

mr/d10p11.02

unrevised

**PRE-SCHOOL TRUST FUND -  
TEACHER-EDUCATOR/SUPERVISORS - POST**

(No. B/373) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the post of Teacher-Educator/Supervisors at the Pre-School Trust Fund, he will -

- (a) state when was the post advertised and the interview and recruitment carried out;
- (b) give the names of all persons recruited to date with their qualifications and experience, and
- (c) why the 16 teachers-in-charge reckoning very long years of service at the Fund and performing those duties since long have not been appointed.

**Mr Obegadoo:** Sir, the reply is as follows -

As regards part (a) of the question, the vacancies were advertised on 16 January 2002. The interview was carried out on 09 October 2002 and 16 Teacher-Educator/Supervisors took up employment on 10 February 2003.

With regard to part (b), I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly all the required information in regard to these 16 new Teacher-Educator/Supervisors.

As regards part (c) of the question, it should be noted that there is no grade of "Teacher-in Charge" within the present set-up of the PSTF. The employees referred to in the question are in fact ex-SILWF employees presently employed as teachers at the PSTF. Out of 19 such teachers, two have been promoted to the position of Teacher-Educator/Supervisor (TE/S).

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As regards the remaining 17, their applications were not retained for the post of Teacher-Educator/Supervisor, which is pedagogical and managerial in nature, whereas they have a background which qualifies them especially for the development of pre-school tool kits and the provision of support services to both public and private pre-schools in Mauritius. It is for that reason that the PSTF has set up regional pre-school resource centres and is proposing to redeploy those teachers to operate these centres against payment of additional remuneration. These arrangements have been discussed and finalised in consultation with the teachers concerned and their union representatives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I indicated when replying to the previous question we are coming up with proposals for the reforms in the pre-school sector which also take into account the human resource dimension and the training needs of that sector.

**Mr Dulloo:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that when the Teacher-Educator/Supervisor post was being created, there were eighteen applicants in service in all; those sixteen, I have referred to, were invited to apply. They were told that, for the first intake - this is the scheme of service as published - priority of consideration will be given to officers performing duties of the post, which they were actually doing. In fact, as a result of the meeting with the chairman, he said that priority would be given to the ex-Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund employees when the post of Teacher-Educator/Supervisor would be filled. Why is it that the sixteen were left out?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Let me repeat that no post has been created; we have merely filled existing positions. I am not aware of the information just imparted by the hon. gentleman and I, therefore, cannot comment.

**Mr Dulloo:** This post was advertised more than a year back. Actually the interview was carried out last October and this post was filled only recently. Is the Minister aware of this? Because he said that this post was not created.

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**Mr Obeegadoo:** I would not wish, Mr Speaker, to repeat my answer, but, at the very outset, I stated that the vacancy was advertised on 16 January 2002, interviews carried out on 09 October 2002, and post filled on 10 February 2003.

**Mr Dulloo:** It seems the Minister has not got the proper information, because actually those officers were assigned special duties in order to prepare them to assume the responsibility of Teacher-Educator/Supervisor and they were even offered an allowance of thousand rupees pending their appointment to this post.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I am not aware, Sir. If the hon. gentleman can communicate any information he has in his possession, I will look into the matter.

**Mr Dulloo:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that these 16 persons were actually asked to train a group of people and those trainees were actually recruited to fill in the post for which they had applied and for which they have been outstripped? They were not recruited. Is he aware of this?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, what I do know is that these persons, 18 in all, were previous employees of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. They moved to the PSTF in the distant past, they are not strong on qualifications, but they have some experience. Two of them have been appointed Teacher-Educator/Supervisors on the basis of their output. Sixteen others, on the basis of their experience, are being considered for posting in what are termed resource centres where, in line with their experience, they can offer support to pre-schools both in public and private sectors.

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**Mr Dulloo:** This is exactly the injustice in what has happened. May I ask the hon. Minister to check and see whether, in fact, out of the 18 persons, two are appointed. He is saying because of their output, but, in fact, the two have actually the same experience, the same sort of qualification as the 16 that were not appointed. In fact, those 16 persons reckon 24 to 28 years of experience in the service; they have been to special seminars, special training and special assignments in order to prepare them for this particular post, that has taken for over a year to be filled.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** That is not my information, Sir, but, as the hon. Member is well aware, each time he refers to me any specific case, I do look into it and do let him have an appropriate answer.

**Mr Dulloo:** Well, the hon. Minister seems to be referring to the question of restructuring. May I ask him whether he is aware that the restructuring has already apparently been put into place and by letter dated 24 February, the Chairman actually circulated to all employees of the Pre-School Trust Fund the restructuring as follows -

To restructure the PSTF at three levels -

- (i) Creation of four regional co-ordination units;
- (ii) Setting up of a national resource centre in other support services,
- (iii) Creation of four regional early childhood resource centres, (.....)

So, the whole structure was there. There was no need to await the report in the pre-primary sector as he is saying, because the restructuring is there already.

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**Mr Obeegadoo:** Reform in education is a permanent process; Restructuration has indeed been on for more than a year and I have, at first hand, witnessed the enthusiasm generated by such restructuration amongst PSTF employees. In fact, all the unions have been taken on board and are fully satisfied with the direction in which we are moving in the pre-primary sector.

**Mr Dulloo:** I would, therefore, ask the Minister - he is speaking of enthusiasm, I am not quarelling about the enthusiasm - but not withstanding it, there has been some sort of injustice. Will he accept the communication that I have given to him with all the documents for him to inquire into what I have said?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Certainly, but then I would need to have the documents which the hon. Member is referring to.