

SUGAR INDUSTRY SAVINGS – EDUCATIONAL SCHEMES (13/06/06)

(No. B/764) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the savings made by the sugar industry as a result to Government's decision to provide free transport to students, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if an educational scheme has now been set up by the sugar industry.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) that the existing educational schemes have been maintained and that the bus pass introduced by Government to allow students to travel free of charge does not cover all the students of the sugar estates. The MSPA continues to make arrangements for transport in cases where either public transport is not available or where the students are traveling outside normal hours. The sugar estates have to top up where appropriate in compliance with remuneration orders in force.

On a general note, I have been informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping that a consultant will be appointed shortly by Government to study the current system of free transport and examine alternative options and make recommendations. Based on these recommendations and after Government decision, the MSPA will be called upon to review the present arrangements.

My Ministry is monitoring the situation closely together with the Ministry of Education & Science. The MSPA has already agreed that any savings made will be credited to a special scheme whose details have yet to be worked out.