try to help out.

Mr Dulloo: I have drawn the attention of the hon. Minister. May I ask him specifically, therefore, whether he is aware that students with outstanding results in Sharma Jugdambi SSS where there was a laureate recently, have not been able to obtain a seat in Form VI colleges with combinations of Economics, Accounts and Business Studies? And they were being asked to attend schools in the south and some of them are not attending Form VI colleges by now. Will the Minister look into this matter urgently?

CA/D06/P06/1
(No. B/216) (contd)

Mr Obeegadoo: I will also ask the hon. gentleman to be specific and to submit a specific case, which will then be looked into and dealt fairly.

Dr. Chady: The Minister will agree with me *qu'il serait scandaleux* if a student, with 33 aggregates, has been admitted to QEC. Next week, we hope to get the name of that particular candidate as well as the combination.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, in response to an earlier question, I said that we need a paradigm shift; abolition of ranking requires a paradigm shift. There is now no school predestined to be a Form VI college: Combinations are advertised, and the best candidates are admitted as per the number of vacancies available. All students having completed Form V in a State secondary school were guaranteed admission to a State Form VI college if they held the basic requirements. That was a commitment which had been taken by Government, and which has been fully adhered to.

Mr Dulloo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there was a subject evaluation in particular areas before deciding on the combination to be offered in any particular Lower VI school? For example, at the Sharma Jugdambi SSS, there was the combination of Economics/Accounts/Business Studies. Those students have been following up to Form V, with outstanding results, and they don't have a Form VI college offering such combination. This is the difficulty. I would like to know whether there has been an evaluation and whether the Minister will look into it urgently, to accommodate those students.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a careful evaluation. Let me repeat that any case of which the hon. gentleman knows could be referred to me for personal attention.

16 March 2004

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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

A/4

The Honourable First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue (Mr Chumroo)

To ask the Honourable Minister of Education and Scientific Research:-

Whether he is aware that students with 3 credits in State Schools have already been admitted in Lower VI whilst students in private schools with 3 credits are still awaiting his approval for admission in Lower VI and, if so, will he make a statement on the issue?

DRAFT REPLY to PQ A/4

Sir,

As at present, all students of State secondary schools having secured at least four credits at the 2003 "O" level examination have been promoted to Lower VI except those who have opted for subjects that do not give any combination of subjects being offered.

2. As regards those who have passed the examinations with 3 credits only, none has been promoted to Lower VI up to now. In line with new policy established since last year by my Ministry, on humanitarian grounds, promotion to Lower VI is being considered on a case to case basis provided the students:

- (i) should have passed SC with at least a Grade 7 or 8 in English and 3 credits overall, obtained at one and the same sitting;
 - (ii) should not have reached the age of 19 on 01 January of year of admission to Lower VI;
 - (iii) should hold a credit in the subjects they propose to offer at Principal level except for Divinity, Hinduism, Islamic Studies and
-

Sociology which may be offered even if they have not been studied up to SC/GCE "O" level.

3. This new policy will allow students who have had already two attempts at the SC examinations and cannot repeat Form V once more and those who would be overaged to be admitted to Lower VI next year if they are made to repeat Form V, to get the opportunity of doing HSC. Otherwise these students would have to leave school.

4. However, with a view to keeping up standards, my Ministry proposes that this category of students being promoted be made fully aware that their future performance will be closely monitored and assessed and that they will be promoted to Upper VI only if they pass the Lower VI end-of-year examinations in at least 2 subjects at Principal level and 2 subjects at subsidiary level. My Ministry proposes to consider students who do not meet the full requirements for promotion to Upper VI but having attained a certain standard, on a case to case basis, for promotion to Upper VI, in particular those students who will not be able to repeat Lower VI by virtue of age. The same procedure will apply to students of private secondary schools whose applications need to be referred to my Ministry by the PSSA.

23 March, 2004

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

B/79 The Honourable Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Riviere
(Mrs Labelle)

To ask the Honourable Minister of Education and Scientific Research:-

Whether, in regard to Form I admission of 2004, he will state (a) the total number of pupils admitted in the State Secondary Schools and (b) the total number of applications received for the State prevocational classes and the number of pupils admitted in those prevocational classes?

DRAFT REPLY TO PQ B/79 - TUESDAY 23 MARCH 2004

Sir,

Approximately 8670 students have been admitted to Form I in the State Secondary Schools in 2004, out of which 7200 have been admitted to the so called "mainstream" and 1470 to the "pre-vocational" stream.

As for Part B for the question,

Last year upon proclamation of the CPE results, the parents of all students who have failed the CPE examinations twice or who are over-aged to repeat standard VI received a form requesting them to signify their interest to admit their ward to the pre-vocational stream. Forms signifying the parent's interest to admit his ward in a pre-vocational stream were scrutinized by Head Teachers and were submitted to Zonal Directors of my Ministry for allocation of seats. This process enabled my Ministry to establish the effective demand for admission to the pre-vocational stream. As such no applications were invited for specific schools for the pre-vocational stream as is done for the mainstream.

A joint committee set up at zonal level comprising representatives of my Ministry and of the Private Secondary Schools Managers including the Bureau de l'Education Catholique then processed the forms. Seats were allocated to students in schools located as far as possible closest to their place of residence.

The lists of seats allocated were submitted to the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, which issued the letter of offer. Responsible Parties were requested to collect the letter of offer from the Head Teacher of the primary school their wards had attended. The Responsible Party thereafter registered his ward at the school allocated.

Supplementary Information to PQ B/79

Out of the 9,805 pupils who failed the CPE examinations, 3,987 were eligible to join the pre-vocational stream.

Following the issue of CPE results, 3,530 forms signifying interest for admission to the pre-vocational stream duly filled in by responsible parties were collected.

- Seats were allocated in both SSS (1709) and PSS (1821)
 - 1,471 students were admitted to a State Secondary School while 1,721 were admitted to a Private Secondary School. The total number of students registered in both State Secondary Schools and Private Secondary Schools stand at 3,192
-

22 June, 2004

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UNREVISED

DR/D20/P09/1

LOWER VI - ADMISSION - CRITERIA, ETC.

(No. B/551) **Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether having regard to the lowering of requirements regarding the number of credit scores for entry in Lower VI as compared to previous standards, he will state

- (a) the present criteria;
- (b) whether the heads of all Form VI colleges have been so informed;
- (c) whether an impact assessment has been carried out regarding its effect on manpower in the future and, if so, will he table the report, if any, thereon, and
- (d) if any feedback from heads of colleges regarding same has been received so far.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, there has been no change in the criteria for admission to Lower VI, but only the insertion of a *proviso* to cater for a category of students who were, hitherto, denied access to the HSC Form VI simply because they were short of one credit at School Certificate.

It is worthy of note that the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate does not impose any criteria for admission to Form VI or to sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations, but in view of the limited number of seats which was available until recently, criteria had been worked out administratively in order to ensure fairness and equity; such criteria being that students seeking admission to Form VI should -

- (i) have passed the Cambridge School Certificate (SC) with at least 4 credits and a pass in English or equivalent; and
- (ii) should not have attained the age of 19 on 01 January of the year of admission to Lower VI

These remain unchanged.

UNREVISED

DR/D20/P09/2
(No. B/551 Cont'd)

These remain unchanged. However, my Ministry was in presence of representations from a category of students totaling around 300 in both State and private secondary schools who were short of one credit and who, by virtue of their age, would have been debarred from admission in Form VI on the ground of age limit if they had been made to repeat Form V in order to meet the required criteria. The need was, therefore, felt to provide an alternative route to such students who would otherwise have left schools with only a School Certificate. It was, therefore, decided to exceptionally allow them to move on to Lower VI, but insisting that they should pass the Lower VI end-of-year examinations for promotion to Upper VI failing which they would have to repeat Lower VI, if eligible or else withdraw from the schools or another alternative which is now under study that they be allowed to proceed to Upper VI to take the GCE A levels rather than HSC as is presently the case.

No negative feedback has been obtained and it is only at the end of the year when the students will be required to meet the mandatory Lower VI end-of-year examination requirements that we shall be in a position to assess the situation.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ADMISSIONS

23/11/04 (10)

(No. B/870) **Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, having regard to the forthcoming college admissions exercise, he will give an updated list of colleges operating in Mauritius, with details of -

- (a) student population, and
- (b) SC and/or HSC results for the last two years.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly, two sets of documents containing the required information.

The first set of documents includes the list of State and Private Secondary Schools (Forms I to V), the State Sixth Form colleges and the

publicly funded private secondary schools offering Form I to VI with school population for 2004 and SC results for 2002/03. The second set provides for relevant list of schools and/or colleges but with HSC results for 2002 and 2003.

The hon. Member will note from the documents submitted that for the newly constructed secondary schools the question of SC/HSC results for 2002/03 does not arise.

Information circulated has been provided to my Ministry by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

YEAR

2005

FORM I/FORM VI - ADMISSION EXERCISES – COMPLAINTS (08/02/05)

(No. B/31) **Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the admission exercises in Form I and Form VI, he will state –

- (a) the system put into place to receive complaints from dissatisfied parents/students;
- (b) the number of complaints received;
- (c) the nature of those complaints, and
- (d) how the complaints are being dealt with.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, ever since 2003, my Ministry has

introduced the concept of customer care desks to handle miscellaneous queries from the public with a view to ensuring effective communication. These customer care desks are located at my Ministry's main office in Phoenix as well as at the four zonal headquarters in Port Louis, Beau Bassin, Rose Belle and Quatre Bornes as well as in one outstation at Centre de Flacq. Furthermore, the Private Secondary Schools Authority operates a customer care desk on the same principle as does the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate immediately after proclamation of CPE, SC and HSC results. Similarly, the Commission for Education in Rodrigues also has a customer care service in Malabar. The customer care desks are operational throughout the year, but during peak periods also operate outside normal working hours, including Saturdays.

Customer care desks are staffed by experienced officers who are during the period of resumption of studies briefed on a quasi daily basis by the Communication Unit of my Ministry so that parents and students may obtain relevant updated information and immediate assistance and advice. Turning to Form I admissions, allow me to remind Members of the House that in December at the time of proclamation of results, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate issued offers concerning all Form I mainstream seats in State Secondary Schools and other publicly owned secondary schools as well as half the seats in all publicly funded private secondary schools. In effect about three-quarters of students passing the CPE are offered a seat. Thereafter, many parents call at the customer care desk concerning admission to Form I. Some who have not received an offer seek admission to a State Secondary School for their child although the State sector can only cater for 45% of Form I mainstream admissions. Others having obtained an offer of a seat in a private secondary school seek admission to a SSS. Others still having obtained an SSS, seek a transfer to another SSS for various reasons. The requests are in the nature of applications for admission or applications for transfers and sometimes they may be couched in language expressing a complaint.

Accordingly, it is quite impossible to quantify with any degree of accuracy complaints *per se*. Be that as it may, these requests are processed in different stages. Firstly, consideration is given to requests concerning serious medical cases and twins. Thereafter, consequential vacancies arising from filling of places in private secondary schools are allotted on the basis of grade aggregate. Then, remaining vacancies are allocated considering hardship and more specially long distance travelling. The exercise has now by and large been completed.

As regards Lower VI admissions, it is to be recalled that in the public sector, 16 out of 70 secondary institutions offer Sixth Form classes.

Accordingly, the State school students eligible to move from Form V to LVI are invited to apply to move to a State Sixth Form College if they so wish.

This year, all students concerned received offers of such places on 31 January and 02 February save for some 20 students whose results or choice of subject combinations make it extremely difficult to accommodate them. Nonetheless, these applications are being addressed on a case by case basis. Here again, queries of a varied nature are reported by the customer care desk. Some originate from private sector students wishing to join State Sixth Form Colleges although the relevant exercise has not yet begun. Others relate to students wishing to change from one State Sixth Form College to another although in general, students would have obtained a college they themselves applied for.

Other requests concern change of subject combinations after the processing of application forms and that may sometimes entail a change of college. And of course, some requests may originate from students not having obtained an offer of a seat for reasons given. Finally, there are also students who are ineligible to join HSC classes who still insist on being allowed to do so. Here again, defining and quantifying complaints is quite impossible as the hon. gentleman will understand.

Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that the admission procedure for Form I and Lower VI admissions has this year proceeded even more smoothly than in years gone by. All representations received at the customer care desks are being handled promptly and in the vast majority of cases to the satisfaction of the makers.

Should the hon. gentleman have any particular cases in mind, I remain as always ready and willing to provide all appropriate assistance.

Mr Dulloo: I wish to seek one clarification, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether complaints for those who would have liked to obtain admission - whether Form I or Form VI - in what is known as confessional schools are also being dealt with by his Ministry, that is, those who have applied and are not satisfied for one reason or the other? Can they come and seek some sort of intervention at the Ministry?

Mr Obeegadoo: The customer care desks are opened to everybody and anybody depending upon the nature of the complaint, assistance may or may not be given. Maybe three weeks ago, some parents came and said: "I do not have a school at all". So, we would provide them the list of all private secondary schools still having vacancies. At lower VI it is different. Right now, private school students have applied to private secondary schools if their own does not

offer lower VI and we have State to State transfers. In the very near future, in the days to come, the Ministry will advertise remaining vacancies in State VI Form colleges to the public at large.

Mr Armance: May I ask the Minister whether his Ministry has received complaints concerning reclassification of zones? It is not evident for a student of Form I living at Trou d'Eau Douce to travel to Beau Bassin. Does the Minister envisage a reclassification of zones?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, Sir. There is no question of reclassification of zones at this stage. When we first introduced reforms there were teething problems. I believe in 2003 probably we did have quite a number of cases of students travelling from one end of the zone to another. This year these cases are very few and far between. I just mentioned, in response to the question of hon. Dulloo, that we have considered hardship cases, long distance travelling and again if the hon. Member has any particular case in mind, he may refer the case to me.

FORM I TO VI COLLEGES – MODE OF ADMISSION (09/08/05)

(No. I B/24) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether colleges which were previously not admitting pupils in Form I, such as the Royal Colleges and the Queen Elizabeth College, will do so for the January 2006 intake and, if so, will he state the criteria that will be used for such admission.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as already publicly announced, my Ministry will be reinstating Form I to VI colleges and, in the light of this development, we are currently considering the existing mode of admission to Form I together with the different views which we have obtained from stakeholders.

This matter will be looked into carefully, and we will come up with proposals soon.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the House that everything is being done according to a set calendar, and filling of admission forms for Form I is scheduled for Saturday 24 September 2005 before examinations starting on 17 October 2005.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister

whether the regionalisation policy will be kept as it is?

Mr Gokhool: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, all implications are being looked into and a decision will be announced soon.

17.NOV.2005 15:27

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NO.635 P.1/1

9/8/05

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - JANUARY 2006 ADMISSION -
SPACE PROBLEM**

(No. I B/28) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if there is a problem of space for the admission exercise of January 2006 in State Secondary Schools and, if so, will he state the measures he proposes to take to remedy same.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am advised that ever since the abolition of ranking and the new mode of admission in Form I in January 2003, there have always been problems of space for admission to Form I for the simple reason that the newly set-up schools are not yet fully operational; and in certain cases like Quatre Bornes State Secondary School, Goodlands State Secondary School, Port Louis State Secondary School and the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School of Nouvelle France, the school buildings have not yet been constructed and we are now in 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take the opportunity to table a status report of the so-called 36 schools that the previous Government says it has constructed. This report is extremely revealing, because apart from two schools which have been completed, one is nearing completion the rest are still incomplete. Therefore, problems of space have existed and will exist and contingency arrangements will be resorted to as in the past years, whenever the need will arise. This is precisely what my Ministry is doing in collaboration with private secondary schools to ensure that all students who pass the CPE are provided with a seat in January 2006.

FORM I

ADMISSION - STATE COLLEGES (06/09/05)

(No. I B/220) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the criteria that will henceforth be applied for the admission of pupils in the seven State colleges which were previously known as Form VI colleges.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take it that the question refers to admission of pupils in Form I in the seven State colleges. The mode of admission to Form I in January 2006 will remain the same as for January 2005, that is, admission will be made on the basis of regionalisation, grading, with proximity of residence being the deciding criterion in the case of tie-up.

The only new element is that in line with Government Programme 2005-2010, the Form I to VI colleges on which there is a quasi consensus, are being reinstated. In this respect, my Ministry has examined different scenarios and for a smooth transition, it has been decided to opt for a phased approach spreading over 2006 and 2007.

In January 2006, only seven VI Form colleges will be converted and the rest will be converted in January 2007 on the basis of a new mode of admission to be finalised, taking into consideration amongst others, the need to recognise performance, the importance of subjects like English and Science Education and so on.

For January 2006, the list of schools admitting Form I students is only being enlarged with the inclusion of seven colleges which were hitherto admitting only Lower VI students.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are changing the policy. There is a judgment of the Privy Council where it is stated that any change in the education sector needs at least a minimum of one-year *préavis*. Can I know from the Minister whether this has been taken into consideration in this case?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all this has been taken into consideration. As I said, the only change which is taking place is that 7 colleges are being added to the list of colleges in the regions. We are not changing the criteria.

Mr Guinness: Anyway, these 7 colleges were Form VI colleges. Now that we are admitting pupils in Form I, I think we must have given sufficient one-year *préavis* to parents.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister has already replied.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether an impact

assessment has been carried out on private secondary schools when we are admitting pupils in these 7 State colleges? What will be the impact on the private colleges in the region?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have held consultations with the managers and rectors of private secondary schools. I have also consulted other stakeholders and there is no problem. Simulation exercises have been carried out and the colleges in the private and public sectors will admit the students who will be passing the CPE.

Mr Guinness: Will the Minister give the guarantee that in case of redundancy employees will be redeployed?

Mr Gokhool: That is hypothetical, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

YEAR 2006

FORM I STUDENTS - INTAKE 2007 - ADMISSION CRITERIA (21/03/06)

(No. B/19) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if there will be any change in the admission criteria for the 2007 intake for Form I students and, if so, will he make a statement thereon.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQ B/19 and B/31 at the same time as they deal with the same subject. Further to my reply to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition, I wish to state that my Ministry is creating an optimal learning environment and in this respect the Form I and VI colleges are being reintroduced.

Further steps have also been taken to ensure the democratisation of access and equal opportunities for one and all. I need to state that the regionalisation process and the grading systems in force since 2002 contained many inherent deficiencies which we had to correct, namely -

- (i) the grade A which has a range of marks of 75 to 100 was too wide to do justice to the high performers;
- (ii) under the grading system most students did the strict minimum to obtain an A and the MES reports on the CPE examination reveal serious limitations in the skills and competencies which these students have acquired, and
- (iii) the criteria of proximity of residence was not an equitable one.

As from January 2007, there will be a new mode of admission to

Form I whereby admission in the State Secondary Schools will be made both on a regional and a national basis. For that purpose, there will be a slight change in the grading system with the inclusion of an A+ with marks in the range of 90 to 100.

It is worth recalling that for admission on a regional basis, the same criteria which were applied for 2002 to date will hold, namely based on an overall grade aggregate, parental choice and proximity of residence in case of tie.

As regards admission process on a national basis, it is worth mentioning that same already existed for the admission in Form VI State colleges and exists in the BEC schools for the 50% of seats which they fill.

This is also the case for private colleges.

In the context of democratisation of access to education and provision of equal opportunities for one and all and in a spirit of equity and fairness, the principle of admission on a national basis has been extended to the 9 high demand State Secondary Schools.

Further, it should be recalled that admission on a national basis is not compulsory but optional.

Finally, I need to say and wish to assure the House that all State Schools will be afforded equality of treatment in terms of infrastructure, human resources and any other facilities.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Guinness!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister state whether there will be other differences apart from the fact that the admission will be different?

Mr Gokhool: I have answered the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. We'll make sure that there is no disparity in treatment as far as resources or any other amenities are concerned.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister...

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. lady must catch the eye of the Speaker first. Hon. Guinness has caught my eye.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two questions. Can the Minister, in simple and clear terms, inform the population if there are 630 girls applying for seats in Queen Elizabeth College, how is he going to allocate these seats? Because there are 50 seats only.

Mr Gokhool: It is a simple question of demand and supply, Mr Speaker, Sir. The MES will take into consideration the criteria already laid out, as I have explained previously.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not clear to the population. What is the criteria which will determine the first 50 girls who will be admitted, if all the 630 parents have applied for that college?

Mr Gokhool: I don't know whether the hon. Member cannot understand and is implying that the whole population does not understand. I am satisfied that the population has understood the formula we have presented. The criteria for admission to the nine State colleges will be based on performance, that is, overall grade aggregate, four best out of five or six subjects, and we are maintaining the grading system.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister, in case there is a tie between two students - two students having four A+ - how do we decide which one of the two...

Dr. Jeetah: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I refer the hon. Member to Standing Order 22(1)(g), whereby it is said that – “a question shall not ask for an expression of opinion, or...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. This is not a point of order.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is not asking for an expression of opinion from the Minister. She is asking...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Would you allow me to finish the sentence, Mr Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

The Standing Order says -

“...or of a hypothetical proposition:...”

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

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am asking the hon. Minister if he can give us some enlightenment on how...

(Interruptions)

It is not hypothetical!

Mr Speaker: Address the chair!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is straightforward. I am asking the hon. Minister how, in case two students have four A+ - which is not hypothetical; there will be two students with four A+ - we will determine which one of the two gets a seat in a national college.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, at present...

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a hypothetical proposition that she is making.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. This is not a hypothetical question.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, at present...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool:...in cases of ties, the MES deals with these issues. The same procedure will be applied if ever there is any case of tie.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the Minister the number of students admitted in HSC at the QEC? Because it was a Form VI college. Henceforth, how many students will be admitted in Form I with the new formula?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, each college has a certain number of seats. For QEC, 140 seats will be available.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will agree to publish all the exams results, with their grading and marks, as soon as they are obtained?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the MES regulations are clear. Individual results are not published.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not talking of either determining A+ or not. I am talking about the marks obtained by the students in each subject respectively.

Mr Gokhool: At present, this is not the practice of the MES.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there will be students with four A+ opting for a national college and would be deprived of a seat, in spite of the heavy work that has been put in? How would this affect the student? Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that there are studies that have been carried out...

Mr Speaker: Put the question, please.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am putting the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Studies that have been carried out show that when a student is faced with such a situation, he may develop a low self esteem just by not being allowed into a national college. How shall we deal with this particular issue?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, even at present, for admission on a regional basis, this situation arises. If students don't get one college, they will get admission in another college.

NATIONAL COLLEGES - ADMISSION – YEAR 2007 (04/04/06)

(No. B/152) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the admission to the National Colleges in 2007, he will state what are the parameters set by his Ministry for the selection exercise.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply, which the substantive Minister made to the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, at our sitting on Tuesday 21 March. Rather than talking of a selection exercise, it is preferable to

talk of admission of students. In this respect, while admission of students to regional colleges will continue to be made on the basis of parental choice, grade aggregate and proximity of residence, as has been the case since 2002, admission to the National Colleges will be made on the basis of parental choice, grade aggregate and relative performance, as provided for in the Education Regulation 1957 as subsequently amended.

**QEC, ROYAL COLLEGE, CUREPIPE, ROYAL COLLEGE,
PORT LOUIS – ADMISSION – 2007 (04/04/06)**

(No. B/153) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will give the number of students admitted to the Queen Elizabeth College, the Royal College Curepipe and the Royal College Port Louis in January 2006, indicating the number of students who will be admitted at each of these colleges in January 2007, following the transformation of these schools into National Colleges.

Reply: The number of students admitted in Queen Elizabeth College, Royal College Curepipe and Royal College Port Louis in Lower VI in January 2006 is as follows –

QEC – 147
RCC – 144
RCPL – 171

As regards admission in Lower VI in 2007 in the same colleges the number of seats available will be as follows -

QEC – 150
RCC – 150
RCPL – 240

***SOCIÉTÉ DES PROFESSIONNELS EN PSYCHOLOGIE - LETTER
TO MINISTER OF EDUCATION (25/04/06)***

(No. B/376) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of a letter addressed to him during the third week of March 2006 by the *Société des professionnels en psychologie* and, if so, will he indicate what action has been taken thereon.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken cognizance of an open letter from one Mrs Gianella Cathan, on behalf of the *Société des*

professionnels en psychologie, which was published in the press towards the end of March and which related to the new mode of admission to Form I.

However, no official copy of the letter was sent to me or to my office.

As regards the contents of the letter, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the PNQ at our sitting of 21 March 2006 and to clear the misunderstandings which emerge from the letter as follows –

- (i) firstly, the new mode of admission to Form I is not a stand alone or isolated measure, but forms part of a series of initiatives in favour of education reforms which my Ministry is pursuing. This is the position I have stated and will continue to state in contrast to the view of the Opposition, which persists in making a selective reading of our reforms. It has, therefore, to be seen in the global context of further democratisation of education through the reinstatement of Forms I to VI colleges as set out in the Government Programme 2005-2010;
- (ii) secondly, by providing for admission on both regional and national basis to State colleges, through the new mode of access thereto, my Ministry never meant to identify an elite and at no point in time have I said so;
- (iii) thirdly and more importantly, the selection process had never been abolished between 2001 and 2005 and access to seats in Form I to the then Forms I to V secondary schools for period 2002 and 2005 was done through selection because in many cases, particularly in high demand schools as well as in confessional colleges, the demand almost always exceeded the number of seats available. MES had to choose the best deserving candidates for admission through a selection process, and
- (iv) fourthly, the introduction of the refined grading system for access on a national basis to the nine State colleges, as from January 2007, forms an integral part of our strategy of bringing overall improvement in the quality of education. It is based on merit, that is, performance.

Finally, I wish to say that in the elaboration of the new policy for access to Form I on a regional and national basis to State colleges, all views and opinions have been duly considered.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister talked about the view of the Opposition, but I was asking his reaction regarding the views of

psychologists, professional people. May I ask the Minister whether he has responded to the wish of these professional people, because they proposed their help? Has the Minister responded to this wish of sharing opinions with these professionals?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, together with the opinions expressed, there have been many more opinions that have been expressed and all of them have been duly considered before the decision has been made.

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, en vue des points très importants concernant le développement de l'enfant, est-ce que le ministre est en présence d'une étude qui soutient le contraire de ce que ces professionnels ont avancé?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been replying to the question with regard to the letter to which reference has been made. There is no mention of any study and the results thereof.

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, ces professionnels ont fait part des conséquences d'une compétition sur le développement de l'enfant, les conséquences d'une dévalorisation de l'estime de soi. Ce sont les points avancés par les professionnels.

If the hon. Minister has taken cognizance of this letter, he should have noted these points. And, my question is: does the hon. Minister have a study, which can sustain the contrary of what has been stated? If he doesn't have, he just says so.

Mr Gokhool: I would request my hon. colleague to carefully read the letter, the content thereof. It is based on a hypothesis and the whole argumentation is developed on the basis of a hypothesis that this measure is going to promote elite. I have never said that. All that I have been saying is that students' performance will be recognised. That is what I have been saying. So, the letter is on the basis of an assumption that this measure is going to promote elite. The measure doesn't.

Mr Dayal: I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether the points raised in the letter relate to any scientific study that has been carried out and which has been referred to in that letter?

Mr Gokhool: I have read the letter carefully and the answer is 'no'.

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, lorsqu'on a parlé d'une évaluation - sur les compétences de l'enfant en se basant sur les performances scolaires - occulte et ignore tous les facteurs, autres qu'intellectuels, qui jouent un rôle prépondérant à cet âge?

We all know that there are many psychologists who have written a lot of literatures on these issues and I can go on, on these points.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I would allow a last question. Please!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, these are views of a group of psychologists. There are many other views of other psychologists and, the more so, this is not backed by any scientific evidence. That's why we have taken note and we have dealt with the matter.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, since we are dealing with the education of children, can the hon. Minister confirm whether he is prepared to meet professionals who have written a lot on that issue, and whether he is prepared to discuss with them and to see what comes out of the meeting?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me take the opportunity to say it once again. In implementing reforms, we are engaging dialogues and consultations, and the request being made is most welcome. If there is a request to meet them, I am going to meet them.

FOREST SIDE SSS – STUDENT – TRANSFER TO SODNAC SSS (25/04/06)

(No. B/388) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he is aware if any Form III student of the Forest Side State Secondary School has been recently transferred to the Sodnac State Secondary School and, if so, will he state the circumstances which led to the transfer.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information available at my Ministry, 11 candidates applied for transfer to Sodnac SSS. Only two candidates have the highest aggregate - 25, 5 A. The demand for transfer for the two candidates who fulfil the criteria (i) highest aggregate, (ii) proximity, was acceded to as vacancies existed.

I wish to inform the House that independently of the general transfer exercise, my Ministry also receives *ad hoc* requests for transfer all throughout the year and such applications are examined and generally speaking, if the requests are received in the first half of the school year and vacancies exist, they are favourably entertained. If vacancies do not exist or if the *ad hoc* applications are made in the later half of the year, the applicants are advised to reapply next year.

As regards the specific point raised in the question of the hon. Member, I am informed that an *ad hoc* request was received from a student of Form III from Forest Side SSS for transfer to Sodnac SSS, and as a vacancy was available at Sodnac SSS, at the material time, after the general transfer exercise, the request was approved.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister whether the 11 applications were received from zone three itself?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the application mentioned a change of address and my Ministry has verified; and there was a change of address to the zone to which the admission was sought.

Mr Guinness: Is the Minister prepared to table a copy of the change of address?

Mr Gokhool: To satisfy the curiosity of the hon. Member, I will do so.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether, from the proof which is being laid on the Table, be it CEB bill or water bill, the name of the responsible party is on that particular bill?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact of the matter is, there is evidence which has been provided that there has been a change of address; this has been deemed to be *bona fide* by the Ministry, and the most important thing is that this candidate has the highest aggregate and the other candidates on the waiting list do not have that aggregate. So, nobody is being penalised.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: There is absolutely nothing personal meant in that case. But, my question to the Minister before I come back on this question of change of address: is the Minister prepared to confirm that all procedures

were followed - there are detailed procedures to be followed - in that case?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to clearly understand that there is a general transfer exercise. Once the exercise is over, *ad hoc* cases are also considered if a vacancy exists. There was a list of candidates who had applied, but there was no vacancy at that material point in time. When the exercise was over, a vacancy arose and, well before that point in time, the application was received and it was considered on the basis that that candidate had the highest aggregate and the other candidates had lower aggregates.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister therefore confirming that once the vacancy had occurred that the candidate, the families and so on, followed all the required procedures?

Mr Gokhool: This is what I am telling the House, that we have looked at the case and the parents made a representation on the basis of change of address. There is a letter to that effect; the evidence is being tabled as well as the aggregate of the candidate.

Mr Bérenger: There is no quarrel there at all. My question is: since allegations have been made - apart from CWA, CEB bills - we know the problems that have arisen in the past - has any form of inquiry been carried out to ascertain whether there has indeed been a change of address or whether a pretext is being used?

(Interruptions)

Mr Gokhool: I think that we have to deal with this matter very carefully because it has to do with students and education.

(Interruptions)

We have the evidence of the change of address in the rent book. So, this is there and it confirms the change of address. Together with the change of address we also look at the other criteria. Change of address by itself will not allow students to get access, the other criteria is the aggregate and this student has the highest aggregate.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Guinness.

Mr Guinness: This is a case of unfair advantage...

Mr Speaker: I'm sorry. The hon. Member cannot comment on the answer which has been given at question time. If the hon. Member wants to come back through another means, he can do so.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the mother of that child is not the Deputy Rector of SSS Sodnac and by that way she got the information that there is a seat available? So, how will other students ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Guinness: How will other students know that a vacancy exists at SSS Sodnac?

(Interruptions)

Mr Gokhool: I take strong exception to the fact that the hon. Member is referring to the mother of a student. Any citizen, whether mother or Rector, if the procedures have been followed, he is entitled to get a seat.

(Interruptions)

I don't think I can discriminate on the basis of the fact that the child's mother is a Deputy Rector. I can't discriminate on that basis.

Mr Speaker: Order! Next question!

Mr Bérenger: If you would allow me one question. This is going to be with us for a long time. The point is: how do parents come to know that there are vacancies so that every child is given the fair chance?

Mr Gokhool: This is a fair question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I need to clarify this. At the beginning of the year, the exercise is undertaken and it is published in the press. Those who want a transfer can apply; this is the general transfer exercise.

(Interruptions)

Ad hoc transfers also take place throughout the year, depending upon the

criteria. If the candidate satisfies the criteria and the vacancies are there, this can be done.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – LOWER VI – VACANCIES (25/04/06)

(No. B/389) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if all the vacancies in Lower VI in the State Secondary Schools have already been filled and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 434 vacancies in available subject combinations were reported in the State schools for students coming from private secondary schools. 419 applications were received, out of which 314 have been favourably entertained.

I am also informed that around 120 vacancies have remained unfilled for the following reasons –

- (i) there was no demand for some vacancies in respect to specific subject combinations. In other words, the applicants did not match the vacancies in the subject combinations available or some schools like Marcel Cabon SSS or Sebastopol SSS did not attract candidates;
- (ii) some applicants did not satisfy the set criteria for promotion to Lower VI, and
- (iii) some candidates may not have accepted an allocated seat in a State school for geographical reasons and have preferred to remain in the private schools to which they were initially admitted.

The set objective of my Ministry is to broaden access to higher secondary education while, at the same time allowing the private secondary schools to remain a privileged partner in the provision of secondary education. Accordingly, all students of private secondary schools who could not proceed to Lower VI either because their respective schools did not run HSC classes or because the subject combination of their choice was not available thereat, were offered seats in State schools where vacancies existed and subject to their satisfying the criteria for admission to Lower VI.

In line with our policy of democratising access, my Ministry will look into the possibility of re-visiting the existing policy together with all consequential implications in order to ensure that in future vacancies are filled in an optimal manner.

Mr Speaker: Can I draw the attention of Ministers that when answering questions - although I don't have control on answers – the answers must be pertinent to the questions which have been put, and if the answers are long, they should be circulated.

Mr Guinness: It seems that a few vacancies still exist and I know students who are willing to get those seats. Is the hon. Minister prepared to advertise again for those seats?

Mr Gokhool: There are conditions which are laid down, they must qualify first. Secondly, they must also satisfy the subject combination.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but if they don't satisfy the subject combination, they will not be admitted. At this time of the year, I cannot say whether this can be entertained.

Mr Speaker: A last question!

Mr Guinness: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether this was not the practice in the past? There was a first advertisement after the result, then if seats are available a second advertisement is made. Was it not the practice in the past?

Mr Gokhool: It was exactly the same procedure. There was a first advertisement. We have gone through the second advertisement as well and, in fact, there was a third one, to give a third chance to those who were not able to get a seat. So, we went through all the procedures; and now we are in the month of April and I don't think, at this point in time, it would be proper to conduct another exercise.

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
– TRANSFER – DOCUMENTS (25/07/06)**

(No. B/1132) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the procedure obtained for the transfer of secondary schools students from one zone to another, he will state the documents that have to be submitted.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that transfers from

one State Secondary School to another State Secondary School in Forms II, III and IV are effected strictly on the basis of CPE results on a zonal basis. I am also informed that the following documents should be submitted along with the applications forms –

(i) CPE examination result slip (not certificate) obtained prior to admission to Form I;

(ii) copy of the 2005 final (3rd terms) internal examination results, and

(iii) original of CEB and CWA bills for the three months in case of the request for transfer from one zone to another.

This exercise takes place during the month of January.

However, it does happen that some applications are made at any time of the year outside the general transfer exercises and such cases are dealt with on a case to case basis. Wherever required, additional documents (medical certificates, residential details, etc.) may also be asked for.

Otherwise, applicants are invited to reapply next year.

Mr Guinness: Since the initial documents asked for, apart from the CPE examination result slip, are the CEB and CWA bills, may I ask the hon. Minister how is it that in this case, document of which I laid on the Table of the Assembly...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, this matter has already been raised.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know how is it that a case in Sodnac, a transfer from a SSS...

Mr Speaker: Yes, but that matter has been raised in the House and answers have already been given.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir,

Mr Speaker: Insofar as this question is concerned, the matter was raised, explanations were given by the hon. Minister and the hon. Member cannot raise it again through this Question.

Mr Guinness: From the answer which has been given, my question is whether in that case the CEB bill...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Member. I am giving my ruling in all

fairness. This matter was fully raised here in this House; answers were given. I will not allow this matter to be raised again through this Question.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, may I ask the hon. Minister whether in some cases, rent books are being asked and, if so, why?

Mr Gokhool: In the second part of my answer, I have said that on a case to case basis, if it is required, other documents are requested. These documents include medical certificates and residential details.

Mrs Perrier: Si je comprends bien, le *rent book* est un document additionnel. Donc, obligatoirement, les factures du CEB et de la CWA doivent être soumises. Donc, comment se fait-il que, dans certains cas...

(Interruptions)

Comment se fait-il que, dans certains cas, seulement le *rent book* a été demandé et accepté?

Mr Gokhool: Je ne voudrais pas faire la pédagogie de l'honorable membre. Au moins, l'honorable membre doit m'écouter...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Minister, can you please repeat the answer.

Mr Gokhool: I'll repeat the answer. There is a general transfer exercise which takes place in January. After January, there are other cases – just now I have the case of a student, who is being assaulted daily and the student has made a request to me, as Minister. Don't I react?

(Interruptions)

I have to react. This is what I am trying to tell the hon. Lady.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister explained that, in certain cases, additional documents are needed. So, may we know from the hon. Minister whether the CEB and CWA bills, which are the initial

documents required, were asked for before the request for additional ones were made?

Mr Gokhool: I'll answer by citing a concrete example. Because of the divorce of his parents, a child changes his residential address to go to another zone. I am not going to ask for any other detail, except for the residential details. This is what we do.

Mr Speaker: Or the divorce paper. Next Question!

NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS – ADMISSION (07/11/06)

(No. B/1308) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the number of parents who have applied for a seat in the National Secondary Schools for their wards who will be completing their primary education this year.

Reply: I believe that the hon. Member is referring to State Secondary Schools with admission on a national basis. I am informed by the MES that the data is presently being entered in the computer system for admission purposes and that the information will be available in due course.

MES – FORM I - SEATS ALLOCATION – SOFTWARE (07/11/06)

(No. B/1299) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to whether the software used for the allocation of seats in Form I has been reviewed for the admission exercise for January 2007.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the software that will be used for the allocation of seats in Form I, on a regional basis, in January 2007, is the same one as has been used in the previous years, except for a slight modification to take into account the new grading system.

As regards allocation of seats for admission to schools, on a national basis, a new software has been developed and tested, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge International Examinations. This software has been programmed to take into account grade aggregate and the relative

performance of the student.

However, I wish to inform the House that there is a uniform grading system applying evenly to all students, irrespective of whether they have sought admission on a national or regional basis, and therefore there is only one exercise which will culminate with the CPE results and the schools allocated either on a national or a regional basis on 16 December 2006. In this respect, any student who applied for a seat on a national basis and succeeds in obtaining one will not be considered for admission on a regional basis. Likewise, any student who fails to obtain a seat in a college with admission on a national basis will be considered for a seat on a regional basis.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister inform the House what criteria has been input in the software for the selection cases because he has just mentioned that there will be a selection process for national colleges? May we know what are the criteria to be used for this particular selection process?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, for students who have opted for admission on a national basis, the only criteria is performance, whereas for those who will not secure a seat on a national basis, they will be considered for a seat in the regional colleges and for that the hon. Member knows the criteria which apply, that is, parental choice, performance and proximity.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry intends, in the name of transparency, to publish the results and the ranks of the 630 girls to be admitted to the national colleges and the 630 boys to be admitted to the same category of colleges?

Mr Gokhool: There will be a list of boys and girls who will be admitted to the colleges on a national basis, but it is not the practice to publish the results and the ranks. By the way, it is not the ranking system which is being used, it is the grading system.

(Interruptions)

Well, you can argue on that.

(Interruptions)

We are using the grading system. The question is about whether the marks will be published. I don't think it is the practice anywhere.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister how, within the 1,260, will the parents be made aware of the 60 students who will get the seats in the Royal Colleges? What criteria will be used to establish the 60 students who will go to Royal College, which is, let's say, No. 1?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the admission will be based on performance of the student relating to other students, and the grading system which will be used has a range of marks. The MES will use the range of marks, which is a grading system.

(Interruptions)

Ranking means absolute marks. If the hon. Member does not know, I can inform him that ranking means exact absolute marks, whereas grading is a range of marks. The MES will use the range of marks to conduct the exercise.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just emphasised on the range of marks. I would like to ask the Minister whether he can give us an indication about how the selection is going to be effected for the different national colleges, for example, between the Royal College and John Kennedy College when using his range of marks. How is this range of marks going to be used?

Mr Gokhool: The MES will have to consider the choice made by the parents for the students for specific colleges. Using the software, they will run the programme. It is a technical exercise, and I cannot go into the technicalities thereof.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister rightly said it. This is a technical exercise. The software has to sort out some values. What are those values? It cannot be a range; it has to be precise values. These precise values lead to ranking.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the software has been tested. A simulation exercise has been carried out, and it has worked. I believe that it is going to work. We just have to wait till 16 December and we will get the result.

Mr Bodha: Can the hon. Minister state how many children, out of the 30,000 who sat for the CPE, have opted for the national list?

Mr Gokhool: There is a question related to that issue, and I will give the reply therein.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that to obtain an A+ grade, candidates have to score between 90 and 100 marks in a subject. Is it true that the MES will break this range of ten marks into two levels, namely 90 to 95 and 96 to 100? If such is the case, is it not a disguised form of ranking?

Mr Gokhool: I will not agree with the hon. Member. It has been published in the newspapers, a brochure has been sent to all parents. It is not going to be a range of marks between what the hon. Member stated. It is going to be a whole range of marks which will be used for those having obtained the A grade.

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Oral Answers debate no 56
of 05/12/06.

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CA/D36/P14/8

STATE COLLEGES – ADMISSION

(No. B/1602) **Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state the criteria which will be used for the allocation of seats in the national colleges for students having the same results.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to two PNQs at our sittings of 21 March 2006 and 28 November 2006, as well as the replies to PQs B/19, B/152 and B/1299 & B/1308 at our sittings of 21 March 2006, 04 April 2006 and 07 November 2006 respectively, where the subject of admission on a national basis to State colleges have been dealt with.

I remind the hon. Member that admission on a national basis to State colleges (9 in all), will be made on –

- (a) the grade aggregate (in the best four subjects);
- (b) relative performance of an applicant at the CPE examinations, and
- (c) parental choice

as provided for in the Education (Amendments) Regulations 2006.

/...

JG/D36/P15/1
(PQ No. B/1602 cont'd)

UNREVISED

Performance will be the decisive criterion and this will be based on the refined grading system, the top grade aggregate being 24 units, corresponding to the results of 4 A⁺.

With regard to the specific issue relating to students having the same results, I wish to state the following –

- (i) these are not unusual cases and have occurred in the past, and
- (ii) in the event of a tie, that is, where candidates come up *ex-aequo* in the given range of marks, and they are not many, the Ministry will slightly increase the seat capacity in the colleges concerned to allow MES to admit all the *ex-aequo* students within that range of marks. However, simulation exercises on past results by MES have shown that such case will be very few and far apart, if any.

In case there are less than 140 candidates for a given school who have obtained 4 grades A⁺ with a maximum grade aggregate of 24, then candidates with 3 A⁺ and one A with a maximum grade aggregate of 23 will be considered and so on.

In case of an unlikely tie arising for the admission of students with a grade aggregate of 23, the same logic as for students with a maximum grade of 24 units will apply, that is, candidates will be admitted by MES looking at the range of marks and in case of tie, for example two candidates having the same aggregate of 23 and the same range of marks for only one available seat, then both candidates will be admitted.

I am tabling a copy of a document setting out the whole rationale and mechanism of admission which has been made public in the past.

Mrs Perrier: Si j'ai bien compris le ministre, deux élèves ayant reçu les mêmes résultats aux examens du CPE et une école nationale n'ayant qu'un seul siège disponible, les deux élèves vont être admis.

JG/D36/P15/2
(PQ No. B/1602 cont'd)

UNREVISED

Mr Gokhool: C'est ce que je viens de dire, M. le président.

Mrs Perrier: Et s'il n'y en a plus que deux?

Mr Gokhool: C'est une question hypothétique parce que d'après les simulations, il n'y aura pas beaucoup de cas, mais les cas qu'on aura on doit les *accommodate in process*.

Mrs Perrier: Le ministre vient nous dire aujourd'hui que le nombre de 1,260 places n'est pas définitif. Il y aura donc plus que 2,260 places.

(Interruptions)

Mr Gokhool: The number of seats provided in the nine colleges is nine times 140. In cases of ties which is not unusual, Mr Speaker, Sir, as it happened in the past, it has been dealt with by the MES and we are going to apply the same procedure. I don't think it is a problem.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister state in the House whether he agrees that the competition this year will be much more than what it has been earlier? Because taking the figures provided by the hon. Minister himself we are having this year around 16,000 students applying for a seat in national colleges and having only 1,260 seats available, that such a competition will be far more acute than what has been the case in the past.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have given the reply in all the PQs I have answered. First, to apply for a seat on a national basis to State colleges is an option, it is not a compulsion. Second, there has always been competition and there will be some competition. But all the arrangements have been made with regard to *ex-aequo* candidates.

JG/D36/P15/3
(PQ No. B/1602 cont'd)

UNREVISED

Mrs Perrier: Est-il prêt à publier les points des élèves dans ce cas précis afin de clarifier et d'enlever tout doute dans la tête des parents et rendre cette rentrée beaucoup plus sereine?

Mr Gokhool: I can answer this and many more questions on this, but I cannot clear the confusion in the mind of the hon. Member. She should read the answer that I have given.

PNQ

(25)

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Debate No. 01 of 24.01.2007

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

- (I) CPE CANDIDATES (2007) – NATIONAL COLLEGES – SEAT ALLOCATION
- (II) SC AND HSC EXAMINATIONS FEES SCHEME - IMPLEMENTATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr N. Bodha) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the declared policy of Government to provide access to, and achieve, a world-class education, he will state –

- (a) if Government will, for the sake of transparency, undertake to publish the names and the detailed results of all the CPE candidates who have been allocated a seat in a national college for the January 2007 intake, and
- (b) how the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations Fees Scheme will be implemented this year, as compared to last year.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the replies I gave to PNQs at our sittings of 21 March 2006 and 28 November 2006, as well as the replies to PQs B/19, B/152, B/1299 and B/1308 at our sittings of 21 March 2006, 04 April 2006 and 07 November 2006 respectively, where the subject of admission on a national basis to State colleges have been dealt with.

In line with the philosophy of the present Government concerning educational reforms as laid down in our Government Programme 2005-2010, we are pursuing a new vision of a World Class Quality Education accessible to all. Consequently, the reforms we are implementing are comprehensive, holistic and inclusive.

As a first step towards our goal, we reinstated the Form I to VI Colleges, first of all by converting seven Sixth Form Colleges into Form I to VI Colleges as from January 2006 and the remaining 9 as from January 2007. Secondly, we provided for a refined grading system, which is fairer and more equitable as it is based on merit. On the basis of this refined grading system admission to schools admitting students on a national basis is made on the basis of grade aggregate, relative performance and parental choice. Whereas admission on a regional basis is made on the basis of residence, grade aggregate and in case of tie, on the basis of proximity of residence as has been the case since 2003.

I have to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the whole CPE Examinations 2006 and the admission exercise in Form I have been carried out smoothly and without any major problems.

As regards the question of publishing the detailed results of all CPE candidates who have been admitted to schools on a national basis, I wish again to repeat what I have said in the past in the replies to numerous PQs and PNQs on the issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the existence of the CPE, even at the time of ranking, it has never been the policy nor the practice to disclose detailed individual results of CPE candidates. I am also informed that according to best practices worldwide, it is neither desirable nor proper to disclose individual results of students both at primary and secondary levels. It is precisely for this reason and also to respect the privacy of candidates that the MES Rules and Regulations governing CPE examinations clearly stipulates that marks shall not be disclosed.

Consequently, my Ministry and the MES are satisfied that transparency has all throughout prevailed and that the lists of candidates admitted to schools on a national basis are available at the school level.

The new system was widely publicized and the schools admitting students on a national basis were gazetted. In term of procedures, parents are advised to fill in an application form prior to the CPE exams to indicate their preference in regard to the schools in which they wish their child to be admitted. Consequently, parental choice is as important as the other criteria of grade aggregate and relative performance for schools admitting students on a national basis. Similarly, for admission on a regional basis, parental

choice is again as important as the other criteria of residence and grade aggregate.

It is to be noted that as regards schools with admission on a national basis, all the criteria of admission have been respected, namely performance, grade aggregate and parental choice. On the basis of the exercise carried out, any student who has obtained a maximum grade aggregate of 24 and 23 for girls and a maximum grade aggregate of 24, 23 and 22 for boys with best performance, have been admitted to a school with admission on a national basis, where the parents have so opted. There are still a few vacancies in the three schools admitting students on a National basis, namely John Kennedy College, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal College and Mahatma Gandhi Institute and my Ministry has invited applications for the filling of these vacancies, which will be filled essentially on the criteria of performance.

Further, for the sake of transparency, all parents who felt aggrieved by the results for the admission of their wards have, on request, been provided with the plausible explanation as to why his or her ward has not obtained an expected school. Indicatively, if a student with a maximum grade aggregate of 24 has not obtained admission in a school on a national basis, it will be simply because the parents did not opt for a college on a national basis.

Consequently, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has never been in the policy of Government to publish the detailed results of students, nor will it be the practice in future.

As regards part (b) of the PNQ, again the matter has been amply dealt with in my reply to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition, at our sitting of 20 June 2006. I need to remind the House that the overall philosophy of the Labour Government has always been supportive of vulnerable sections of the population. In line with this philosophy, Government has set the Welfare State which is still striving today.

In the present Budget, Government has further consolidated the concept of the Welfare State, with the clear objective of providing better support to the most needy of the community.

Every rupee of the taxpayer's money should be judiciously spent and should be directed towards the most vulnerable group and the most needy of our citizens.

It may be recalled that the previous Government had, in its Budget Speech of 2004/05, introduced a system of targeting whereby the subsidy on SC and HSC examinations fees would be limited to those children whose family benefited from social aid.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware from the Budget Speech 2006/07, Government has modernized the approach to social protection to ensure fairness and make sure that we can increase support to those who need it most. The House will recollect that before reform two thirds of the wealthiest Mauritians received three quarters of the subsidy on SC and HSC examinations fees.

The new policy ensures that Government assistance will be focused on those who need Government support the most. That is why the Ministry of Social Security will pay the full fee for the SC and HSC exams for students from families whose income is below Rs7,500 per month. Because children from such families may sometimes require a second chance, Government will also pay in full the exam fees for first time repeaters whose parents' income does not exceed Rs7,500 per month.

Qualifying households will be invited through communiqué in the press and radio to call at the Social Security Office of their locality with relevant documents, to submit an application for payment of exams fees. It is expected that payment will be effected within a period of two weeks from the date of application.

In line with this Government's philosophy to target aid to the needy, the Ministry of Social Security is also working on a scheme to provide assistance to other genuine cases needing assistance and the policy will be in place before the exam fees are due in March 2007.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that 16,000 students applied for a seat in the national colleges - and there were very limited seats - may I ask the hon. Minister how many students did get a 4 A⁺?

Mr Gokhool: Well, I don't have the details of how many obtained the 4 A⁺, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact of the matter is all students who got the 4 A⁺ have been provided with a seat in the colleges.

Mr Bodha: My second question to the Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, is: how many students who have got a 4 A⁺ did get a seat in a national college and how many did not get a seat?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, all students who got 4 A⁺ were provided with a seat. Whether they availed of the seat or not is a different matter. But they were provided with a seat. The number which was provided with a seat was 1,050 and those who availed of the seats which were provided was 999. 1,050 who got A⁺ were provided with a seat and 999 took advantage of the seats which were provided.

Mr Bodha: Let me take these figures, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister is saying that 999 students did take the seat, so, we are left with 51 seats. Today, in the press, we have an official document saying that there are only 27 seats. May I ask the hon. Minister where the other 24 seats have gone?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, we provided for 1,260 seats initially and we also explained that because of ties that occur, we increased the number of seats from 1,260 to 1,337 which means that officially there were 1,260 seats, but because of the ties we had to accommodate the students. Now, in certain colleges, for example, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, the last admitted student with a grade aggregate...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, we provided for 1,260 seats, but because of ties, 1,337 seats were provided to students. Now, we have made a check of how many vacancies are available and these vacancies have been advertised. The official number of seats was 1,260 and the number we have offered was 1,337. We have adjusted because we don't really have to offer all the seats being given that the official number of seats available was 1,260.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the figures presented to the House by the hon. Minister, we have 287 additional seats because the final number is 1,337. Can he confirm that among those 287 seats, there are students with 3 A⁺ plus one A and 3 A⁺ and a B who have been allocated a seat? My question is now: how many students did get a 3 A⁺ and an A and how many of them did get a national college and how were they chosen?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the scheme, as it is implemented, is on grade aggregate so that a student who gets 4 A⁺ will get the maximum grade aggregate of 24. Now, if a student gets a 3 A⁺ plus one A, the grade aggregate will be 23. If a student gets 2 A⁺ plus 2 A, the grade aggregate will come to 22. The basis of the admission is on the grade aggregate. Therefore, if we have the number of students with 4 A⁺, that is, a grade aggregate of 24, the seats are offered to them, if they apply for a seat. But if the number of those who are admitted is less, then we go to the next aggregate, that is, 23 and this is how we admit 3 A⁺ plus one A or even 2 A⁺ plus 2 A which will be 22 marks. And this system has been used by the MES to offer admission.

Mr Bodha: The whole issue of transparency is very important, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the CPE students are spending 50 hours every week to run this unacceptable race for a seat in a national college. The QEC is offering only 140 seats. My question is: some students with 3 A⁺ and an A, that is, an aggregate of 23, have obtained a national college, I want to know how many were there and how those who got a seat at the national college were chosen. That is the question.

Mr Gokhool: I can provide the breakdown of candidates with 4 A⁺, 3 A⁺ plus one A, 2 A⁺ plus 2 A. These statistics can be made available. This is not a difficulty. We can make the statistics available. But the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is: why is it that somebody with a 4 A⁺ may

not have got a seat, but somebody with a 3 A⁺ plus one A has got a seat. As I said, it is a parental choice. If the parents, for example, do not opt for admission to a national college, such candidates will not be considered for a national college.

(Interruptions)

Let me explain! If a parent whose child has got a grade aggregate of 24 – and we have the option of a national college - and he does not want his child to go to a national college, that student will not get a seat. And that will explain why somebody with a 3 A⁺ plus an A, a grade aggregate of 23 might get a seat in a national college, whereas somebody with a 4 A⁺ may not get a seat because of the choice. It is parental choice.

Mr Bodha: It is an issue of transparency, Mr Speaker, Sir, because people are making representations and they are complaining. My other question is: are there students with 3 A⁺ and a B who have obtained a seat in a national college while a student with 5 A⁺ has not had a seat?

Mr Gokhool: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition should follow. If a student ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool: I repeat my answer. If a student has got 4 A⁺ which is 24, but the parent did not opt for a college on a national basis, that student will not get a seat on the national basis, but will get a seat in the regional college because the parent did not opt for it. And that will explain how when the exercise is carried out, the possibility is there that somebody with a 3 A⁺ with one A or 2 A⁺ with 2 A will get a seat. The MES has looked at those cases where a student may have got 4 A⁺ and has not got a seat. Representations have been made and explanations have been given and parents are satisfied that because they didn't opt for a college on a national basis, they didn't get the seat.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, parents are not satisfied. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he agrees that an aggregate of three A⁺ and one B is

the same as two A+ and two A. How is the choice made then? That is why we are asking for the detailed results.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking him whether, for those cases, the border line cases...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: When there was the system of ranking, a girl...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha:... did not get a seat at the QEC because of a difference of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mark. This is a very delicate and sensitive issue. My question is: whether the Minister is aware that when we go on the aggregate, somebody having three A and one B has the same aggregate as somebody having two A+ and two A. How do you choose? That's why I am asking why he does not...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has put the question. Let the Minister answer.

Mr Bodha: The question is: why he does not publish the list of all students, in each school, with the detailed results, so that there is transparency? There should be faith in a system! We need to have faith in a system!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has canvassed this point in the past. We are in the logic of grading and not ranking. If we go with the logic of ranking, then you have to compute the marks. We are in the logic of grading. So, the starting point is grade obtained by the candidate. The candidate who has obtained grade A or four A+ would obtain 400 marks. If the lower range is 90, this means it is 360. I have presented the scheme of the range of marks that will allow the MES to carry out the selection exercise. The range of marks is important and not the absolute marks. We are not using the absolute marks.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the refined grading was used in all cases or whether, in certain cases, the raw scores were used?

Mr Gokhool: I stand by what I said. The refined grading system, as it has been devised, was used.

Mr Bodha: Can the Minister confirm that the raw marks were never used?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am saying that the range of marks was used for the admission of candidates.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, remaining in the logic of grading, as the hon. Minister stated, may I ask him whether he is in a position to inform the House how many pupils got a grade aggregate of 23 and how many were admitted in national schools, and how this choice has been made?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have the figures. For Maurice Curé, 152 candidates were offered a seat and they all had grade aggregate 24; Droopnath Ramphul, 116 with grade aggregate 24, and 24 with grade aggregate 23; Gaëtan Raynal, 67 with grade aggregate 24 and 91 with grade aggregate 23; MGI, 72 with grade aggregate 24...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member should, at least, listen. Out of courtesy, she should listen! She will have her turn to put questions.

(Interruptions)

I am replying! This is the hon. Member's interpretation! QEC...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is a point of order. Let me listen to it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister is giving information that I did not ask for. He is not replying to my question.

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order. I have no control on the answer of the Minister. However, I would request the Minister to be relevant.

Mr Gokhool: QEC, 163 with grade aggregate 24; MGI, 72 and the overall grade aggregate admitted was 24; John Kennedy, 41 with grade aggregate 24 and 100 with grade aggregate 23; Mahatma Gandhi, 70 with grade aggregate 24; Royal College Curepipe, 147 with grade aggregate 24; Royal College Port Louis...

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Minister is going to be long, I will request him to circulate the figures.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that, for parents who have opted for national colleges, a seat must have been given. I am in presence of a case where a student with five A+ from Montagne Blanche opted for the national colleges and even opted for MGI, where today we see that vacancies exist. I am laying the document on the Table of the Assembly. How does the Minister explain the fact that this student has not been given a seat in a national college?

Mr Gokhool: The parents must have made a proper representation to the MES. Otherwise, as I explained, we have admitted a certain number of students on the grade aggregate 24. But the number of applications and those who obtained 24 was much larger. That's where the range of marks was used by the MES to give to those who are the best. This is simple!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, it is clear that they advocate a fairer and more equitable system, but that they are not for transparency.

Let me come to the second part of the PNQ. May I ask the hon. Minister how many students are sitting for the SC and the HSC exams this year, and how many are going to benefit from a subsidy from Government this year as compared to last year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have the figures for last year. The number of students who sat for SC exams was 20,229 and 9,929 for HSC exams. The students have yet to fill forms for sitting for the exams for this year.

Mr Bodha: Could the hon. Minister please give the figures of those who benefited from full subsidy from the MSM/MMM Government and the number of students who benefited from a 50% rebate on the full fees, which meant that they paid around Rs3,000 for SC and around Rs9,000 for HSC?

Mr Gokhool: The figure is 1,600, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, does that mean that 1,600 students for SC and HSC included, are going to benefit from a subsidy from Government this year?

Mr Gokhool: The figures are for last year. The exercise is being done. A communiqué will be published, and those who need help will have to go to the Ministry of Social Security, where their cases will be studied and processed.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I remind the hon. Minister that the last Budget provided for Rs72 m. in terms of subsidy? May I ask the hon. Minister what is the figure for this year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have indicated, the cases that will be eligible will be attended to by Government.

Mr Bodha: It is clear that Government is not aware of the number of cases who are going to benefit from social aid. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, this year, SC exam fees are going to be increased by at least 25%, first because of an annual increase and second because of the devaluation of the rupee, and that the fees of the HSC will be about Rs10,000? Can he imagine the burden on a certain number of parents? May I ask him what the Government intends to do?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, as I have indicated, the Ministry of Social Security will implement the policy of paying the full fee for those who will qualify. On top of that, we will also provide assistance to those cases which are genuine ones and which may not be covered by the existing scheme. This will be looked into by the Ministry of Social Security.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is: how genuine is genuine? How will we know that there is a genuine and rewarding case?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the parents will have to make a case and provide all the information that will be required to study the case on a case to case basis. The other question we are examining is how to alleviate the difficulties of some parents. I have asked the MES to look into the possibility of paying the fees by instalments. This is being looked into.

Mr Nancy: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the local examination fees, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the same policy will apply for Rodrigues or whether additional special consideration will be given to Rodrigues, as in the recent case of free books in all schools in Rodrigues?

Mr Gokhool: As it is applied in Mauritius we also apply it for Rodrigues.

Mr Dayal: Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that despite several claims and requests from all stakeholders and Union people no detailed results of the students, their place of residence and the schools they were allotted were published during the last five years? Why? What about transparency then?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order I said! Hon. Dowarkasing, order! Hon. Guinness, order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Gokhool: The exam fees...

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Minister does not want to answer, I can't force him to answer, but if he is answering let me listen to the answer.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Dayal has put a question and I would like to answer the question.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has already answered the question in his main reply.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the examination fees have many components. There is an entry fee, there is a subject fee and there is a local fee. May I ask the hon. Minister whether Government can consider that the local fee be subsidised or abolished so that the fees paid by the parents are less than the 25% that they are going to pay because of the devaluation of the rupee?

Mr Gokhool: I have already stated the policy of Government with regard to the payment of fees.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask this Government, through the hon. Minister and through the hon. Prime Minister, to come back to the former policy of providing 50% grant...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: ... to all those who are going to sit for the SC and HSC examinations this year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will answer that question. The population has given us a mandate to carry out our Governmental Programme. They will have to wait for their turn.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon Bundhoo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the refined grading system, can the hon. Minister of Education state the number of complaints received this year as compared to last year and would he make a statement on the refined grading system itself?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been very few cases. In fact, I, myself was pleasantly surprised - because of the outcry that was raised in certain quarters - that there have not been many cases.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

11/12/07
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FORM 1 STUDENTS – ADMISSION 2008

(No. B/1355) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the admission of students in Form I for the 2008 intake, he will state the arrangements that have been made.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as in previous years, for an integral part of the Admission in Form I exercise, a Committee has been set up at the level of the Ministry to ensure that this exercise goes on smoothly both in Mauritius and Rodrigues for the mainstream and prevocational stream. This Committee consists of all the relevant stakeholders, including officials of my Ministry, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and the PSSA.

Admission will be made in the same way as last year, i.e. both on a National basis and on a regional basis in accordance with Section 10(5) of the Education Regulations, 1957, as subsequently amended.

As regards the Admission in Form I exercise 2008, a whole calendar of activities has been defined on the same line as the admission in Form I exercise 2006 and 2007. This calendar of activities includes the following procedures -

- (i) distribution of Information Pack containing materials on admission procedures;
- (ii) filling in and submission of the application forms by parents;
- (iii) issue of CPE results;
- (iv) registration exercise of students to be admitted in Form I in mainstream and the prevocational stream, and
- (v) examination of requests for transfers.

The distribution of Information Pack containing materials on the admission procedures and the filling in and submission of the application forms by parents were completed in September 2007.

The CPE results 2007 will be issued on Thursday 13 December 2007 and a common registration exercise both for students in the mainstream and prevocational stream is scheduled for Thursday 20 December 2007.

As already mentioned in the information pack issued to parents in September and as will again be mentioned in the letter of admission to be issued to parents on Thursday 13 December, consideration will be given to modify the date of registration exercise to accommodate the celebration of the Eid-Ul-Adha festival, if need be.

In view of the planning and coordination in respect of both demand and supply of seats in both mainstream and prevocational stream in both State and private secondary schools, done by my Ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders, it is not expected

that there will be any problem for admission in Form I exercise 2008. Allocations of seats in Form I in State schools with admission on a national basis, State schools, with admission on a regional basis and the 50% seats of private secondary schools, including the BEC schools allotted to MES, will be made by the MES. All requests for transfer in respect of Form I will be processed by the MES as from 26 December 2007 and will be completed before the resumption of studies in January 2008.

Customer Care Desks have been set up in all the 4 zones and PSSA to attend to any complaints from the general public thereto.

The situation is being closely monitored.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister the number of seats that will be available next year for the National colleges, that is, for those getting 4A+?

Mr Gokhool: I have the aggregate figures for the total number of seats that will be available, that is, 20,478 and the demand is 17,224. For the National colleges, it is around 1,450, because we have added three colleges more.

Mr Guinness: In case the number of students getting four A+ is less than 1,450, can I know from the Minister what mechanism he proposes to adopt so as to fill the remaining number of seats that will be left?

Mr Gokhool: I think the MES has worked on the basis of projection taking the figures for 2006 and, of course, they have projected the number of seats, and it is on that basis that we have increased the number of colleges that would be required to accommodate the students. At this stage, I will stand by what projections have been made.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister whether any existing State schools running prevocational classes would stop offering pre-vocational courses?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have answered this question on many occasions in this House. All I can say to the House is that ...

Mr Speaker: The more so the question is not relevant. We are talking of admission of students in Form I. Prevocational is not Form I.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister answered lengthily in his reply about the procedures of admission in Form I and prevocational classes.

Mr Gokhool: In fact, I have given the answer on many occasions, Mr Speaker, Sir. The gist of it is: whether seats will be available for those students who will join the prevocational classes. I have said yes, the seats will be provided to every student who has to go to a prevocational class.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask another question? Has the Minister received any request from private secondary colleges to stop operating prevocational classes?

Mr Gokhool: This is an ongoing feature, because the main purpose is to see to it that the number of seats is available, and that condition is met. It is not statutory required for all colleges to offer prevocational classes.

Mr Mohamed: Since the hon. Minister stated in his reply that special arrangements are being made pertaining to admissions for those students because of the celebration of Eid-UI-Adha which has been fixed to 20 December. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what special arrangements have been made pertaining to this specific issue? And if they have not been made as yet, when does he expect them to be made and communicated in advance to the parents?

Mr Gokhool: This has been taken into account. My colleague is informing me that it is on 20 December. If that is the case, we will take that into account and adjust the date.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, Eid-UI-Adha is normally celebrated over three days on which people are busy. Therefore, can I humbly suggest that the Minister considers 19 December- or even 18 December – as possible dates in order to facilitate the issue for those of the Muslim faith?

Mr Gokhool: I take note and will refer it to the officers who are working on this issue. I can't offhand say that this is going to happen.

Year

2008

NATIONAL COLLEGES - LOWER VI – ADMISSION (25/03/08)

(No. B/51) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students who have applied for a seat in Lower VI in the different subject combinations at the Royal Colleges, the Queen Elizabeth College and the Dr Maurice Curé State Secondary School, he will state if -
(a) all the students have obtained a seat, and
(b) the lists thereof will be rendered public.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, filling of vacancies in Lower VI in State Secondary Schools is a yearly recurrent feature except that this year the exercise has been wider in scope because of a greater number of vacancies arising out of the fact that high demand secondary schools like the Royal Colleges, Queen Elizabeth College and Dr. Maurice Curé State College did not have their own students in Form V last year.

That being said, the exercise of admission in Lower VI is over and the near totality of vacancies have been filled and all eligible and deserving students have been offered a seat. I am tabling information relating to the number of applications received and the number admitted in the four colleges. There are a few vacancies mostly in the odd subject combinations which have not been filled because there was no demand for these subject combinations.

I would like to seize this opportunity to clear a wrong perception that currently prevails in the minds of any applicants, the parents and the public at large to the effect that in certain national colleges, candidates with average results 26 to 30 units have been admitted to these national colleges to the detriment of candidates with bright results 6, 7 or 8 units. There is nothing sinister about that and has certainly happened, but not in the same subject combination. For each subject combination, the criteria used for admission had been grade aggregate and in case of tie, it was sub-aggregate. For example, in the highly subscribed subject combinations, Maths, Chemistry and Physics at QEC, the last admitted students had a grade aggregate of six units with a sub-aggregate of three, whereas for the subject combinations Food Studies, Biology and Chemistry at the same college, the last admitted student had an aggregate of 31 units.

Further, many of the applicants of a national college had applied for only one college and only one subject combination, although the application form provided for no less than 7 possibilities in terms of colleges and 5 possibilities in terms of subject combinations per college, totaling 35 possible choices.

The list of admitted students is already available on the website of the MES.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Minister since when the list is available on the website?

Mr Gokhool: It is available.

Mr Guinness: In fact, it is since this morning that it is on the website.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Minister answer the question as to when it is available on the website?

Mr Gokhool: Well, it is available. I can't say when.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Gunness, do you have another question?

Mr Gunness: Yes, Sir. The seats have been offered to the students since nearly three or four weeks. Can I know from the hon. Minister as to why it has taken such a long time for that list to be put on the website?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with our commitment to transparency, for example, with regard to admission to Form I, the policy of the Ministry is to be transparent and these instructions have gone to MES and they have to...

Mr Speaker: The question is so simple. It is about admission in Lower VI and not in Form I. Why has the list been put now?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, transparency applies all across, whether it is Form I or Lower VI.

SSS – LOWER VI CLASSES – ADMISSION EXERCISE (25/03/08)

(No. B/64) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Lower VI classes in the State Secondary Schools, he will state if the exercise for the admission of the students has been completed and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL SCHOOLS – FORM I LEVEL – VACANT SEATS (25/03/08)

(No. B/65) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Schools, he will state if –

- (a) the vacant seats at Form I level thereat have been filled, and
- (b) he will give the names and the examination results of the students who have been admitted in the second admission exercise.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL COLLEGES – ADMISSION EXERCISE (15/04/08)

(No. B/240) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Schools, he will state if –

- (a) the vacant seats at Form I level thereat have been filled and,
- (b) he will give the names and the examination results of the students who have been admitted in the second admission exercise.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, all vacancies in Form I of National Colleges were filled by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate in accordance with the provision of Regulation 10 (5) of the Education Regulations 1957, that is, on the basis of specified criteria and merit.

Out of a total of 1670 available seats 1702 seats have been allocated by MES with 854 of the boys' side and 848 on the girls' side. Therefore, more seats were allocated than originally provided for because of ties.

The last part of the question does not arise as there has not been any second admission exercise in National Colleges by MES.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is the very reason for the question. The MES has proceeded with the first exercise and then vacancies were filled. I would like to know what was the mechanism put up to fill the vacancies in National Colleges?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have given a very simple and clear answer. There was only one exercise that was carried out by MES and my answer is very simple. There were 1676 seats, but more seats were allocated because of ties. There was no second exercise. If the hon. lady has prepared a question in anticipation of an answer which I have not given, that is not my problem.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister has just mentioned that there were more seats made available due to ties. I would like to know in which cases and in which colleges such a situation arose and again if they were ties, the number of such ties that have been taken on board.

Mr Gokhool: This is a matter which is dealt with by the MES concerning admission in Form I. They forecast a number of seats and when there are ties, these are accommodated. If the hon. lady wants specific answers as to which colleges these ties.....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Perrier!

NATIONAL SCHOOLS – FORM I – ADMISSION (01/04/08)

(No. B/154) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Schools, he will state if -

- (a) the vacant seats at Form I level thereat have been filled and
- (b) he will give the names and the examination results of the students who have been admitted in the second admission exercise.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL COLLEGES – FORM I – ADMISSION (29/04/08)

(No. B/365) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the admission of students to Form I in the National Colleges, he will state the number thereof who have not obtained 4A+ at the Certificate of Primary Education examinations and who have obtained seats thereat.

Reply: A total of 677 (412 boys and 265 girls) candidates who has not scored the top aggregate 4 A+ at the CPE Examination 2007 have been allocated a seat in a National College in Form 1 in 2008.

11/7/08
33
SECONDARY SCHOOLS – FORM V STUDENTS – REVERSION

(No. B/764) **Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students of the State and Private Secondary Schools who were in Form V at the beginning of the year, he will state if any of them have been reverted to Form IV classes or have left school since and, if so, the number thereof, in each case.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that –

- (i) out of 8,325 students in Form V in the State Secondary Schools at the beginning of the year, 104 have been reverted to Form IV, and
- (ii) out of 12,168 students in Form V in the private secondary schools, 12 have been reverted to Form IV;

making a total of 116 reversions.

I am also informed that the reasons differ from case to case for such reversions. In most of the reverted cases, the students had poor results at Form IV level and had been exceptionally and conditionally promoted to Form V, but when their parents realised that they could not cope with the level, they applied for reversion.

JG/D22/P10/5
(PQ No. B/764 contd.)

Mr Guinness: Can the hon. Minister, first of all, give us the names of the State Secondary Schools where such reversions have taken place?

Mr Gokhool: I do not have the names right now, but I can submit the information later on.

Mr Guinness: Is the hon. Minister aware that in most of these cases, it is because the parents are not being able to collect the amount of money needed to pay for the SC exams fees? That is why the children have not been able to pursue in Form V and they have been reverted to Form IV.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information we have gathered is that parents have looked at the level of the students and then they have requested for reversion.

(Interruptions)

But I am answering the question and the hon. Member should listen to my explanation. I do not have any formal representation that students were reverted because of the inability to pay fees. I am giving the information I have. If the hon. Member has got official information, he has to communicate to the House and I will look into it.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, anyway the student has been promoted to Form V. I cannot see the point of the Minister that it is now that the parents find that the student is not able to pursue and, therefore, is reverted back to Form IV.

The Deputy Speaker: Yet the hon. Minister has said that this is the answer that he has been provided with.

(Interruptions)

Let him seek for the information!

JG/D22/P10/6
(PQ No. B/764 contd.)

Mrs Labelle: Is it the policy of the Ministry to let parents make evaluation of pupils as to whether they can be in a class? Is it the duty of parents to make such evaluation?

Mr Gokhool: Not only this is part of their responsibility and they will have to talk to the Head of the school to assess what is the level of the student. I don't think the parents should be left out of this exercise and this is proper thing to do.

Mr Guinness: The student has been promoted to Form V. Let us say that the student is not in a position to pay for the examination fees, why is it that he or she has to be reverted to Form IV?

Mr Gokhool: This is the hypothesis of the hon. Member. I don't agree with that. I have given the information I have. What I am saying is that parents, in most cases, together with the school administration, realise that the student is not able to cope. The other thing that I have said - I am not saying that it is automatic - is that only exceptionally and conditionally. There are many cases of students who are unable to cope and they write to the Ministry and they say they would want to revert back to the lower form. This is a normal practice.

D22/IF/P11/1

No. B/764 (contd.)

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister how many of the 140 students who have been reverted back to Form IV had written to the Ministry requesting for their demotion from Form V to Form IV?

Mr Gokhool: I cannot say exactly how many, but we can look for the information. Normally this takes place at the level of the school and when the matter is sorted out, this is not reported. When students do write to the Ministry requesting a reversion, this is addressed at the level of the Ministry otherwise these matters are sorted out at the level of the school.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the answer given by the Minister, there is a situation where parents have been challenging the evaluation of the school, which has found these students fit to be promoted to Form V. Is it normal that we experience such a situation?

Mr Gokhool: I am sorry. I think the hon. lady is not understanding the process. The child is admitted on a conditional basis; it can happen that a child can start in January and we have so many cases of children facing difficulties. This will be made known to the parents who come to the school and discuss. Let me inform the House that out of 8,325 children, there are only 104 in State Secondary Schools and out of 12,168 children, only 12 have been reverted. It is not a serious problem because there are some children who have problems. I cannot understand the logic of the hon. lady. At times they want to help students and when we are helping them, they find a problem out of it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

D22/IF/P11/2

Hon. Minister! Stop now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has the figures for last year and whether this happened only this year because of the reason which was pointed out by my colleague?

Mr Gokhool: I have given the answer to the question with regard to the reversion of classes for this year. If a question is set to me about the trend, I can give the answer.

Mr Gunness: Can I know from the Minister whether there is any student who is not sitting for SC examinations and who has not asked to be reverted to Form IV, but is still pursuing Form V?

Mr Gokhool: I won't have the answer right now.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has made mention of two figures, if I am not mistaken. The first case: 104 and the second case: 12. Since the Minister said that he does not have the exact figures as to what the situation is, that is, whether it is about non-payment of fees or inability to pay, would he consider carrying out a survey among those set figures of students and later on tabling it for the House to have an exact idea?

Mr Gokhool: I have no problem with that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

NATIONAL COLLEGES – NUMBER (22/07/08)

(No. B/920) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Colleges, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof as at
 - (i) January 2007;
 - (ii) January 2008
- (b) if other regional colleges will be converted into national colleges as from January 2009, and
- (c) the criteria used for such conversion.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information is as follows -

- (a) there were nine and 12 colleges admitting students in 2007 and 2008 respectively, on the basis of merit;
- (b) for January 2009, three additional colleges have been upgraded to the status of National Colleges namely Piton State Secondary School, France Boyer de la Giroday SSS and Sir Leckraj Teelock SSS, and
- (c) as regards the last part of the question, the overriding criterion is to create opportunities for students with the best results to access the high demand schools on the basis of merit. Given that the education system is a dynamic one, and that, on account of the on-going educational reforms and the quality initiatives, more and more students are doing better and better and are expected to do better, my Ministry has to enlarge opportunities for them. In designating the National colleges, a proper school mapping exercise is carried out where my Ministry looks at the public demand and supply of seats, the geographical position, the quality of the infrastructure and availability of educational and recreational facilities.

As a matter of fact, although admission to a National college is made on the basis of performance, nowhere is it provided that access thereto should be limited to only those obtaining the maximum grade of 24 units. Enlarging access to National colleges, not exclusively on the basis of a 4 A+ (i.e. $4 \times 6 = 24$ units) but also accommodating students who do not achieve the 4 A+ but have nevertheless put in the required efforts, should be encouraged. Overtime, this will result in higher achievements of the many as opposed to higher achievements of the few.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning the criteria to get into the National colleges, that is, 24 units and so on. What I am interested in is: what criteria have been used to upgrade these regional colleges into National colleges?

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Minister mean part (c) of the question?

Mrs Labelle: Yes, the criteria used.

The Deputy Speaker: In fact, your question is quite clear.

Mr Gokhool: I have already given the answer, I can repeat it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Gokhool: What I said is: as regards the last part of the question, that is, part (c), the overriding criterion is to create opportunities for students with the best results to access the high demand schools on the basis of merit. Given that the education system is a dynamic one, and that, on account of the ongoing educational reforms ...

(Interruptions)

Well, this is the answer I have given.

The Deputy Speaker: The criteria for conversion.

Mrs Labelle: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Once again, the hon. Minister has repeated the criteria to get into this school. He has talked about providing higher level and so on. My question is: what criteria have been used to upgrade these regional schools into National colleges and why France Boyer de la Giroday SSS and Sir Leckraj Teelock SSS? I suppose some criteria have been used.

Mr Gokhool: I cannot undertake this exercise without criteria. I have just said that I will read the relevant part of it: in designating the National colleges, a proper school mapping exercise is carried out and the Ministry takes into account the public demand and supply of seats. The statistics are available. When we do the school mapping, we project, we know the statistics, and also the geographical positioning, the quality of the infrastructure and the availability of educational and recreational facilities.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has, on a number of occasions, mentioned in the House that there is no difference between a National college and a regional college as far as infrastructure and the teaching are concerned. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any change in this policy?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, there is a public document, when I answered the question of the hon. lady, which is available. And we follow the same policy. It is the admission on the basis of merit. Otherwise, the human and physical resources are similar. In fact, some of the regional colleges have got better facilities in terms of infrastructure.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that three new colleges

will be National colleges, can I know from the hon. Minister how many seats will be available for national colleges - how many for boys and girls respectively - and out of the three colleges, which one will be for boys and which one girls?

Mr Gokhool: I will give the figures as I have them. Seats in Form I in 2009: 7,985 in the State Schools, both in national and regional colleges. In the National colleges: 1,890 with 945 boys and 945 girls. These are the projected figures and we have to wait for the results of exams. And for private colleges, the figure is 11,502.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister why this change in policy? Because, at the start, when he came with his reform or counter-reform, he mentioned that all students will not be forced into the rat race and that some students might choose not to ask for seats in the national colleges. Then, why are we forcing children to enter the rat race? Because when we convert the regional college into a national college, students from the region will not have the option of choosing to get admitted into a regional college?

Mr Gokhool: First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a continuity of the policy, there is no change. Because as from 2007 we have moved on to the establishment of national colleges and this policy is being maintained. At present, there are students who are in regional colleges and who stay in the regional colleges. The process is going on whereby every school, whether it is national or regional, will emerge as a quality school on its own merit and it will have its own characteristics. For example, certain schools will emerge in terms of academic achievements and also in terms of excellence in science or academic brilliance, excellence in languages. This is the process we have engaged upon. They may not agree, that is their business, but we are going ahead with the policy of the Government.

(Interruptions)

They will never agree!

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that the hon. Minister is quite confusing in his answers. Since he says that the quality of education is the same in all the schools and that the schools have the same infrastructure, on what basis does he choose to put one college as a national college and another one as a regional one?

Mr Gokhool: I think I will go back to where we started then if they want to open the whole debate. What we wanted to do is honour a pledge

taken to the nation that we will have Form I to VI colleges and put in place the policy is addressing that issue, and we are continuing the same policy.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he has projected any figure of national colleges? How many national colleges, at the end of the day, we will have?

Mr Gokhool: As I said, this is a situation which evolves. If we look at the statistics, if the demand goes on, we have to accommodate the demand of the students. But, at some point, a point will be reached where this process will have to stop.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned earlier that he is against the competition at CPE level, and that at one point in time we expect the CPE to get phased out. May I ask him what will be the basis of admission - whether we are going to have a competitive exam for admission in National colleges or whether we will eventually have all colleges converted into national colleges with admission on a regional basis?

Mr Gokhool: Let me, first of all, tell the hon. lady that we believe in fair competition on the basis of merit. If she thinks that there can be a world without the competition, she is just dreaming. The other thing I want to say is that, with regard to the second part of the question, I have already given the explanation on many occasions.

Mr Jhugoo: Can I know from the hon. Minister why all his answers are so confusing today?

The Deputy Speaker: No.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are all getting confused with the different answers. At one time the Minister is saying that one criterion is quality of infrastructure and when we asked for the difference he said that there is no difference. He now talks about the demand. How far is the hon. Minister proposing to go regarding the demand? What does the hon. Minister mean by the demand? Is it the only criterion of having 4A+ and something like that?

The Deputy Speaker: It is not only the hon. Minister who is confused!

Mr Gokhool: If the hon. lady is confused for three years, I am not responsible for that. She has to live with her confusion!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Labelle! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

(Interruptions)

This has to stop now!

(Interruptions)

This has to stop now!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Labelle, I am asking you to withdraw from the House!

(Interruptions)

At this stage, the Opposition Members left the Chamber

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Next Question!

24/6/10

15

SCHOOLS - FORM VI – ADMISSION

(No. 1B/171) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to admission to Form VI, he will state if Government is proposing to lower the eligibility criteria.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with the announcement made in the Government Programme 2010-2015, we are working towards the establishment of new and innovative pathways for students who have successfully completed the o-level/School Certificate either in the academic or technical/vocational stream, in order to improve access to upper secondary education.

The overall aim of this measure is to ultimately improve such an access without sacrificing the quality of education. Hence, it is not intended, per se, to lower the current eligibility criteria in any way, but to review these and provide more opportunities to students having passed the School Certificate by introducing a form of flexibility for their promotion to the Lower VI stream taking into account their diverse aptitudes and inclinations.

Such flexibility to facilitate movement to an upper grade will allow for possible consideration of -

- 1) A broad subject combination than what currently prevails; hence implying a wider choice among the subjects in line with the student's predilections;
- 2) Allowing students to take only two subjects at Principal Level and two at Subsidiary Level, and
- 3) Offering Professional HSC as an option at school.

In this regard, a Technical Committee has been set up to look into the implications of the new scheme and make recommendations for the implementation modalities.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I welcome the idea of new path ways as opposed to reducing entry requirements for a Higher School Certificate, but I would wish to ask the hon. Minister in this regard, whether there has been assessment of the practice over the last few years, of allowing students with only three credits at SC level to go on to the traditional HSC?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, the idea of coming up with this project is based on what has been happening in the last few years. I, myself have asked for an assessment, I do not have the result already with me, but it is being looked into.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister consider questioning the very concept of group certificates, since Mauritius is one of the few countries which still have group certificates SC and HSC, whereby you need to pass at one and same sitting on a number of subjects. Will the hon. Minister consider the possible advisability of replacing same for instance by 'O' and 'A' Levels as was done by the UK and many Commonwealth countries years ago.

Dr. Bunwaree: This matter has also been taken up. In fact, there is a Committee working on that.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, five long years ago, the idea of alternative pathways was mooted by the MSM/MMM Government with polytechnics along the Singaporean model. Do we understand that this is one of the possibilities now being envisaged?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, as much as the Foundation Programme also which has already started.

27/11/10 (36)

SECONDARY EDUCATION – ENROLMENT RATIO

(No. 1A/44) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Secondary Education, he will give, for each of the years, from 1999 to 2009, the –

- (a) net enrolment ratio for
 - (i) lower secondary education, and
 - (ii) upper secondary education
- (b) number of students enrolled in the pre-vocational stream, indicating the completion rate, and
- (c) number and names of educational institutions catering exclusively for pre-vocational students.

Reply: As regards part (a) (i) and (ii), Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for Lower Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education, Republic of Mauritius (1999-2009) –

(Academic and Prevocational)

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
NER (Lower Secondary: FI to FV)(%)	61.4	61.7	62.5	63.6	65.6	66.5	69.9	71.2	72.4	71.9	72.1
NER (Upper Secondary: Lower VI to Upper VI)(%)	54.3	57.2	58.6	60.2	60.9	58.6	59.1	62.5	63.2	62.7	64.2

(Academic only)

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
NER (Lower Secondary: FI to FV)(%)	57.0	57.3	58	57.9	58.9	58.7	60.9	61.7	63.5	63.9	64.4
NER (Upper Secondary: Lower VI to Upper VI)(%)	53.4	55.8	57.5	59.6	60.3	58.4	59.0	62.4	63.0	62.5	63.8

Note:

$$\text{NER for Lower Secondary} = \frac{\text{Enrolment in Secondary aged (11-15)}}{\text{Population aged (11-15)}} \times 100$$

$$\text{NER for Upper Secondary} = \frac{\text{Enrolment in Secondary aged (16-17)}}{\text{Population aged (16-17)}} \times 100$$

As regards part (b), Pre vocational - Enrolment and completion rate, Republic of Mauritius,
1999 – 2009 –

	Enrolment	Completion rate (%)
1999	4,489	na
2000	4,695	49.4
2001	4,919	45.4
2002	5,966	47.1
2003	7,326	63.5
2004	8,488	70.2
2005	9,845	74.6
2006	10,424	79.3
2007	9,573	77.7
2008	8,495	71.2
2009	8,033	77.6

na – not available

$$\text{Completion Rate} = \frac{\text{Enrolment in Grade III, Year } t}{\text{Enrolment in Grade I, Year } t-3} \times 100$$

As regards part (c), number and names of educational institutions catering exclusively for pre-vocational students in 2009 -

1. Goodlands SSS (V)
 2. Riv. Du Rempart SSS (V)
 3. Immaculée Conception SSS (V)
 4. Gandhian Basic School
 5. Colonel Maingard SSV
 6. S. Murday SSS (V)
-

9/11/10
(32)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2011 - PUBLIC & PRIVATE NON-FEE PAYING

(No. 1A/128) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to resumption of studies in academic year 2011, he will state –

- (a) if there will be any changes in the number of
 - (i) public, and
 - (ii) private non-fee paying, secondary schools in operation and, if so, state the reasons therefor;
- (b) the number of seats available at Form I Level in
 - (i) State National colleges;
 - (ii) State Regional schools;
 - (iii) non fee-paying secondary schools, and
- (c) the list of institutions offering pre-vocational classes.

Reply: Concerning part (a) (i) of the question, with regard to public schools, there will be no change in the number of State Secondary Schools in operation for the resumption of studies in 2011.

As regards part (a) (ii), as far as grant-aided private secondary schools in Mauritius are concerned, the number of schools will decrease from 87 in the year 2010 to 85 in 2011. Two

schools namely Byron College and Grand Bois College will no longer be registered as grant-aided private secondary schools in 2011 for the following reasons -

- (i) these two schools have a very low student population (which is below the minimum threshold of 150 students in mainstream) thereby increasing the cost per student to an unreasonable level. As at October 2010, Grand Bois College and Byron College had the following student population in the mainstream -

	Number of students in mainstream
Grand Bois College	95
Byron College	80

- (ii) the perennial strained industrial relations prevailing in the schools.

As regards part (b) (i) to (iii), the number of seats available at Form I for the resumption of studies in academic year 2011 is as follows -

	Number of seats in Form I in 2011
(i) National Schools (State)	1,715
(ii) Regional Schools (State)	6,025
(iii) Private Aided Secondary Schools	10,603

As regards part (c), the list of institutions offering pre-vocational classes in 2011 -

STATE-OWNED SCHOOLS	
ZONE 1	
1.	ADOLPHE DE PLEVITZ SSS
2.	B. RAMLALLAH SSS
3.	GOODLANDS SSV
4.	IMMACULEE CONCEPTION SSV
5.	FRANK RICHARD SSS
6.	LADY S. RAMGOOLAM SSS
7.	PAILLES SSS

8.	PAMPLEMOUSSES SSS
9.	PORT LOUIS NORTH SSS
10.	PROF. HASSAN RAFFA SSS
11.	R. PRAYAG SSS
12.	RIV. DU REMPART SSV
13.	TERRE ROUGE SSS
14.	TRIOLET SSS

ZONE 2	
15.	CAMP DE MASQUE STATE COLLEGE
16.	BON ACCUEIL STATE COLLEGE
17.	B. AIR RIVIERE SECHE SSS
18.	BEAU BASSIN SSS
19.	EBENE SSS
20.	GANDHIAN BASIC SCHOOL
21.	MANILALL DOCTOR SSS
22.	QUARTIER MILITAIRE SSS
23.	R. GUJADHUR SSS
24.	SEBASTOPOL SSS
25.	SMT INDIRA GANDHI SSS
ZONE 3	
26.	RIV. DES ANGUILLES STATE COLLEGE
27.	DHUNPUTH LALLAH SSS
28.	FLOREAL SSS
29.	FOREST SIDE SSS
30.	M. SANGEELEE SSS
31.	ST AUBIN SSS
32.	SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SSS
ZONE 4	
33.	BAMBOUS SSS

34.	LA GAULETTE SSS
35.	PALMA SSS
36.	QUATRE BORNES SSS
37.	PHOENIX SSS
38.	SODNAC SSS
39.	SWAMI SIVANANDA SSS
40.	VACOAS SSS (HOLLYROOD)
41.	VACOAS SSS(ST PAUL ROAD)
42.	MURDAY SSV

PRIVATE SECONDARY GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS	
ZONE 1	
1.	BHUJOHARRY COLLEGE
2.	BRADLEY COLLEGE
3.	COLLEGE DU BPS FATIMA
4.	COLLEGE IDEAL
5.	COLLEGE PERE LAVAL
6.	COSMOPOLITAN COLLEGE (BOYS)
7.	COSMOPOLITAN COLLEGE (GIRLS)
8.	DAYANAND ANGLO VEDIC COLLEGE (Morcellement St André)
9.	DAYANAND ANGLO VEDIC COLLEGE (Port Louis)
10.	FRIENDSHIP COLLEGE (BOYS)
11.	FRIENDSHIP COLLEGE (GIRLS)
12.	INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
13.	ISLAMIC CULTURAL COLLEGE (Port Louis)
14.	LORETO COLLEGE (Port Louis)
15.	MADAD UL ISLAM COLLEGE
16.	MEDCO-ALEX BHUJOHARRY SECONDARY SCHOOL
17.	MEDCO CASSIS SECONDARY SCHOOL
18.	MEDCO TRINITY SECONDARY SCHOOL

19.	MERTON COLLEGE
20.	PORT LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL
21.	SOONDUR MUNRAKHUN COLLEGE
22.	ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S COLLEGE
23.	UNIVERSAL COLLEGE
ZONE 2	
24.	COLLEGE DE LA CONFIANCE
25.	COLLEGE DES VILLES SOEURS
26.	COLLEGE DU B.P.S (Beau Bassin)
27.	DARWIN COLLEGE
28.	LORETO COLLEGE (Rose Hill)
29.	LORETO COLLEGE (St Pierre)
30.	LYCEE DE BEAU-BASSIN
31.	MAYFLOWER COLLEGE
32.	MODERN COLLEGE
33.	NEW EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE
34.	NELSON COLLEGE
35.	NEW DEVTON COLLEGE
36.	PATTEN COLLEGE (GIRLS)
37.	QUARTIER MILITAIRE COLLEGE
38.	ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE
39.	SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE
ZONE 3	
40.	AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
41.	CUREPIPE COLLEGE
42.	HAMILTON COLLEGE (BOYS)
43.	HAMILTON COLLEGE (GIRLS)
44.	KEATS COLLEGE
45.	LORETO COLLEGE (Bambous Virieux)
46.	LORETO COLLEGE (Curepipe)

47.	LORETO COLLEGE (Mahebourg)
48.	MAURITIUS COLLEGE (BOYS)
49.	MAURITIUS COLLEGE (GIRLS)
50.	NOTRE DAME COLLEGE
51.	REASCENCE COLLEGE
52.	SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
53.	THANACODY COLLEGE
54.	UNITY COLLEGE
55.	WINDSOR COLLEGE (GIRLS)
ZONE 4	
56.	COLLEGE DU ST ESPRIT (Rivière Noire)
57.	COLLEGE DU SAINT ESPRIT (Quatre Bornes)
58.	ISLAMIC CULTURAL COLLEGE (Belle Rose)
59.	LE LYCEE MAURICIEN
60.	LORETO COLLEGE (Quatre Bornes)
61.	MEDCO CLAIRFONDS SECONDARY SCHOOL
62.	N SADDUL COLLEGE
63.	PATTEN COLLEGE (BOYS)
64.	ST HELENA'S COLLEGE
65.	ST MARY'S WEST COLLEGE

RESIDENCE CANDOS - ABANDONED CONCRETE HOUSE

(No. 1A/129) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the

- (a) existence of an abandoned house in a derelict state belonging to the N. Family representing health and security hazards to the inhabitants, and
- (b) remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that following a site visit effected near Residence Candos, it has been noted that there was an abandoned concrete

YEAR 2011

(38)
22/3/11

HSC – ENTRY REQUIREMENT

(No. B/51) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Sixth Form classes and the HSC course of study, he will state -

- (a) the reasons behind the decision for lowering the entry requirement thereto, indicating when the decision was announced, and
- (b) whether GCE "A" Level in two subjects is now being considered as an alternative.

Reply: As the House is aware, the Government Programme 2010-2015 underscores the need to improve access to upper secondary education through the establishment of new and innovative pathways either in the academic or technical/vocational stream for students who have successfully completed School Certificate/GCE 'O' Level.

The implementation of this measure involves the provision of new opportunities for a greater number of students to access upper secondary and post-secondary education, by introducing more flexibility in the system without compromising on the quality of education and its outputs.

Prior to 2011, the criteria applicable for promotion to Lower Six and which were based on 4 credits at School Certificate/G.C.E 'O' Level was a constraint to many students who were denied the possibility of having access to H.S.C/G.C.E 'A' Level Studies, in our secondary schools. However, under the previous formula, students having 3 credits at S.C/G.C.E 'O' Level were exceptionally allowed to be promoted to Lower Six only in the following circumstances -

- (i) in the event of a repeat at Form V level, they would thereafter be disqualified by virtue of their age for promotion to Lower Six that is, they should not have reached the age of 19 on 01 January in the year they are admitted to Lower Six;
- (ii) in case they have already repeated Form V and because of internal rules, they cannot repeat more than once.

This constraint faced by many students having 3 credits had to be addressed holistically in as much as seats were available in both State and private secondary schools in the relevant subject combinations offered.

The criteria had therefore to be reviewed such that all students having passed SC/GCE 'O' Level with 3 credits be allowed to join Lower Six, subject to their satisfying the requirement for subject combination as well as the age criterion.

In parallel with this strategic decision, we are advising students to further improve their 'O' Level qualification by sitting for the SC/GCE 'O' Level exams preferably while being in Lower Six.

As Members may be aware, a policy announcement was made in early 2010 on the provision of increased opportunities for students to follow HSC. programs. Following a Government decision on 28 January 2011, the new criteria were formalised.

This measure will further facilitate access to education at post-secondary and tertiary levels in line with our vision to have a Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio (GTER) of 72% in 2015. It is worthwhile mentioning that most universities accept admission with 2 'A' Levels and it is increasingly becoming a worldwide trend. I am pleased to inform the House that this new measure has benefited more than 1500 students having less than 4 credits and who have been promoted to Lower Six.

With regard to part (b), the major concern is to obviate the wastage of precious human resources and improve efficiency in the system. We have come across a number of cases whereby students, despite having met the minimum requirements for promotion to Lower Six, are not eligible for any subject combination in their school by virtue of their results.

As a result, under the previous conditions these students would have had to repeat Form V or else, leave the school in case they had already repeated the class or were over-aged.

With a view to offering such students the opportunity to obtain 'A' Level qualifications in a minimal number of subjects, it has been decided to review the current practice and allow

them exceptionally to join Lower VI with 2 subjects at 'A' Level, 2 subjects at Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and General Paper.

These students are being allowed to sit for at least 2 subjects at Principal Level. As for students who have passed in 2 subjects at GCE 'A' Level, their qualification is equivalent to the same 2 subjects offered at HSC Level.

The House would appreciate that, failing to usher in this measure, would have deprived many of our students with three credits of the opportunity to follow HSC classes and ultimately have access to post-secondary or tertiary education. We believe that the majority of these students come from deprived areas or from needy families. Education is in fact their major leverage to ensure upward social mobility. Hence, denying these students the possibility of promotion to Lower Six may further push them deeper into poverty instead of empowering them which is the primary mission of education.

I wish to reiterate, that the criteria for having a minimum number of credits, is not per se a requirement of Cambridge. It was rather a decision taken administratively years ago in view of a limited number of seats available in Lower VI in those days.

Today, the situation has changed, and now that we have more than enough seats, there is no reason why students, especially the needy should be deprived of such opportunities.
