

FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME – CONSULTANT (20/06/06)

(No. B/801) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if a consultant has been appointed to work out the modalities of the existing Free Transport Scheme and, if so, will he state the amount of consultancy fees paid out to the consultant.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the services of International Development Partners Ltd, a member of the De Chazal du Mée Group, have been enlisted to review the current Free Travel Scheme. The consultant will be paid an all inclusive fee of Rs869,000 plus VAT for the assignment.

Mr Guinness: May I know whether there are other firms which have quoted if ever there was a tendering exercise?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There have been no quotations, but there has been an expression of interest from another firm, but rather late.

We were pressed because of the time limit.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister the difference in the price? What price did the other firm quoted?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There was no quotation of price, but just an expression of interest. They learnt about it through the press that there was going to be this consultancy and they were interested in the project.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister how this international firm came to know that there was a consultancy exercise to be carried out?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It was in the press. I announced it myself that we are going for a consultancy.

Mr Guinness: I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister will agree with me that we want to get the best consultants to do the work. The Deputy Prime Minister said that there was no advertising in the local or international press to call for consultants. But how is it that one consultant came to know about it? He came and he was enlisted.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It was not like that at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the field of transport, we know who are the transport specialists. The reference of this particular firm is a very first-class one and I have faith that they will do the job that they are meant to.

Mr Guinness: I do not challenge the integrity of that firm. It can be a reputed firm. But what I mean to say is that if we want to get other firms, at least, we ought to have advertised that we need consultants to carry out an exercise in the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, our main objective was to have a report as early as possible by a world-class consultant. We have got one and we are going to get it soon.

Mr Guinness: **I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister will agree that there are other world-class consultants in that field.**

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, there are. But we do not need two, we need only one.