

SECONDARY

PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

SIR RAMAN OSMAN SSS – MEETING WITH PARENTS OF PRE-VOCATIONAL PUPILS 22/4/03

(No. B/217) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will ascertain if the Rector of Sir Raman Osman State Secondary School had a meeting with parents of pre-vocational pupils on Friday 21 February 2003 and, if so, will he further ascertain –

- (a) the purpose of the meeting; and
- (b) the allegations made by parents in regard to sexual assault by Form VI students on the younger pupils and the response to these allegations.

(Withdrawn)

**SIR RAMAN OSMAN SSS – RECTOR/ PRE-VOCATIONAL PUPILS’
PARENTS - MEETING**

(No. B/249) **Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will ascertain if the Rector of Sir Raman Osman State Secondary School had a meeting with parents of pre-vocational pupils on Friday 21 February 2003 and, if so, will he further ascertain –

- (a) the purpose of the meeting; and
- (b) the allegations made by parents in regard to sexual assault by Form VI students on the younger pupils and the response to these allegations.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I am informed that the Rector of Sir Raman Osman Sixth Form college did convene a meeting with parents of pupils of the pre-vocational stream on 21 February 2003 to inform them of the decision of my Ministry to transfer the Form I pre-vocational pupils to Medco Clairfonds College, Vacoas. This decision was prompted by the fact that Sir Abdool Raman Osman College is not admitting Form I students this year and that the younger students were the target of bullying by senior most students, a phenomenon not uncommon, unfortunately, in our schools.

I am further informed that, at no point in time, during that meeting, did parents make any allegations of sexual assault on their children by Form VI students.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Rector of that school is still there or he has been transferred, and the reasons for his transfer?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not aware that any transfer has been effected at the college, but if I am given notice of the question I can check and find out.

Dr. Beebeejaun: If I understood rightly, the pre-vocational section has been moved. May I ask the Minister if the pre-vocational school has been moved as an emergency, announced on Friday for Monday? Lots of students did not know; they turned up at the previous school and had to be transported. There were lots of problems created.

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CA/D07/P05/4
(No. B/249) (contd)

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not sure I heard the hon. gentleman clearly. I understand the question had to do as to whether the transfer was a measure of emergency. The point is very simple. At the time of admissions, we had a very high demand for the pre-vocational stream in the region of Vacoas/Quatre Bornes. As a temporary measure, one class of pre-vocational students was accommodated at Sir Raman Osman College, which, as the hon. gentleman might be aware, is being transformed into a Form VI College. Then, after a number of weeks, as soon as it was possible, an alternative was identified at MEDCO Clairfonds Secondary School, and so the students were transferred there.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I would ask the Minister to inquire again into that meeting which was held on the Friday I mentioned, and see whether allegations were made, which are serious. Even if no statement has been made to the Police, I think it would be in the interest of the students for the Minister to inquire, and see to it that it does not happen again.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, I did not attend the meeting. I have asked for a report from the Directorate of Education for that area and the report says – I repeat – that, at no point in time, during that meeting, did the parents make any such allegations.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I would appeal to the Minister to, once again, look into the matter and verify a bit more closely this. These are very serious allegations...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Beebeejaun, I allowed you to put another question about the allegations, and the Minister clearly said that, according to reports, there was no such allegation. Now, you are insisting. You are disputing the reply. The Minister said that there was no allegation; you are saying that there was. We cannot go on like this.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not disputing what the Minister is saying. What I am disputing is the version he has been given.

CA/D07/P05/5
(No. B/249) (contd)

Mr Speaker: Of course, you are disputing. When the Minister says that there was no allegation made, according to the report, and you say that there was allegation made, this is what I call disputing. I am sorry, I cannot allow you to continue.

Mr Obeegadoo: If the hon. gentleman has any information, which he thinks needs to be communicated, in the public interest, he can communicate it to me and I will inquire as appropriate.

Dr. Beebeejaun: May I ask the hon. Minister how many schools there are at the Sir Raman Osman site? Because I gather that Ebène also is now at Phoenix. It seems there is a lot of confusion as to who is going where.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am afraid that does not arise from the question. If the hon. Member puts a substantive question, I shall answer on the next occasion.

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS/FEDERATION -
CONSULTATIONS

23/11/04

X (No. B/882) **Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state if there have been consultations with Managers of Private Secondary Schools and their Federation on the terms and conditions of the introduction of pre-vocational classes and, if so, what has been the outcome thereof.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, from a general standpoint, I wish to assure the hon. Member that the Federation of Managers of Private Secondary Schools is a major stakeholder in education, is a prominent partner of my Ministry and is always consulted on all issues affecting the sector.

D37/IF/P13/5

As regards pre-vocational sector, in particular, the Managers of Private Secondary Schools, at least, publicly funded, have been fully involved from the outset, in the very conceptualisation of the project as well as with its implementation as from 2001 onwards.

It is, however, a fact that inevitably within such partnerships there may, from time to time, be communication problems which do lead to difficulties arising. In order to address those problems, an enlarged committee comprising all stakeholders, including the Federation as well as volunteers genuinely interested in pre-vocational education, has been set up since August 2004 and is working on the review of various components of the project.

contd./

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DR/D37/P14/01
(No. B/882 Cont'd)
(Mr Obeegadoo)

The discussions with the Federation of Managers on the issue of prevocational education has now entered a decisive phase with the Bill we are called upon to vote today on compulsory schooling for next year. In fact, those discussions are now progressing at a feverish pace and I understand that at this very moment we are talking, there is a General Assembly of the members of the Federation of Managers of Private Secondary Schools and we do hope that something very positive will come out of it for a reinvigorated partnership in favour of the prevocational project.

Mr Dulloo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has not received complaints in the course of those consultations, if ever there have been, to the effect that the scheme for the introduction of prevocational classes in secondary schools was not clear enough and not well-defined for them to be able to fit this in their syllabus and in the curriculum of those secondary schools?

Mr Obeegadoo: Such complaints are very often received, Sir, not only concerning the prevocational scheme. I will come back to prevocational education later on in the course of our debates this afternoon. It is a new project launched four years ago now which has had the merit of bringing into our schools thousands of children who would otherwise have been left out. It is progressing and it is being improved on the basis of experience. Complaints are welcome to the extent that they are constructive and we are very attentive to all constructive suggestions being made.

Mr Dulloo: Have the managers not suggested that in order to be able to introduce the new scheme, there should be the publication of a White Paper or, at least, a comprehensive paper setting out clearly the scheme, and that this would serve the basis for discussion in order to finalise the scheme and also for the implementation of the project?

Mr Obeegadoo: At all relevant times, the majority of publicly funded private secondary schools have been participating in the prevocational project. There have been some suggestions from the Federation of Managers that more clarification be given and such clarifications have been provided, Sir.

UNREVISED

DR/D37/P14/02
(No. B/882 Cont'd)

Mr Dullo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether certain managers have not informed the Ministry that they would not be in a position to implement the scheme for the next academic year and as a result of which advisers of the Ministers are being sent to persuade the managers individually of how to implement the scheme?

Mr Obeegadoo: Certainly, Sir, I am a believer in friendly persuasion rather than imposition. We have opted not to vote a law to impose upon managers an obligation to accommodate prevocational stream students. But we are doing all that is within our means to convince managers to join us in embarking upon this new historical step of offering secondary education to each and everyone of our children.

Mr Dullo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Federation of Managers have not complained that this method being used, that is, to single out certain managers to approach them, whereas the scheme has not been agreed generally by the *Corps des Managers*, that is, the Federation of Managers, and that they have objected to the method that advisers of the Ministry are going to individual managers in order to try to compel them to join the scheme?

Mr Obeegadoo: Not at all, Sir! In fact, I have met personally the Federation of Managers yesterday. We have agreed that any problem that may have arisen comes from a lack of proper communication and, as I said, things are working out beautifully.

Mr Dullo: One last question, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the managers have not made it clear to the Ministry or the Minister that the present scheme is actually not appropriate pedagogically? Because it would merely transform the secondary classes into *des garderies d'enfants* for those who have failed the CPE just for the implementation of the 16 years' compulsory schooling.

UNREVISED

DR/D37/P14/03
(No. B/882 Cont'd)

That is, just to accommodate them without a proper syllabus, curriculum and pedagogical approach for those particularly targeted students who have failed the CPE.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure you would agree that I would not want to waste the time of the House by debating this matter which is the subject matter of the Bill which will be presented later on in the course of the day. All I can say is that whatever has been said by one or two managers has been attended to. As all pedagogical projects, this one is something which is constantly being improved upon, and it has a lot of merit and we will debate the subject later on.

YEAR**2005****PREVOCATIONAL TEACHERS – SALARY (06/09/05)**

(No. I B/212) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the teaching staff of prevocational classes, holding a Teacher's Diploma Pre-Voc, he will state if their salary has been aligned on that of Education Officers and, if so, since when.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not clear whether the question of the hon. Member refers to the private secondary schools sector or to the State sector.

Be that as it may, there is a single salary scale for the grade of Education Officer in the range of Rs10,600 to Rs27,000 with a Q.B. (Qualifying Bar) at the salary point of Rs21,600. The holder of a diploma enters the salary at Rs10,600, but will not be allowed to proceed beyond the Q.B. unless and until he or she obtains a degree whereas the degree holders enter the salary scale at Rs14,200 and proceed incrementally to the top salary.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister whether he is aware that pre-vocational teachers in the private sector have seen their salary being aligned on that of Education Officers whereas I am not aware whether it is the case for the public sector?

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am fully aware of the first part of the observation made by the hon. Member. Regarding the State sector, this is not the case because there was a *mise en demeure* put against the Ministry and the matter was referred to the State Law Office. Now, the Ministry, after consultation with the State Law Office, has requested the PSC to go ahead with the exercise of the filling of vacancies.

**PRIVATE/STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS -
PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES - 2006**

(No. I B/315) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if prevocational classes will be run in Private and State Secondary Schools in 2006, as is the case presently.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the previous Government introduced prevocational classes in Secondary Schools as far back as 2001. The scheme was implemented in the absence of a coherent and comprehensive plan for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It was meant to take care of the immediate needs of students who are unsuccessful at CPE without providing them scope for advanced training and career prospects.

In consequence, the scheme has been the subject of regular criticisms from various stakeholders. The matter has even been raised in Parliament, in particular with respect to its inappropriate curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. As a matter of fact, the present scheme needs to be revisited and is being revisited.

However, since 2006 is a year of transition as far as reforms are concerned, the principle of running prevocational classes is being maintained both in State and Private Secondary Schools. The scheme will be monitored by my Ministry and appropriate remedial action will be taken as and when required.

All the 56 State Secondary Schools (running Form I to Form VI classes) including the Mahatma Gandhi State Schools will admit a section of Form I prevocational students in January 2006. 60 of the 99 private secondary schools, will admit students in Form I prevocational in January 2006. I will shortly meet the directors of those schools that have not yet signified their intention of admitting students in Form I prevocational classes next year to enlist their support and invite them to do so.

Where demand for prevocational seats exceeds supply, students will be accommodated in prevocational schools known as SSSVs - State Secondary Schools Vocational, as is the case presently.

This will ensure that students stay in schools, in accordance with existing regulations regarding compulsory education which requires that every child should attend school up to the end of the academic year in the course of which he attains the age of 16.

Presently, students who have not been successful in passing the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) Examinations twice or who are above 12 years of age are admitted to Form I prevocational classes. These are run alongside mainstream classes in secondary schools. After three years of prevocational education, students are eligible to join the National Trade Certificate (NTC) Foundation Course. On completion of this course, they may integrate the National Trade Certificate Level 3 course run by IVTB.

A Steering Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of my Permanent Secretary to work towards the conceptualisation of a program that would provide prevocational students with the right orientation so that they become skilled in a line of trade. In this respect, this Government is coming with the IFETs - *Institut de Formation et d'Education Tertiaire*, which will provide for a higher qualification for prevocational students.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister whether there are presently secondary schools which have signified their intention not to run prevocational classes as from next year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are various opinions which have been expressed and one of these opinions expressed is the one as referred to by the hon. Member.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has talked about the curriculum, may I know from the Minister whether actually, there is not a curriculum that has been prepared, which is ready and is being used for prevocational classes?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are a number of weaknesses which have been identified and there have been some changes which have been made in the curriculum, but this is not adequate in terms of the technical and vocational education training programme that we want to put in place.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have another question with your permission. Is it not a fact that actually three State schools of Zone 2 have already written to the Ministry to state that they are not going to run prevocational classes next year?

Mr Gokhool: This is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we have not taken any decision as yet.

PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES - INTAKE 2006 – SEATS (25/10/05)

(No. I B/389) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the prevocational intake for January 2006, he will state if his Ministry has made a forecast of the number of seats which will be needed.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to the reply made to PQ I B/315 at our sitting of 11 October 2005 to the effect that Form I prevocational classes will be maintained in January 2006 in both State and private secondary schools and to confirm that from a global standpoint, the projected figures indicate that the demand for admission in Form I prevocational will turn around 3,850 for 4,113 available seats.

Consultations have already been held with the Managers of Private Secondary Schools on this issue and my Ministry does not foresee any major problem in accommodating all the pupils in prevocational classes in January 2006.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether about 30 Private Secondary Schools have already sent a letter to the Ministry informing that they do not intend to run prevocational classes as from January next year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the point is that the Ministry has figures whereby the demand will be accommodated by the number of available seats.

Mrs Labelle: My question was whether the Minister is aware that there are about 30 secondary schools which have already signified their intention not to run prevocational classes.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not necessary that all private secondary schools should offer prevocational classes.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with the 30 schools, we had an intake of about 4,000 last year as per MES list. So, my question is whether we are going to be able to accommodate such a number without 30 schools.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has already answered this question. Next question, please!

YEAR 2006

PUPILS - CPE, ADMISSION TO PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES, ETC. (11/04/06)

(No. B/203) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will give -

- (a) for the year 2005, the number of pupils who -
- (i) have failed the CPE twice;
 - (ii) are above 12 years of age and have failed CPE for the first time;
- (b) are admitted in prevocational classes in January 2006, and
- (c) the percentage of students eligible for prevocational classes and who joined these classes in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is as follows -

- (a) (i) 4047 pupils have failed the CPE twice in the year 2005;
- (ii) for the same year, 115 pupils above the age of 12 failed the CPE for the first time;
- (b) 3811 pupils were admitted in pre-vocational classes in January 2006, and
- (c) the percentage of students eligible for pre-vocational classes and who joined these classes in 2005 and 2006 is as follows -
- 2005 - 100%
 - 2006 - 92%

It is to be noted that the figures for 2005 also include students from the previous year, that is, 2004.

Mr Speaker, Sir, compulsory education has been introduced up to the age of 16, but as indicated in my reply to PQ B/161, the legislation was introduced without a proper mechanism for its enforcement and its monitoring to identify who do not register and the reasons for same as well as the number of dropouts.

I also indicated that my Ministry will, in collaboration with stakeholders, work out a suitable mechanism.

The process is under way.

I wish to point out that all students eligible to pre-vocational classes

were offered a seat by Government. It is a matter of concern that some have not availed of this opportunity.

I wish to add that there now exists other providers and many of the students may well have opted to go to other institutions of their choice.

My Ministry is envisaging to put in place a Parenting Programme to sensitise parents and the public on the importance of education and the need to take advantage of all opportunities provided by Government.

STUDENTS - PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES (2003) AND NATIONAL TRADE CERTIFICATE FOUNDATION COURSE (2006) (25/04/06)

(No. B/379) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the number of students who joined -

- (a) the prevocational classes in 2003, and
- (b) the National Trade Certificate Foundation Course in 2006.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in 2003, around 3,158 students were admitted in the prevocational classes in both State and private secondary schools out of which 1,847 joined the National Trade Certificate Foundation Course in January 2006.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister what measures are being taken to encourage these pupils to continue their course? Because we find that there is a considerable amount of drop-outs.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the prevocational classes started in 2003 and they were to be for three years. There was no plan which was made for the fourth year. It was on when the programme was started. Then the previous Government realised what to do with these children who followed three years, then they brought in the fourth year, that is, the foundation course. So, in between many people left and that explains the low number.

With regard to what is being done, I would repeat what I have said. Prior to the introduction of compulsory education up to the age of 16 in December 2004, it is possible for students to drop out. As I have indicated before, we are in transition stage and there is need to completely revisit the whole prevocational education which, according to stakeholders, is not giving the required results. In this respect, in line with Government

Programme 2005/2010 which provided for the revamping of polytechnic projects and the setting up of the *Institut pour la formation et l'éducation tertiaire*, my Ministry has set up an *ad hoc* committee with the following terms of reference -

- (i) to propose a curriculum that will ensure a harmonisation between prevocational and IVTB run foundation course curriculum, and
- (ii) to work out a phased approach for the development of prevocational curriculum resulting in the production and writing of the relevant materials.

In the light of the outcome of the work of the committee, my Ministry will examine the matter further for the elaboration of a new policy.

PRE-VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS – REGISTRATION (16/05/06)

(No. B/524) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the pre-vocational educational institutions, he will state the procedures that are obtained for their registration.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of the hon. Member refers to pre-vocational education.

As far as pre-vocational education is concerned, the current policy, as put in place by the previous Government, is that all pupils who have failed CPE twice or have failed CPE once, but are over-aged to repeat, are offered a seat in a pre-vocational class in either a State Secondary School or a grantaided private secondary school. The system provides parity of esteem to academically disadvantaged students who are able after a three-year course to join the IVTB for the NTC Foundation Course which prepares them to some extent for the world of work developing skills needed in specific fields.

This is also in line with the policy of free compulsory education up to the age of 16. Any pupil who has completed primary education is offered a seat in either Form 1 (mainstream) or Form 1 (pre-vocational) in a publicly funded school.

Consequently, in the present context, the question of registering private pre-vocational educational institutions does not arise.

However, I wish to remind the hon. Member of what I have said before, namely that pre-vocational education is being revisited in the context of giving new orientations to technical and vocational education and training, as per Government Programme 2005-2010.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that the Minister is quite aware that there are institutions which are providing pre-vocational courses. Must I take it from the Minister that, as far as these existing institutions are concerned, the question of their registration does not arise if they want to get registered?

Mr Gokhool: I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have explained that the policy of the Government is to provide pre-vocational education to all pupils in the primary schools and this is catered for by Government policy, which was approved by the previous Government. We are continuing with the policy, but we are going to bring about changes in the context of revisiting technical and vocational education. If pre-vocational schools in the private sector were to be registered, this would be in contradiction to Government policy which has been approved by the previous Government.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I fail to understand the Minister. He is aware that there are NGOs which give private pre-vocational education and he does not oppose to it. Is it to say that it is out of question for these centres, which are catering for those most needy children, to get recognition from the Ministry? Is that what the Minister wants us to know?

Mr Gokhool: As per Government policy, these children are being provided pre-vocational education free of charge by Government. If we were to consider registering private pre-vocational schools, this would be in contradiction to Government policy. If we were to change Government policy, this can be looked into in the context of the changes which are being proposed by Government.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to insist on one point. I am not talking about new centres. I am talking about centres which are on the market since ten years. Let us take the centres administered by ANFEN. Maybe the Minister is not aware, but during the past three years, out of 190 pupils who attended these centres, 100 have successfully completed the CPE, which represents more than 52%. These centres are at service to the society. Why can't they get recognition? Which contradiction are we talking about?

Mr Gokhool: The hon. lady has canvassed this point on previous

occasions. I have explained that there is a Government policy of providing free education to pupils in the primary schools under certain conditions. If we were to register the private pre-vocational schools, this would be in contradiction with Government policy. What I have said is that Government is looking into the matter.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understand well the Minister, does it mean that those private institutions which are actually running pre-vocational classes - I am not talking of private colleges and State colleges – are operating in an illegal situation?

Mr Gokhool: I can't say that they are operating in an illegal situation, but if pupils or parents, out of choice, don't want to avail themselves of the facilities that Government is offering, we can't debar them from going elsewhere.

Mr Speaker: Last question, please!

Mr Guinness: Is the Minister satisfied that all students as at now are offered a seat in available State and private colleges where pre-vocational classes are available?

Mr Gokhool: I have already answered this question in a previous PQ and I will refer the hon. Member to it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question! I said last question. The hon. Member can raise the matter at Adjournment Time.

PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS - NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME (04/07/06)

(No. B/905) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Apprenticeship Scheme, he will state the measures he proposes to take to vulgarise the scheme amongst youngsters attending the pre-vocational schools.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Apprenticeship Scheme is operational since 1996 and is managed by the Industrial & Vocational Training Board.

The objective of the scheme is to enable young persons aged at least 16, and having a minimum of three years secondary schooling or prevocational schooling with the National Trade Certificate (NTC) foundation, to learn a trade. Some 43 trades are designated for the scheme.

The apprentice learns the practical component of the trade on the job at the employer's workplace, under the supervision of a skilled employee for at least four days per week and follows theoretical courses in an IVTB training centre for one day per week. The duration of the apprenticeship is for one or two years, depending on the trade.

A total of 2,300 youngsters have completed the pre-vocational course in 2005 and, out of this figure, 1,847 joined the NTC foundation course at the IVTB. It is only when the students complete the one-year NTC foundation that they are eligible to apply for recruitment as an apprentice under the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The IVTB already sensitises pre-vocational students joining the NTC foundation on the different trades available for apprenticeship. My Ministry proposes to adopt the following measures to bring the scheme closer to youngsters -

(i) An intensive campaign, with the help of the MEF, will be carried out to ensure that all pre-vocational students are aware of the NTC Foundation programme.

(ii) An orientation programme will be conducted for the students, to expose them to possibilities for further upgrading of their skills through the Apprenticeship Scheme.

(iii) Arrangements will be made for students to visit industries and IVTB training centres, to enable them to get acquainted to the world of work and also to observe apprentices in their learning environment. At this level, employers will be encouraged to talk to the students, with emphasis on the trades available in industry and the benefits in joining the NAS.

(iv) Talks will also be organised for the parents of students, so that they understand the functioning of the scheme.

(v) The pre-vocational curriculum will be reviewed, to create an early awareness of the apprenticeship mode of training among students.

(vi) A comprehensive informative brochure will be published.

(vii) The services of MCA and MBC TV will be enlisted in the sensitisation campaign.

**PREVOCATIONAL TEACHERS – EDUCATION OFFICERS -
APPOINTMENT (31/10/06)**

(No. B/1245) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to prevocational teachers who have completed the Teachers Diploma (Prevocational), he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from -
- (i) the Mauritius Institute of Education, the number thereof to date;
 - (ii) the Private State Secondary Authority, the number thereof who have subsequently been appointed as Education Officer, indicating since when, and
- (b) state the number thereof, in the public sector, who have subsequently been appointed as Education Officer, indicating since when.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) (i) of the question, the answer is 52.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, 34 of the 52 teachers who had completed the Teacher's Diploma Pre-Vocational Programme were from private schools. Of these 34, 29 were appointed as Education Officers during the period December 2004 to September 2005, namely –

- 26 as from December 2004
- 1 as from 17 January 2005
- 1 as from 01 August 2005
- 1 as from 29 September 2005

As regards part (b) of the question, none of the 18 who were teaching in the pre-vocational stream of State Secondary Schools and had completed the Teacher's Diploma (Pre-Vocational) have been appointed Education Officer to date.

Mrs Labelle: May I know from the Minister whether those in the public sector will be appointed as has been the case for their colleagues in the private sector who followed the course?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did reply to a Parliamentary Question relating to this issue and I did say that the recruitment exercise was delayed because there was a *mise en demeure* put against the Ministry as regards the scheme of service. The matter was referred to the State Law Office for advice. Subsequently, the posts of Education Officer Prevocational

and Teacher Secondary Pre-vocational were advertised by the Public Service Commission on 07 September 2006 and the closing date for submission of the application was 27 September 2006. However, following an injunction filed by the Technical School Management Trust Fund Employees Union, my Ministry has been summoned to appear before the honourable Judge in Chambers on 30 October. The case has been postponed to 16 November 2006.

Mrs Labelle: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the advertisement which he has just mentioned has been amended three times and the last amendment excludes these prevocational teachers from applying for the post of Education Officers?

Mr Gokhool: I do not think this is correct because the schemes of service are approved by the PSC. I do not think this is correct.

Mrs Labelle: Is it not a fact that the last amendment on the advertisement mentioned that those with the Teacher's Diploma (Prevocational) will not be considered for this present intake?

Mr Gokhool: There is a logic. I think this is the crux of the problem. People who hold a diploma want to be appointed as Education Officers and this is where the *litige* is. It is a matter which is before the Court.

Mr Speaker: If the case is *sub judice* I think we have to be very careful.

Year 2007

PREVOCATIONAL EDUCATION - BILINGUAL EVALUATION (17/04/07)

(No. B/155) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to prevocational education, he will state if he has received a request from the *Bureau d'Education Catholique* for a bilingual evaluation for year III in 2007 and, if so, will he state the stand of his Ministry thereon.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs B/155 and B/157, which are similar in nature, at the same time. My Ministry has received a request from the *Bureau d'Education Catholique* towards the end of January 2007 for -

- (i) a bilingual (English/Kreol) evaluation for year III prevocational, and
- (ii) a joint collaborative programme to develop and facilitate an action research strategy in Mauritian Kreol.

At the outset, I wish to state that the overall policy of my Ministry in regard to the pre-vocational education both in the State and private sectors is that there is a National Curriculum which has been developed in consultation with all stakeholders and which is premised on the use of English as a medium of instruction for all subjects except for French obviously. On the basis of that National Curriculum, all the materials, curriculum guidelines and teaching strategies are based on English which is, and remains, the official medium of instruction, in schools. However, in line with the recommendations of UNESCO for the use of the mother tongue or the language of the environment in the early stages of a child's development, my Ministry does not object to teachers having recourse to Mauritian Kreol as an aid, along with English, for children who have serious learning difficulties or lack the basic foundation skills for effective communication.

However, teachers are not authorized to completely disregard English as an official medium of instruction nor should this be the case of children that will grow up, live and work in an international context.

Concerning the request of the BEC for the use of English and Kreol for the purpose of assessing student at the end of their 3-year pre-vocational course, my Ministry has already informed BEC that its request for the proposed bilingual evaluation cannot be approved. The reasons are as follows -

- (a) the pre-vocational end-of year assessment is a National examination which calls for standardization and consistency in certification;
- (b) there are no conclusive research findings at this stage on the use of Mauritian Kreol as a pedagogical tool;
- (c) the proposal will require widespread consultation and prior parental consent;
- (d) a bilingual assessment would assuredly create an undesired language divide between young students, and
- (e) it would be very difficult for a student who has been assessed in Kreol at the end of his three-year pre-voc course to take a

year later the NTC Foundation Course Exams in English, or access any other educational system where Kreol is not the mode of assessment.

As regards the second broader issue of a joint collaboration programme for the development of a strategy for the use of Kreol as a medium of instruction in all schools, my Ministry has informed the BEC of its support for any research or study thereon, particularly if the MIE or the University of Mauritius or the Mauritius Research Council is/are involved.

The question of a joint collaborative programme does not arise at this stage and unless and until a National policy is evolved on the basis of empirical findings. English is, and will remain the official medium of instruction in schools, with the use of the mother tongue or the language of the environment as spelt out in the earlier part of my reply.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the prevocational students have been taught during the past three years to use the *Kreol Morisien* and based on the findings, following a collaboration between the Ministry and BEC last year, which showed that Math concept was better acquired while using the Kreol language and that the students better expressed themselves in this language, I would like to know whether the Minister is aware of these findings and what is his position on these findings?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, when BEC presented the project, the evaluation part was not included in it. It was only submitted to my Ministry in January 2007, and my Ministry has replied, giving reasons which I have just stated. That is in regard to the evaluation part. With regard to the findings, in fact, I attended the workshop where the findings were presented and I stated at the workshop that they should publish the findings and validate it. Because a research which is carried out by an organisation for public policy has to be widely disseminated and scientifically validated. This is the proposal I made to BEC.

Mrs Labelle: May I know from the Minister whether there is any action initiated by his Ministry for such evaluation?

Mrs Gokhool: Not at this stage! As I said, it is not Government policy for evaluation in Kreol.

Mrs Labelle: May I take it from the Minister that, despite all recommendations by UNESCO and other organisations for the use of mother tongue, specially as he mentioned, for kids who have difficulties, it is still

the policy of the Ministry not to take into account the use of mother tongue for a better acquisition of literacy and numeracy in our country?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member has listened to my explanation, I stated that we have taken on board UNESCO recommendations.

CPE EXAMINATIONS - PREVOCATIONAL STUDENTS(31/07/07)

(No. B/928) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to prevocational students who passed the CPE examinations, he will consider the advisability of shifting them to the normal stream classes in the same school and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the prevocational stream and the normal stream, also referred to as the mainstream, are two different systems which run in parallel.

Admission to Form I in the normal stream is made electronically by MES on the basis of the overall grade aggregate of the pupil at CPE and the choice of the parent as to schools. Any student who is school-going and is not overaged who passes the CPE and has applied for a seat in Form I in either a State or grant-aided secondary school will be allocated a seat by MES. They may accept or refuse the seat. Such students on accepting the admission in Form I continue their schooling in the same stream up to School Certificate and eventually Higher School Certificate. As regards admission to the prevocational stream, it is open only to students who have either failed the CPE twice or failed the CPE once but are overaged to repeat. They follow the Year I, Year II and Year III prevocational programme at the end of which they take a National Examination and, if successful, they are allowed to go up to the NTC Foundation Course.

It is to be noted that, as per the MES Regulations and Syllabuses, the CPE examination is basically a school examination although provisions exist for private candidates, including overaged candidates, to take part in the examinations. However, it is only students who satisfy the age factor and are school-going who are concerned with the admission in Form I by MES.

As regards a student who has obtained admission in Form I – prevocational in either a State or grant aided secondary school, he/she is not debarred from taking the CPE anew and for as many times as he/she wishes, but as a private candidate. However, in view of the age factor provided for in the Education Regulation to the effect that for admission in Form I a pupil must have attained the age of 12 but not the age of 14 on 01 January in the year of

admission such pupils do not qualify for admission in Form I in the normal stream in either a State or grant aided secondary school through the MES mechanism. However, any private candidate who passes the CPE may seek admission in a grant aided private secondary school on the basis of the 50% seat which these schools fill on their own.

Consequently, there is already a pathway for a pre-vocational student who has passed the CPE to seek and obtain admission in Form I in the mainstream in a grant aided private secondary school. It is also possible for a pre-voc student of a grant aided private secondary school to move to the mainstream in the same school if he or she has passed the CPE.

As regards pre-voc students of a State secondary school who may pass the CPE, they cannot, in the present state of affairs, automatically move to Form I in the mainstream in the same school and it is not proposed at this stage to review the system to allow same. However, my Ministry does give consideration to admission in Form I mainstream in the same school or another school, on a case to case basis, any pre-voc student who has passed the CPE, provided vacancies are available and the admission of the pre-voc pupil does not prejudice other pupils. In so doing, my Ministry will have also to consider the psychological, social and pedagogical dimension of the case being treated.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister consider the advisability of amending the legislation for those students who satisfy the criteria of age and having performed well at the CPE? Being given that they join the prevocational and they perform well, does not the hon. Minister consider that this will be a source of encouragement and will give incentive to other students to perform better?

Mr Gokhool: There are few cases right now which have been handled and the adaptation has not worked. We are taking a global view of the prevocational in the context of the new TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training) and in that context we will address the issue raised by the hon. Member.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the past we have had cases of students who had left the prevoc stream to join the mainstream: and from the information I have, many of these students have been doing well during the past years.

They have been successful up to the HSC level. Basing ourselves on these experiences, we can see how we can help others to join the mainstream, to extend these chances to all students who can do well. As hon. Dayal says it can be a motivation for these students to do better.

Mr Gokhool: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I gave the impression that all those students do not do well, this is not the case. There are a few cases who are given the opportunity, but they do not do well whereas others did continue. Our policy is to open up more opportunities to the students in prevocational.

Fundamentally, what is most important is to raise the status of the TVET stream so that those who want to continue can do so, and our view is that there should be pathways for them to even reach to university level, as it happens in Singapore. But those who want to go back to the mainstream this is an issue that will be addressed in the context of the new TVET policy which is being developed by my Ministry.

Mr Dayal: In view of the fact that we have late developers, will the hon. Minister try to create a bridge between the prevoc and the mainstream?

Mr Gokhool: As I have said, pathways exist right now, but it is not a general policy. If we have to come with a general policy, it has to be addressed globally and not on a case to case basis, as is the case because of the existence of regulations

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister has mentioned that aided private schools can receive the students on the 50%. My question is: why what is applicable for these schools cannot be applied for the State Secondary Schools?

Mr Gokhool: I said that the admission is done by MES taking into account the CPE and the parental choice. As at now, the MES regulation does not allow it. Secondly, in the 50% cases, you may have vacancies to which the student may access, but in the State schools there is already a waiting list which is determined by the criteria applicable for admission to State colleges. Therefore, if we admit a prevocational student who has passed, it may be to the prejudice of those students under existing regulations who are on the waiting list and are better qualified.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why I am asking the hon. Minister if he can consider the advisability of amending the present legislation to take into account what we have just mentioned.

Mr Gokhool: As I said to the hon. Member, we are addressing the issue on a case to case basis, but not on a piecemeal basis. I want to come with a proper policy. The point that is raised will be taken care of; it is being prepared and it will come. We have to do a good preparation, this is an important issue.

Mrs Labelle: Just one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. The argument that the hon. Minister has just given can be applied to these private schools too.

This can create problem. Are we offering opportunities to these children? Using this argument will not other colleges shut the doors to these pupils?

Mr Gokhool: In the grant aided colleges, 50% of seats are allocated electronically by MES and the other 50% is left to the schools to admission; and this is where the facility is provided as at now. So, the prevoc students who have passed and satisfied the conditions can go to Form I, but this is not the case as far as the State colleges are concerned, where all the seats are allocated by MES electronically and not 50%.

STATE, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES (06/11/07)

(No. B/1075) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the pre-vocational classes, he will state if -

- (a) he has been informed whether any private or public secondary schools presently running pre-vocational classes will no longer be doing so as from January 2008, and
- (b) the number of secondary schools which had no intake in January 2007.

Reply: I wish to remind the House that the current policy regarding pre-vocational education is that any pupil who has failed CPE twice or has failed CPE once, but is over-age to repeat, is offered admission in Form I Pre-Vocational in either a State or a grand-aided private secondary school within the zone in which he/she resides.

There is no statutory provision compelling a school to run a pre-vocational stream, but since the inception of the project, all schools having the capacity to do so have been encouraged to admit at least one section of pre-voc. However, there were a few schools, both in the State and the private secondary schools sectors, which could not run a pre-vocational stream because of space constraints.

I am informed that -

- (a) there are 110 schools (41 State and 69 private) which are currently running pre-vocational classes;
- (b) it is estimated that 109 schools (39 State and 70 private) will be running pre-vocational classes in January 2008, and
- (c) 37 schools (16 State and 21 private) did not have any intake in January 2007.

The reasons accounting for the above state of affairs are –

- (i) problems of space – on the State side, schools are being constructed in a

phased manner and many of them are still incomplete whereas on the private side, many schools are in rented buildings without scope for expansion;

(ii) several schools on the State side are accommodating students from other schools as part of the contingency arrangements; and

(iii) National colleges are not taking pre-vocational students as a matter of policy.

The intake of pre-vocational students in the last four years has been steadily decreasing.

The figures reflect a clear indication in a reduction in the intake for the pre-vocational stream and eventually lesser pre-vocational classes in the State and private secondary schools.

I can, however, assure the House that in terms of demand and supply, my Ministry is in a position to afford a seat in Form I pre-vocational to all eligible students. I also wish to inform the House that the pre-voc project is in a transitional stage and is being reconsidered within the broader objective of revamping Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the setting up of an Institut de Formation et D'Education Tertiaire (IFET) as proposed in the Government Programme 2005-2006.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – TEACHERS (PREVOCATIONAL STREAM) – RECRUITMENT (20/11/07)

(No. B/1165) 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 teachers of the prevocational stream, he will state the number thereof recruited in the State Secondary Schools as at to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that no teachers have been recruited by the Public Service Commission as at to date to work in the prevocational stream in the State Secondary Schools.

However, we are expecting a list of 57 Education Officers (Prevocational) and 240 Teachers (Secondary Prevocational) from the Public Service Commission at any time now as interviews have already been conducted.

Presently, there are actually 288 teachers who are posted in the prevocational stream of State Secondary Schools of which 118 employees of the Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF), 36 Primary School Teachers and the remaining are Supply Teachers. The majority of the Supply Teachers were recruited since January 2004.

PREVOCATIONAL SECTOR – RECRUITMENT (04/12/07)

(No. B/1270) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the teachers of the prevocational stream, he

will state the number thereof recruited in the State Secondary Schools as at to date.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are presently 288 teachers who are posted in the prevocational stream of State Secondary Schools of which 118 employees came from the Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF), 36 are primary school teachers and the remaining are supply teachers. The majority of the supply teachers were recruited since January 2004.

There are two categories of posts in the prevocational sector –
(i) Education Officers (Prevocational) who hold a degree, and
(ii) Teachers (Secondary prevocational) who hold at least a School Certificate.

In 2004, 57 posts of Education Officer (Pre-vocational) and 240 posts of teacher Secondary (Pre-vocational) were accordingly created on the establishment of my Ministry. Vacancies in both grades were reported to the PSC on 22 June 2005. In view of the lawsuit filed by the Technical School Management Trust Fund Employees' Union, the recruitment was delayed.

However, the Commission has, in October 2007, carried out an interview of all eligible candidates.

The Public Service Commission has, on 16 November 2007, forwarded a list of 55 Education Officers (Prevocational) for recruitment, and offers of appointment have already been issued by my Ministry.

As regards the post of teacher (Secondary Prevocational), interviews are still ongoing at the PSC, and we are awaiting a list of some 90 candidates in the first instance for appointment.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are any State Secondary Schools which will not provide prevocational stream and, if so, the number of teachers involved?

Mr Gokhool: All I can say is that all students who are to follow prevocational classes will be provided a seat. As regards the number of teachers, I have just given the figures.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether by January 2009, there would be any State Secondary Schools which would not be offering prevocational stream?

Mr Gokhool: I cannot say at this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but all I can say is that, for students who have to follow prevocational classes, seats are provided, whether it is in the Government sector or the private secondary schools. We need to provide as many seats as are required and this is being taken care of by the Ministry.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I take it from the Minister then that about 90 new teachers for the prevocational stream would be recruited in the near future?

Mr Gokhool: I have given the hon. Member the figures of those who are being recruited now. As regards the future, we have to look at the figures of 297 posts which exist. If there is need to fill more posts, then they will be filled.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: My question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is about the 90 teachers who are being recruited presently as per the answer of the Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: I know this is a *dialogue de sourds*. The hon. Member is asking questions about teachers whereas the hon. Minister is talking about pupils.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am talking about the teachers that are being recruited. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are no cases where schools have stopped offering prevocational classes or stream and whether teachers, who were appointed there, have been reverted back to their previous jobs at the Technical School Management Trust Fund or whether they are being retained within the sector?

Mr Gokhool: I think the arrangement which is being made is to absorb the teachers from the Technical School Management Trust Fund who started working in the prevocational stream. I don't know of any case of a teacher wanting to go back to the Technical School Management Trust Fund. If there are cases, I am not aware, but arrangements are being made to provide them the posts which have been created.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the teachers who have been recruited right now are coming from the Technical School Management Trust Fund or whether they are teachers who have been recruited from the public in general?

Mr Gokhool: It is both, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because there are so many vacancies and I have given the figures. The number of teachers working presently is lower than the number of posts which have been created and we recruit both from the existing teachers of the Technical School Management Trust Fund, primary school teachers as well as from outside.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is a new policy of Government not to offer prevocational courses in State Secondary Schools? Are we going towards this?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have given the answer. The question relates to teachers.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Gokhool: Concerning the policy, as regards prevocational classes, I have already replied. We provide the number of seats whether it is in Government colleges or secondary schools. We cannot just create seats when we can afford to provide them the seats, whether it is in Government colleges or secondary schools. I don't think that we should create seats just for the sake of creating seats and satisfying ourselves that seats are available in the State Secondary Schools or in the private secondary schools.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that students who are willing to go for prevocational stream may not necessarily be admitted in State Secondary Schools, they can be sent to private secondary schools. My question is: whether the teachers who are being recruited will also be sent to private secondary schools in case there is a need for it? Because students can move from one sector to another, are we also stating that teachers, who are being recruited right now, will also follow the same fate?

Mr Gokhool: I think this is logical. If they have no students to teach, they have to be redeployed to other schools where there are prevocational classes.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the same policy will apply to education officers teaching in State Secondary Schools and private secondary schools?

Mr Gokhool: We are talking about education officers and prevocational teachers. If a college is not offering prevocational classes, we

have to redeploy in colleges where the services of these teachers will be required to teach prevocational classes. I think I am clear.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has a predetermined policy for teachers who have been recruited right now?

Have they been told that, in case their services will no longer be required, they will be sent to the private sector?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, education and training is a dynamic sector. We are providing for what is required now. We are engaged in a reform programme. This is a hypothetical question. Should the need arise, then we will have to take appropriate actions to redeploy the teachers.

SSS – PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES – POLICY (25/03/08)

(No. B/66) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the prevocational classes in the State Secondary Schools, he will state if his Ministry has defined a clear cut policy for the running thereof?

(Withdrawn)

SSS - PREVOCATIONAL CLASSES (08/04/08)

(No. B/180) 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 prevocational classes in the State Secondary Schools, he will state if his Ministry has defined a clear cut policy for the running thereof.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I invite the attention of the House to previous replies that I have made to Parliamentary Questions B/524 in May 2006 and B/1075 in November 2007.

The pre-vocational project was introduced in 2001 in a specific context to address the situation of students who would have otherwise dropped out of school at a time when compulsory education up to 16 years was not yet in force. The scheme made provision for primary school leavers who failed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) twice or who were overaged and could not obtain access to secondary education. The project has continued up to date, but it is clear that it is not giving the desired results as many students have still not managed to grasp the basic literacy and numeracy competencies and only a few reach up to the NTC Foundation Course level.

There is, therefore, a definite need to review the whole project which is in a transitional stage and is being reconsidered within the broader objective of revamping the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the setting up of the *Institut de Formation et d'Education Tertiaire (IFET)* as proposed in the Government Programme 2005-2010 and approved by Government. I am tabling a copy of the TVET Report.

In addition, a series of accompanying measures are being taken such as –

- (i) revisiting the Year I curriculum for pre-vocational and the launching of new textbooks;
- (ii) introduction of a holistic remedial education strategy, and
- (iii) links and pathways will be created to provide greater opportunities to eligible student to join advanced level programmes.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the review of the curriculum, as proposed by him in the Assembly in 2006, has been done and whether he can table, if any, the reformed and reviewed curriculum for the prevocational stream?

Mr Gokhool: As I indicated in my reply, the process is on and the revisiting of Year I curriculum for prevocational and the launching of the new textbooks are on.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Minister mentioned the same thing in April 2006 and 2007 as well. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when the new curriculum will be put forward? I'll come with it more fully in the next question.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the curriculum reform is a complex process. For this sector as well the work has started and we are addressing the Year I curriculum and then as the work will progress to Year II and Year III curriculum.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, some time back, the Minister mentioned in Parliament the setting-up of the *Institut de Formation et d'Education Tertiaire*. He also said that this was meant to allow students doing prevocational and IVTB to continue their studies. May I ask the Minister how many of these students have been admitted to the Institute?

Mr Gokhool: As indicated, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a review proposal that has been made for the reform of the TVET sector and there is now going to be consultations.

All the implications will be looked into and then the setting-up of the IFET will be envisaged.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the last nearly three years, the hon. Minister has been speaking of reforming the curriculum, may I ask him whether he has at least an indication when this reformed curriculum will be ready?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, reform in the education sector is an ongoing process. We have stated that we are going to reform the curriculum; the work has started and as we progress, the different stages of the reform programme will be undertaken. I cannot give a sort of hard and fast date.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister, since he has just mentioned right now that the present system is not reaching the aims we had set, does he not think that it is high time that we come up with something quickly to ensure that these students are not made to remain in a school without expecting any result?

Mr Gokhool: Sir, the whole idea is to revisit the present system and we are working towards its reform.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is talking about reform, but the question is not about reform, it is about the curriculum. The Minister is working on that curriculum reform. Can I ask him when will this new curriculum be available?

Mr Gokhool: As I have said, I cannot give a hard and fast date.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister mentioned that the curriculum that he was proposing to come up with, was meant to ensure the harmonisation between prevocational and IVTB foundation courses. Can he mention whether anything has been done as yet, at least, in view of harmonising the two curricula?

Mr Gokhool: Yes, because the IVTB is involved in the reform of this programme

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since the IVTB is already involved in the reform and the Minister mentioned that he would carry out an awareness programme to ensure that the students doing these prevocational courses know that there are possibilities for their further training, has this, at least, been done?

Mr Gokhool: Sir, we cannot undertake that phase unless we agree on the proposals contained in the proposal that I am submitting to the Assembly.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister whether he is aware that this harmonisation programme was mentioned by him only in this Assembly some two years back and that we have already gone through almost three years of his being the Minister

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool: May I remind the hon. Member that the mess we are clearing was made by them!

(Interruptions)

At 12.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair