

**TERTIARY**  
**MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE**

05.12.00 (1)

**MGI COUNCIL - BOARD - RECONSTITUTION, ACTIVITIES,  
PROMOTION, ETC.**

(No. B/399) Mr A.K. Gungah (Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain -

- (a) when the Board thereof was last constituted together with the names the members thereof at that time;
- (b) whether the Board is still functioning, and if not, why not, and
- (c) whether the Boards chaired by Mr S. Veerasamy had proceeded to recruitment, promotion in the course of the last 5 years and, if not, why not, considering the frustration caused among the staff.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, I am informed that -

- (a) the MGI council was last reconstituted in 1993 for a period of 3 years. The names of the council members at that time together with subsequent changes with regard to ex-officio members is being circulated. (Appendix IV).
- (b) the MGI council is still functioning and the last meeting dates back to 03 November 2000.
- (c) the appointments' committee of the MGI council had not carried out any appointment since 1996 due to a policy decision taken by my predecessor to the effect that no recruitment should be effected pending the renewal of the Board.

I must, however, point out that as soon as this matter was brought to my attention, I gave the necessary authorisation for the MGI appointments' committee to do its work as usual. In the meantime, I have called at the MGI and I have met with the Board Chairman and with the Senior Management separately to discuss the situation there. In the light of these discussions, preparations are underway for the reconstitution of the MGI council which should intervene shortly.

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## Members

Representative of Indian High Commission	-	Mr. J.W. Lobo, First Secretary (Culture) & Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture	Replaced by Mr. N. K. Sharma
Director, Mahatma Gandhi Institute	-	Mr. U. Bissoondoyal	Replaced by Mrs. A. Sibartie Ag. Director
Representative, Prime Minister's Office	-	Mrs N. Nababsing, Principal Assistant Secretary	Replaced by Mrs. Makoondlall
Representative of Ministry of Finance	-	Mr. V. Mulloo, Principal Assistant Secretary	Replace by Dr. A.K. Aubeeluck
Representative of Ministry of Arts and Culture & R.I.	-	Miss M.D. Moti Chief Education Officer	Replaced by Mr. O. K. Dabidin
Representative, Ministry of Economic, Planning and Development	-	Mr. S. Veeramundar, Economist	Replaced by Mr. A. Rajaballee
Representative Ministry of Education and Science	-	Mr. G. Pertaub, Permanent Secretary	Replaced by Mr. V. Sewraj
Representative University of Mauritius	-	Mr. V. Hookoomsing Associate Professor	Same
Representative of Staff Association	-	(1) Mr. Y. Chan Kam Lon MGI Senior Staff Association (2) Mr. K. Kitaruth MGI Staff Association (3) Mr. C. Moonshiram MGI Employees Union	Replaced by: Mr. M. L. Mungur  Mr. Banymandub  Mr. C. Padaruth
Representative of Student Association	-	(1) Mr. R. Ramchurn MGI Student Association (2) Mr. S. Ragoo MGI Students Council	Replaced by Miss. B. Ramphul Replaced by Miss R. Ganguly

### Nominated Members

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|----|---|----------|
| 1. | Mr. Dhundev Bahadoor<br>Adviser, Prime Minister's Office<br>Port Louis                                      | Same     |
| 2. | Mr. K.N. Domah<br>Principal Examinations and Research Officer<br>Mauritius Examinations Syndicate<br>Reduit | Same     |
| 3. | Mr. T. Ammigan<br>Press Attache<br>Ministry of Education and Science  | Resigned |
| 4. | Mr. Babooram Guiness<br>101, Palma Road<br>Quatre Bornes  | Same     |
|    | Mrs Sarojini Bissessur-Asgarally<br>Beeltah House<br>St. Jean Road<br>Quatre Bornes                         | Same     |
| 6. | Mr. Jacques Li Wan Po<br>Managing Director<br>Food Cannery Ltd<br>Plaine Lauzun<br>Port Louis               | Same     |
| 7. | Mr. Hurduthlail Gungah<br>1, Avenue Dunand<br>Quatre Bornes   | Same     |
| 8. | Mr. Krishna Ramanah<br>5, Dr. Clifford Mayer<br>Floreale  | Same     |
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24/04/01

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### MGI - COUNCIL - MEETINGS

(No. A/38) Mr A. K. Gungah (Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether in regard to the Council of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), he will, for the benefit of the House and for the period 01 January 1996 to 31 December 2000 give -

- (a) the number of times it was convened; and
- (b) the number of times its meetings were postponed and the reasons thereafter.

**Reply:** The reply is as follows -

- (a) 39 meetings of the MGI Council were convened for period January 19 to 31 December 2000; and
- (b) 12 of these meetings were postponed because of lack of quorum.

### MGI - APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND RECRUITMENT

(No. A/39) Mr A. K. Gungah (Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will, for the benefit of the House and, in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) -

- (a) for the period 01 January 1996 to 31 December 2000 ascertain the number of times its Appointments Committee met and the number of recruitments made as a result thereof, and
- (b) ascertain the present number of vacancies on its establishment and the reason/s of their not being filled up.

**Reply:** As regards part (a), the Appointments Committee of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute met only twice of the period 1 January 1996 to December 2000 and 21 recruitments were made.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the present number of vacancies is 187. Following instructions from my predecessor, the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research advised MGI to stay action on the filling of vacant posts pending the setting up of the New MGI Council. However, the new council was only set up in January this year and an Appointments Committee has been constituted in March 2001. The committee is now actively working.

## MGI - CONVERSION INTO FORM VI COLLEGE

22/5/01  
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(No. B/431) **Dr. J. B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in view of the fact that the MGI was set up pursuant to an agreement between the Government of India and that of Mauritius in 1969, he will state if he has had consultations with the Government of India concerning the conversion of the secondary school of the MGI into a Form VI college and, if so, will he state when he met the Indian High Commissioner to that effect and, if not, why not.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Questions B/431 and B/432 together, as they both relate to what is essentially the same subject matter, that is the role of the MGI within the education reform process.

Let me state at the very outset that the MGI is a symbol of the very close relationship that was, is, and always will be between India and Mauritius. At the same time, the MGI holds out a very valuable educational and cultural experience which needs to be further popularised.

The MGI was set up in 1970 and the MGI Act of that year describes its object as being essentially:-

- to establish, as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, a Centre of Studies of Indian Culture and Tradition; and
- also to promote education and culture generally.

When the Act was repealed and replaced in 1982, the objects of the MGI were described in essentially the same manner.

CA/D10/P14/6

(No. B/431) (Contd)

The MGI has, over the years, become well-known as a centre, hosting cultural activities, a centre for fine arts and performing arts, an institution conducting historical research and offering tertiary courses, as well as adult education courses. In addition, the MGI houses a secondary school admitting approximately a 108 Mauritian students each year. The secondary school has, over the years, become a perceived star school.

The Reform Plan released on 10 May, in line with the recommendations of the National Education Commission Report of 1995, and in line with the Action Plan of the previous Government, proposes that the MGI no longer has a Form I intake as from January 2003.

It is specifically proposed that the MGI becomes eventually by 2007 a Form VI college.

The reference to the MGI in the Reform Plan is deliberately couched in a very general terms, as it was always intended that the specifics of the Reform Plan, the modalities of its implementation, would only be finalised after discussion with all those concerned.

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D10/IF/P15/1

No. B/431 (contd.)

(Mr Obeegadoo)

The proposal for the MGI in no way contradicts the terms and provisions of the MGI Act. In actual fact the ideas being considered by the Ministry of Education and which were discussed with the MGI staff yesterday, should provide an enhanced role to the MGI in the promotion of Indian culture and the teaching of Asian languages generally. It is thus proposed that there should be in each of the new regions at least one secondary school performing the present functions of the MGI. By providing the whole range of Asian Languages with a curriculum incorporating Indian culture, as may be appropriate. These regional schools including the Form I – V school attached to the new Rabindranath Tagore Institute would operate in close coordination with the MGI and could even be managed by the MGI.

As a Form VI college, the MGI would become a centre of advanced learning specialising in Indian culture and Asian languages and offering places to students from its regional schools and possibly others offering appropriate subject combinations.

Apart from its secondary school, the MGI would remain as at present keeping its actual functions and fulfilling its specific mission. In so doing it would benefit from the additional infrastructural facilities of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute. The ideas I have just presented, Mr Speaker, Sir, are, of course, still mere proposals which have to be discussed in greater detail with the MGI itself and subsequently at Governmental level before finalisation, but they do testify to our deep commitment to preserving, cherishing and enhancing the role of the MGI as an Institution fundamental to our educational system and central to the cultural life of Mauritius. Naturally, the Indian authorities will be fully consulted and there have already been preliminary discussions.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it was quite a lengthy reply but, unfortunately, the questions have not been replied. My first question is: was there any consultation with the Indian Government through the Indian High Commission? The second one: when the MGI was set up in 1970, reference was made to the secondary school. May I quote what the then hon. Minister of Education, Mr Jomadhar then said: "It will consist of the following units

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D10/IF/P15/2

including a secondary school". And then when it was taken again in 1982 by hon. Jadoo he said – I quote from Hansard:

"I think we have to be careful and depending upon the number of vacancies in Form I ascertain the exact number of students and so on from the MGI".

So, my questions were very specific. The first one: was there any consultation with the Indian High Commission? And the second one: is the reform not going counter to the spirit in which the MGI was first set up in 1970 and subsequently reconfirmed in 1982?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, as a matter of fact, I have stated that there have been recently preliminary discussions with the Indian Authorities as represented in Mauritius. I do not have the mastery of languages which the hon. Member may have, but I very humbly believe that as a generic term the term secondary school does include a Form VI college. A Form VI college is a secondary school. As regards the spirit, I believe we are faithful both to the letter and the spirit of the original Act. I would only quote the speech of Shrimati Indira Gandhi at the laying of the foundation stone for the MGI in 1970 where she said -

"An Institute named after so wondrous a personality must help the intellectual and spiritual unfoldment of the people of Mauritius."

That is precisely what we are doing, Sir.

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened to the Minister of Education and he defined a Form VI school as a secondary school. May I go to the Education Act in which the definition of secondary school is given. Secondary school means....

*(Interruptions)*

Whatever happens, I am going to ask my question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Whatever be the reaction of those who are present here....

*(Interruptions)*

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D10/IF/P15/3

You may shout as much as you want, I am going to ask the question and I wish to get an answer from the Minister. Definition of the Secondary School from the Education Act: Secondary school means: a school providing post-primary education of not less than five years duration leading to public examination. Will he confirm that he is going to amend the Education Act?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, we are acting with sincerity of purpose, within the philosophy of the creation of the MGI as I have just explained. We shall, therefore, look again at whatever legislation needs to be looked at in consultation with all the required parties, including the Opposition to do what is best.

**Dr. David:** The Minister is talking of a lot of consultations, but we know what he said: "*arrive qui arrivé*, this plan will go on". Therefore, on the one hand, there is a request for dialogue and, on the other hand, he says "come what may", he is going along with his plan. The next question is: among the 11 State colleges, he includes the MGI; does it mean that the MGI is not a State school as clearly spelt out in the Glover Commission of Inquiry?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** The MGI certainly has its specificities, it has its specific role and mission. I have explained, at length, in response to the PNQ, this morning, what was the underlined philosophy of the transformation of the perceived star schools. I believe the question is answered.

**Mr Dulloo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with what the hon. Minister just said, that the MGI has got its own specificity, I am asking him about the stand of the MGI, yesterday, when he met the representatives of the staff of the secondary school of the MGI. Was it not in order to maintain that specificity, especially to attain that objective as described by late Shrimati Indira Gandhi when the foundation stone was laid that they want to preserve this college as it is, that is, from Form I to Form VI to ensure in the same spirit as being claimed by the confessional schools that there is in their education programme to preserve the specificity of such schools and to ensure education from Form I to Form VI to attain those objectives: spiritual, cultural and otherwise as has been said?

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D10/IF/P15/4

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is always resistance to change. The hon. Member, I believe, was a backbencher in 1982 and he would remember that there was then an attempt to *mettre à jour* the legislation concerning the MGI, there was reaction. It is only natural that in all changes that we try to bring about there are reactions. We are witnessing it today in some of the schools we hope to transform into Form VI colleges. Yesterday, I did go to the MGI, but there were different reactions. In fact, there were three unions at the MGI, not just the one we heard of in the press. One union did take the stand which the hon. Member has just described and another expressed its enthusiasm and support for the proposals I have just outlined. So, there are certainly different views and what is essential is that we preserve the MGI for what it is in the very essence as a centre for Indian culture proposing as Shrimati Indira Gandhi put it: "the intellectual and spiritual unfoldment of the people of Mauritius" and we shall act in conformity with that spirit.

#### **MGI/FORM VI COLLEGE – PROPOSED CONVERSION**

**(No. B/432) Dr. J.B. David (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the proposed conversion of the MGI into a Form VI college, he will state if, before making a decision, he had considered the objectives for which the MGI was set up in 1970 by the then Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs and subsequently reaffirmed in 1982 by the then Minister of Education, namely, the setting up of a secondary school starting from Form I.

*(Vide reply to PQ No. B/431)*

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Documentation Unit

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22 APR 2003

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**MGI - APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE/COUNCIL - MEMBERS**

(No. B/213) Mr D. Hurnam (Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, obtain information as to -

- (a) the names of the members of the Appointments Committee and those of the Council, and
- (b) (i) the criteria on which the Appointments Committee recommended to the Council the appointment of Mr Pongasamy Tiroumachetty and Ms Reshmee Ramdhonee to the posts of Associate Professor, and
  - (ii) the reasons why Mr Narainduth Sookhoo was not appointed to a similar post despite a recommendation to that effect by the Appointments Committee on 21 July 1995.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, for the information of the House, I am circulating a paper on the composition of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Council and on its Appointments Committee respectively. (Appendix I)

With regard to criteria used by the Appointments Committee, for the post of Associate Professor, I am informed that these were according to the prescribed scheme of service for the post, namely -

- (a) Qualifications - postgraduate degree, MPhil or Phd in the subject concerned or equivalent;
- (b) Experience - at least five years experience in teaching/research at the tertiary level and sound administrative capability.

Apart from the above two criteria, the Appointments Committee was also, according to information received, guided by merit criterion and by the performance of the candidates at the interview.

With regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, I am advised that the Appointments Committee responsible for the selection exercise for the post of Associate Professor in 2003 cannot base itself on recommendations made in 1995, that is, 8 years back. The post of Associate Professor as the title itself suggests is a high calibre one and the candidate cannot, for instance, be appointed on a seniority basis. I am further informed that the candidates selected are both Phd holders.

22/7/03  
(5)

**CONSERVATOIRE DE MUSIQUE FRANCOIS MITTERRAND - NO. OF STUDENTS, EXAMINATIONS,  
ETC**

(No. B/505) Mr P. Roopun (Third Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the *Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand*, he will ascertain -

- (a) the number of students who have followed courses yearly for the last five years;
- (b) the examinations for which they have sat, and
- (c) say whether the certificates awarded are internationally recognised and, if not, what remedial action is being envisaged.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, in response to part (a) of the question, allow me to state that the number of students who have followed courses yearly at the *Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand* for the last five years is as follows -

1999	-	641
2000	-	566
2001	-	582
2002	-	578
2003	-	612

I am informed that between 40% to 50% of these students are enrolled for non-award courses.

As regards part (b) of the question, those who were enrolled for award courses have sat for -

- (i) internal examinations i.e. Elementary, Intermediate or Final stages. These examinations are conducted by the *Conservatoire* under the supervision of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, and
- (ii) examinations in Music Teaching and Interpretation leading to a certificate or a diploma of the British Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, which are also supervised by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

As regards part (c) of the question concerning international recognition of the certificates, students going abroad may seek advice as to recognition and equivalence of these *Conservatoire* certificates from the Equivalence Council or corresponding body in the country concerned.

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However, those awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music are recognised in the UK and in Commonwealth countries.

**Mr P. Roopun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister confirm that the examinations conducted by the MES are not internationally recognised?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Certificates delivered by local bodies are not automatically recognised abroad. We are a small country, so it is on an *ad hoc* basis. If somebody holding a certificate from a body in Mauritius goes abroad, he inquires as to recognition and equivalence. That is the case generally.

**Mr P. Roopun:** Could we know how many students from the *Conservatoire* take part in the exams conducted by Royal Schools of Music, in UK?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I understand the *Conservatoire* provides courses to assist students to prepare themselves for either the certificate or the diploma exams which are offered by the British Associated Board of Royal School of Music. So, the student can choose to do only Certificates of the *Conservatoire* or he can choose to do only the UK Bodies Examinations or he can choose to do both. The MES assists in the organisation of all these examinations and the *Conservatoire* provides tuition.

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**MAHATMA GANDHI SSS & GANDHIAN BASIC SCHOOL -  
ROAD SAFETY MEASURES**

(No. B/256) Dr. P. Ramloil (First Member for Moka and Quartier Militaire) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the dense traffic in the surroundings of the Mahatma Gandhi SSS and the Gandhian Basic School and, if so, will he state what security measures have been taken for the safety of students attending those schools and indicate if it is proposed to have a path between those two schools.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would first like to point out that as a caring Government, road safety measures in the vicinity of schools for the security of children are given top priority by my Ministry.

Thus, my Ministry is aware of the dense traffic in the surroundings of the Mahatma Gandhi SSS and the Gandhian Basic School and the hazards that such a situation constitutes.

I shall now elaborate on the different security measures that have already been taken in order to improve road safety in the vicinity of the Mahatma Gandhi SSS, the Gandhian Basic School and also the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

These road safety measures are as follows -

- (a) a signalised pedestrian crossing has already been provided near the existing bus stop along the main road near the Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
- (b) footpaths and handrails have recently been provided between Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School in order to segregate pedestrians from vehicular traffic;
- (c) two new bus lay-bys, one on each side of the road have recently been constructed near the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School;
- (d) a one-way scheme has recently been implemented within the Mahatma Gandhi Institute compound; and

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(contd.)

- (e) a speed limit (50 km/hr) traffic sign has recently been provided near the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School along the Moka/Camp de Masque-Flacq Road.

My Ministry also proposes to install a signalised pedestrian crossing near the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School as soon as the Central Electricity Board will provide the power supply.

I wish to point out that raised footpaths already exist on both sides of the Montagne Ory Road for the safety of students attending the Gandhian Basic School.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether a bus shelter has been provided in the existing lay-bys.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now there is no bus shelter, but I will try to communicate this to the authorities concerned.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it has been a common sight to see students crossing the highway in the region of the Gandhian Basic School to go to the University area bus stops. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a subway or an overpass could be provided to facilitate that type of movement, because apparently most of the students catch buses in the University area.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, actually, we are proposing to install a signalised pedestrian crossing and if the need is felt, then we'll look into that possibility. Whenever we have provided overhead bridges, we have found from experience that pedestrians are not delighted. I'll make a follow-up and if the need is felt then we'll come with other measures.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether there was a traffic impact assessment carried out before the construction of the school?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, normally, before and after construction also, the Traffic Management Unit has that role of monitoring the situation and a traffic impact assessment as well has been carried out.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Thank you. Would the hon. Minister lay the documents on the Table of the House?

**Mr Bachoo:** I'll lay a copy of the documents, Sir.

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22/6/04  
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## PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

B/554 The Honourable Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart  
(Dr. Hookoom)

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

**Whether, in regard to persons who are recruited, appointed, called upon or employed on a contract basis for some assignment by the Rabindranath Tagore Institute during the past six months, he will state (a) their names and their respective qualifications and dates of assumption of duty (b) the basis of such assignments (c) the salary, allowances and other payments made to each of them and the job assigned to each of them and (d) if there was an advertisement relating thereto and, if not why not?**

### DRAFT REPLY FOR SITTING OF TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2004

Sir,

I am informed that the only two contractual appointment at the Rabindrath Tagore Institute (RTI) over the past six months relate to the employment of Mr. Abhimanyu Unnuth with effect from 3 February 2004 to plan, execute and coordinate the activities of the cultural sector and that of Mrs. S. Sarojini Bissessur-Asgarally with effect from 6 April 2004 to conduct activities for the RTI and collect and classify material relating to Tagore Studies. It is noteworthy that Mr Unnuth was already on contractual appointment with duties relating to RTI. Mrs Bissessur-Asgarally for her part opted to terminate her contract on 31 May 2004. I am tabling the terms and conditions of employment of both Mr Unnuth and Mrs Bissessur-Asgarally.



22/6/04  
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**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION**

B/553 The Honourable Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart  
(Dr. Hookoom)

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

Whether, in regard to those called upon to head State Secondary Schools compared to those of the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, for example he will say if there is any difference in their appellation, salary scale and terms

DRAFT REPLY FOR SITTING OF TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2004

Sir,

The State Secondary Schools are headed by Rectors who enjoy salary in the scale of Rs 28,000 to Rs 34,000. For the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools (MGSSs), the 2003 PRB Report has recommended the creation of a grade of Rector to head these schools with the same salary scale of Rs 28,000 to Rs 34,000. The other terms and conditions of service as per the PRB Report are also identical.

2. However, I am informed that pending the finalisation of the Scheme of Service for the post of Rector MGSSs and the filling of the vacancies, the MGI Council has assigned duties at the level of Office-in-Charge to selected Education Officers against payment of an allowance. This is a purely *ad hoc* arrangement in line with current practice in the public sector and there is no indication of any draw back in the system.

3. I further wish to point out that even within the State sector proper, whenever there are vacancies in the grade of Rectors, Deputy Rectors are similarly assigned duties of Rector against an allowance pending the filling of vacancies.

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**YEAR 2005**

**MAHATMA GANDHI AND RABINDRANATH SECONDARY SCHOOLS - RECTORS & DEPUTY RECTORS (09/08/05)**

**(No. I B/11) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Heads of the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools and the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School he will state –

- (a) when such schools became operational;
- (b) the title of the posts at their respective inception and their respective title today;
- (c) if the same privileges, pay packet, allowances and title of post in State Secondary Schools and/or Confessional Secondary Schools were resorted to and, if not, why not, and
- (d) upon whose advice or recommendation was the practice followed.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that as far as part (a) is concerned, the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools of Moka, Flacq and Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School, Ilot and the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, Nouvelle France came into operation in January 2002 and January 2003 respectively.

As regards part (b), at the time of the setting up of those schools, temporary arrangements were resorted to and after an in-house exercise, most senior Education Officers of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute were identified by the management of Mahatma Gandhi Institute to act as Officer-in-Charge as from the date the schools became operational, against payment of an allowance of Rs1,800 per month. That was so because the scheme of service for the post of Rector had not yet been prescribed. They were subsequently appointed as Deputy Rector with effect from 04 January 2005 and their current appellation is still Deputy Rector pending a decision for the Mahatma Gandhi Institute to fill the post of Rector.

As regards part (c), the post of Rector and Deputy Rector on the establishment of Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute carry the same salary scale and conditions of service as that of Rector and Deputy Rector both in the State schools and the private secondary schools, including the confessional schools.

With regard to part (d), the salary grading for the post of Rector and Deputy Rector were made by the Pay Research Bureau as is the case for all posts in the Civil Service and parastatal bodies. The designation of Officers-in-Charge and appointment of Deputy Rectors have been effected by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute Council on the recommendation of the Management of the Institute.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister when the Deputy Rector will be promoted to the post of Rector and the subsequent filling of the post of Deputy Rector. Could the Minister consider the advisability of backdating the appointment of these posts since the

Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School conduct classes of Form IV as from January 2005?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, procedures are on for the appointment of the Chairmen of MGI and the RTI. As regards the backdating of these posts, I shall refer the matter to the appropriate institutions.

**MAHATMA GANDHI SECONDARY SCHOOLS - LABORATORY,  
SPORTING FACILITIES, ETC (09/08/05)**

**(No. I B/12) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools, he will state –

- (a) if they are equipped with (i) a Biology, Chemistry and Physics laboratory, and (ii) volleyball pitch, basketball pitch and football playground;
- (b) if any sporting facility and Domestic Science Room and/or a Design and Communication Room and Library exist and, if not, why not;
- (c) if the prevocational classes conducted thereat are equipped with any workshop facilities and, if not, why not, and
- (d) the arrangements, if any, made or to be made for the provision of the above basic facilities.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), I am given to understand that the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School at Ilot and which is part of the Mahatma Gandhi Schools has Biology, Physics and Chemistry laboratories as well as volleyball and basketball pitches and football ground. As for the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools at Central Flacq, Moka and Solférino, they have neither Science laboratories nor proper sports facilities.

Since no building has been put up yet for the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, at Nouvelle France, its students are accommodated in the Nouvelle France Sixth Form State College next to the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School site. They do not have Science laboratories and football ground, but they benefit from the volleyball and basketball facilities available at the college.

With regard to 'sporting facility' mentioned in part (b) of the question, this has just been answered.

The Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School has a Domestic Science Room, a Design and Communication Room and a Library. But the four Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools do not have any of those facilities.

I am given to understand that the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools, like a few other State Secondary Schools, are being constructed phase-wise due to time constraint and the urgent need for classrooms for accommodation purposes in the first instance. The Domestic Science room, Design and Communication Room and Library will be put up in the second or third phase of the respective projects.

As regards part (c), the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School has got workshop facilities for the prevocational classes. These facilities are not available at the four Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools.

The workshop infrastructure has not yet been built in those schools, but will be put up in the second or third phase of the construction works of those four schools. However, equipment has been purchased in March 2005 for the prevocational streams of all the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools. As regards part (d), some simple tools among those items of equipment are already being used by the students in practical work carried out in the classrooms. The rest of the equipment will be installed and put to use when the necessary infrastructure is put up in the second or third phase of their respective projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is working closely with the MPI with a view to speeding up the completion of the remaining phases of all the schools, including the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the school yard is so small that the ratio of the number of students to the area of school yard is less than 1:1, that is, one student to less than 1 square metre. More particularly, in the case of that MG SS Flacq where morning assembly could not be conducted because of lack of space, and parents rightly claim that this age which the students are presently living will not be revisited. Therefore, I should like to appeal to the hon. Minister to look into the matter.

**Mr Gokhool:** I am fully aware of the problems being faced by the students in these schools, Mr Speaker, Sir. And again, I would say, as was mentioned by my colleague, Minister Burty David, this is yet another

example of very poor planning and very poor project management. This is the reason why the students are facing ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, Order! Let the Minister answer the question, please!

**Mr Gokhool:** I assure the House that every step is being taken to correct the situation which has been prevailing over the last four and a half years.

**MGI – RECRUITMENT EXERCISES – JAN 2005 TO DATE (23/08/05)**

**(No. I B/133) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Education Officers and minor grades/manual/field workers at the MGI, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information on the recruitment exercises carried out during the period 01 January to date.

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

- (i) recruitment exercises at the level of the MGI (Mahatma Gandhi Institute) are carried out by the MGI Council through its Appointment Committees, and
- (ii) from January 2005 to date, the MGI has filled the following vacancies which existed on its establishment with regard to Education Officers and minor grades staff

–

Education Officers - 11 posts  
Laboratory Attendants - 7 posts  
Office Attendants - 13 posts  
Gardeners - 10 posts  
Handy Workers - 3 posts  
General Workers - 66 posts

It should be noted that while the posts of Education Officers and general workers were advertised to the general public, the other vacancies were filled by promotion internally, *i.e.* qualified serving officers of the institute were promoted to higher posts.

Government has taken a decision to the effect that all temporary appointments made during the pre-electoral period, *i.e.* from 24 April to 03 July should be terminated subject to legal advice being obtained and the MGI has already been apprised of that decision for necessary action at its end.

If the hon. Member has any worry or any specific issue in mind, I shall be pleased to look into the matter if same is communicated to me.

**Dr. Ramloll:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Minister for the answer. My interest lies in the case of the field workers who were recruited prior to the election as he just said. May we know if the Minister can table the residential address of those concerned?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have checked the information and the workers come from various constituencies.

**MAHATMA GANDHI SECONDARY SCHOOLS - MOKA, FLACQ,  
SOLFERINO - CONTRACTS**

*debate no 11 of  
11/10/05  
17*

**(No. I B/313) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools at Moka, Flacq and Solferino, he will state -

- (a) if any contract for the construction of a classroom and/or administrative block has been awarded and, if so;
- (a) when, and
- (a) the expected date of completion and handing over of the building.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQ No. I B/313. The contracts for works for the three Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools have been awarded to the Development Works Corporation as follows -

- (a) MGSS Solferino - Administrative Block:  
Date of Award : 14 May 2004  
Expected Completion Date: End October 2005
- (a) MGSS Central Flacq - Administrative Block, Classroom and Toilet Block:  
Date of Award: 12 August 2004  
Classroom Block handed over 14 July 2005  
Administrative Block: Expected Completion Date: End Nov.2005
- (a) MGSS Moka - Classroom Block:  
Date of Award: 19 August 2004  
Expected Completion Date: Mid November 2005

I am informed that the expected completion dates are subject to the diligence of the sub-contractor on the sites. However, I have instructed that the performance of sub-contractors be closely monitored.

**GAYAN, MRS SOORYA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MGI -  
DISMISSAL (11/10/05)**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P.Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to his recent decision to dismiss Mrs Soorya Gayan as Director-General of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, he will -

(a) say what led him to state in the House last Tuesday that Mrs Sibartie, former Registrar and acting Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, has had to resign on the occasion of the appointment of Mrs Gayan, and

(b) agree that circumstances, fair play and justice dictate that Mrs Gayan be re-appointed Director-General of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), although in reply to the PNQ last week, I did raise the question concerning Mrs Sibartie's retirement, I made it clear that this was behind us. However let me state the facts.

When Mr Utam Bissoondoyal, then Director, Mahatma Gandhi Institute was either on leave or on mission, it was Mrs A. Sibartie, then Registrar who replaced the Director on several occasions during the period 15 August 1995 to 07 August 2000. When Mr Bissoondoyal went on preretirement leave as from 01 February 2000 and eventually retired on 07 August 2000, Mrs Sibartie acted as Director of the Institute as from 01 February 2000 until 14 October 2001.

On one occasion, when Mrs Sibartie, Acting Director, went on leave from 24 June 2001 to 25 July 2001, Mrs Gayan, then Head, Centre for Mauritian Studies, acted as Director.

According to records a scheme of service for the post of Director of the Institute was specified with effect from July 2001. The qualification requirement for the post stated to be a degree and a post graduate qualifications from a recognised institution. Other requirements included sound knowledge of Indian culture traditions and cultural values.

As far as qualifications were concerned Mrs Sibartie had a degree and a Diploma in Educational Administration. The question may be asked whether the effect of the provisions of the scheme of service were not such as to render Mrs Sibartie ineligible for the post.



Mrs Gayan was appointed as Director, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, on 15 October 2001 and Mrs Sibartie resumed her post and proceeded on leave as from 08 February 2002 prior to retirement which was effective as from 31 July 2002.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I had indicated last Tuesday that I would be speaking to Mrs Gayan that afternoon.

In fact, I did have a conversation with her and made some propositions to her. She wanted time to consider it and I talked to her again the next day and finally there was the proposition that she takes up the post of Director of Rabindranath Tagore Institute. She has written to me yesterday saying that she had given a thought and would rather proceed on retirement and that she would want all the benefits entitled to her to be paid. I personally have no objection to retirement benefits being paid to her in conformity with existing legislation. That is the situation.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fact is that last week the Prime Minister did say that Mrs Sibartie, former Registrar and former Acting Director of the MGI had had to resign. Now, he is better informed.

This is another case where clearly the Prime Minister was misinformed. Will the Prime Minister confirm that, in fact, Mrs Sibartie did not resign from the MGI and that when the time came, she retired from the MGI?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, what I meant, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that she decided to retire - if we want to put it that way - because she felt that she was the Acting Director, she had been the Registrar and the scheme of service was changed and, therefore, she felt she did not want to continue. That is why I said she decided to go.

**Mr Bérenger:** This is not the information that I have. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - now that we've corrected the fact that Mrs Sibartie did not resign from the MGI, but she retired from the MGI when the time came - whether he will confirm that, in fact, she chose not to apply for the post of Director when the decision was taken to open up to anybody the possibility of becoming Director of the MGI?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to clarify the facts. She decided to go on pre-retirement leave because of the new scheme of service and she could not apply because she had only a degree and a diploma in Education and Administration. The new scheme of service required a degree and a post-graduate qualification which she did not have. She had been acting as Director, she had been Registrar and, as I said in my answer,

when Mr Bissoondoyal, for example, went abroad it was Mrs Sibartie and not Mrs Gayan who acted as Director-General. My understanding is that she felt the new scheme of service precluded her and she preferred to go on preretirement leave.

**Mr Bérenger:** I would not wish the hon. Prime Minister to get me wrong. Mrs Sibartie had a beautiful career at the MGI and she retired at the end of her career. There is absolute nothing against her, absolutely nothing.

Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will agree with me that under his Government up to the year 2000, nothing would have prevented the then Government from appointing, after her actingship, Mrs Sibartie as Director? This was not done, we reached general election and she was acting. The previous Government did not confirm her, then the decision was taken to open up the possibility to anybody, including from overseas to become Director of the MGI. This having taken place and all the procedures having been followed, as I said, does not the Prime Minister agree with me that circumstances as we see them, fair play and justice indeed do dictate that Mrs Gayan be reappointed Director? The Prime Minister has said that he has just received the letter, but this is because she is not being reappointed. Will not the Prime Minister agree with me that circumstances, fair play and justice do dictate that she be reappointed?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to clarify one thing before the first part of what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying. Mr Bissoondoyal went on pre-retirement leave on 01 February 2000 and only retired on the 07 of August 2000. There was then the electoral campaign as he knows. So, we wanted to wait for the election. That is the reason that this is so. The other thing is that I did talk to her. You know, I don't want to go through it because I don't want to sour the atmosphere, but there were some reasons why she was asked to go. There were some questions about some appointments that were done and all those things; and that is the reason why it was proceeded in that way. But as the hon. Leader of the Opposition says about the *côté humanisme*, I did ask her if she would reconsider certain options. She wanted to go back to the post of Director, but the one which was available was that of Rabindranath Tagore Institute.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Director-General is available.

**The Prime Minister:** Concerning the post of Director-General, there were some reasons as to why she was asked to go. In fact, she did consider it. I don't want to go into the private conversation I had with her, but she said she appreciated what we have done but, on the whole, she preferred, at

this point, to do other things and, therefore, she would want her full retirement.

**Mr Bérenger:** Surely the hon. Prime Minister agrees with me that *on ne peut absolument rien à reprocher à madame Gayan, absolument rien*. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister – being given that he said in a press interview last week ‘*je suis un humaniste*’ - whether he will not agree with me that un vrai *humaniste* would admit to a mistake having been made and reappoint as a true *humaniste* Mrs Gayan as Director-General of the MGI, the post which is there?

**The Prime Minister:** That does not change the *humanisme*. In fact, it is through a humanistic approach that I rang her and talked to her. It was a very friendly conversation and I did tell her at the first place that there were some reasons, whether right or wrong, that we felt there was a need to change, with the reorganisation that is going on at the MGI at the moment.

She did, in fact, consider it. She turned down the offer of Associate Professor, because she felt the least she should be the Director. Therefore, that is the situation.

**Mr Bérenger:** Let me put it differently. After I have read his statement to the effect that “*je suis un humaniste*”, I read what he said last Saturday. This time he came out with this forceful statement ‘only fools have no regrets’. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is not a candidate.

Therefore, can I again insist that this is a case where we should be fair? I heard the Prime Minister say “whether right or wrong”, but it is important.

We cannot say whether it is right or wrong, it is very unfair towards somebody who cannot be blamed for anything and who deserves to be reappointed. Therefore, can I insist that if he is *un vrai humaniste* and in the spirit of fair play, of justice that he gives further consideration to the reappointment of Mrs Gayan to the post of Director-General of the MGI, which is available?

**The Prime Minister:** Through the humanistic approach, I did speak to her, Mr Deputy Speaker and, in fact, we had two conversations. The first one was, as I said, the post of Associate Professor was turned down, but not that of Director. She had said - I don’t want to go in the private conversation - that she wanted to be appointed either as Director-General or, but not Associate Professor. That offer was made and she did think about it positively, the way she was answering, but, at the end of the day, she felt

that she would want to do other things and she would want her full retirement. It was through a humanistic approach that I talked to her

**Mr Bérenger:** The bottom line is the fact that somebody who fully deserves that post of Director-General, a lady at that, when we are all in favour of promoting ladies to the highest possible post, that she had been very hurt by being treated in that way and that, therefore, there is nothing that would be better than re-appointing her Director-General of the MGI. This is the question I put to the Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** When I said “either right or wrong”, I meant there were different opinions. The Opposition has a different opinion, and on this side there are different opinions about some of the appointments that were made just prior to elections. All this came into it, but, as I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did speak to her and that is the situation as it is.

**Mr Varma:** May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that Mrs Gayan has been involved in political activities during the 1983, 1995 and 2000 general elections?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, I don't want to go into the details, but if the hon. Member is saying so.

### **WORLD HINDI SECRETARIAT ACT 2002 – PROCLAMATION (15/11/05)**

**(No. I B/508) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the World Hindi Secretariat, he will state –

- (a) when the World Hindi Secretariat Act 2002 will be proclaimed;
- (b) whether he is aware that the foundation stone was laid in Phoenix by a then Senior Minister of the Republic of India;
- (c) whether there has been any follow-up action and, if not, why not, and
- (d) his Ministry's policy in regard thereto.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the World Hindi Secretariat Act 2002 was proclaimed under this Government on 12 September 2005.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the foundation stone of the Secretariat was laid on 01 November 2002 by the hon. Murli Manohar Joshi, the former Minister of Human Resource Development of the Government of India.

As regards part (c), I am informed that the following has been done -

- (i) the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Mauritius on 21 November 2003;
- (ii) in September 2005, the Indian side has been requested to make arrangements for the Executive Board member from the nodal Ministry in India to be in Mauritius in December 2005 to discuss and finalise modalities of operation of the Secretariat;
- (iii) arrangements for the Governing Council to hold its first meeting in India in February 2006, and
- (iv) Mr Speaker, Sir, it is worth recalling that the idea for the setting up of a World Hindi Centre was mooted by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Father of the nation, at the first World Hindi Conference held in 1975 in Nagpur, India, and this project took the form of a resolution, and the second conference was held in Mauritius in 1976. In 1996, after the advent of the Government led by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, a World Hindi Secretariat Unit was set up in the Ministry of Education and, since then, a number of initiatives were taken, pre-eminent among them being the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Mauritius on 20 August 1999, outlining the objectives, functioning and the financing of the Secretariat.

It is but fitting for the Government led by the present Prime Minister to be in power again, to materialise such an ambitious project, which has, as objective, to promote Hindi as an international language and to further the cause of Hindi towards its recognition at the United Nations as an official language.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether a Secretary was appointed to the World Hindi Secretariat in 2002?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I won't be able to provide the answer. But, as from my reply, you have noted that the Act voted in 2002 was proclaimed only on 12 September 2005. These are facts and figures that cannot be challenged, even by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he

is aware that Mrs Sarita Boodhoo was appointed Secretary to the World Hindi Secretariat in 2002?

**Dr. David:** I will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the foundation stone has been laid for the World Hindi Secretariat. Can we know from the hon. Minister when the building will be erected?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Minister of Education comes back, I will ask him when the building will be erected.

### **YEAR 2006**

#### **MGI - COUNCIL MEETINGS AND ADVISERS (23/05/06)**

**(No. B/605) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mahatma Gandhi Institute –

- (a) the number of council meetings that have been held since the appointment of the new Chairperson, and
- (b) a list of advisers recruited thereat since July 2005, indicating their qualifications and the allowances and other benefits to which they are entitled.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that two council meetings have been held since the appointment of the new Chairperson with effect from January 2006.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been informed that the MGI has no adviser recruited since July 2005.

#### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE INSTITUTE – DRAMA ACTIVITIES – CO-ORDINATOR (30/05/06)**

**(No. B/678) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, information as to whether a co-ordinator for drama activities has recently been recruited thereat and, if so –

- (a) the qualifications required for the post;

- (b) the salary attached to it, and
- (c) the qualifications of the selected candidate.

**The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J.B. David):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the MGI/RTI has enlisted the services of a suitable person as coordinator for drama activities at the RTI on a contractual basis for an initial period of one year. The offer was made on 24 May 2006, and the person is about to assume duty at any time.

I am also informed that the services of the said person have not been enlisted on the permanent and pensionable establishment but on contract. Drama is a field where academic qualifications cannot be insisted upon because one can have very high qualifications but is a poor performer. What the MGI/RTI required was a talented and competent person who could develop drama activities for the benefit of students and the population at large. In this respect, the person has extensive experience in the field of drama and has been awarded best actor and best director in youth drama festivals organised by the Ministry of Arts & Culture. He has also considerable international exposure.

The co-ordinator for drama activities will be remunerated at the rate of Rs29,000 per month plus salary compensation at the approved rates.

*(Interruptions)*

Did I hear a whistle? Go and find out what Desveaux had as allowance. That coordinator is called Mr Balraj Ramphul, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a travelling allowance attached to that salary?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, from information I have from the Ministry of Education, yes, it's either a travelling allowance or a mileage at the rate of Rs3.65 per kilometre.

**Mr Lesjongard:** He is drawing a salary of more than Rs30,000. May I know the duties of that gentleman at the Institute?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, he has been nominated on a contractual basis as a coordinator for drama activities. I am sure that the hon. Member must know what drama is...

*(Interruptions)*

He is such a poor actor! But he should be taught what drama is.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how many hours of work is that person required to do per week?

**Dr. David:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say one thing about the hours of work for a drama coordinator. Certainly, there is no fixed time. Somebody who teaches drama...

*(Interruptions)*

That's right! But this is what drama is about.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. David:** But one thing, I must underline, Mr Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

Can you translate that into French, Madam? Translate that into proper French, then I will understand. I was just saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this person has been appointed on a contractual basis as drama coordinator with all what it implies.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** One more supplementary, Sir. Can the Minister confirm that among the duties of that gentleman, he has to prepare and train students of the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School and Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School to participate in the National Drama Festival?

**Dr. David:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

## Year 2007

### **INDIAN IMMIGRATIONS RECORDS – MGI – TRANSFER (24/04/07)**

**(No. B/229) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to documents relating to indentured labour, he will state –

(a) if a decision has been taken to have them transferred to the



Mahatma Gandhi Institute and if so, the reasons therefor,  
and

(b) if any other institution/organisation has been duly authorised to carry out similar activities and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker Sir, following a Joint Indo-Mauritian Scientific and Cultural Agreement signed in 1973, the Indian Immigrations records which were in the custody of the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security were transferred to the National Archives Department in June 1973.

In March 1978, the National Archives Department was requested to have the documents transferred to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in line with the Agreement.

The transfer was effected on 06 March 1978.

According to the Agreement, the documents would have to remain in the custody of the Archives until the MGI could take them over. As such, in line with the policy set by the then MGI Board for restoration, preservation and dissemination of ancestral cultural heritage, the transfer was effected.

The National Archives Act 1999 provides for all archival material which is in the custody of, *inter alia*, the MGI to be transferred to the National Archives Department. Moreover, one of the objects of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, in accordance with the AGTF (Amendment) Act 2006, is to set up a museum and create public awareness of the history of indentured labour.

The proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding to be worked out among the MGI, AGTF and National Archives so as to provide a framework for collaboration among the three institutions was raised at a meeting chaired by the Ministry of Arts and Culture on 13 April 2007. Both my Ministry and the MGI were represented at the meeting, and the proposal is under consideration.

### **INDIAN IMMIGRATION ARCHIVES - UNESCO MEMORY (24/04/07)**

**(No. B/230) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the computerisation of the Indian Immigration

Archives at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the proposal for these archives to be included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, he will state -

- (a) the date on which the project and proposal were forwarded by the Mauritius National Commission for the UNESCO, and
- (b) the details and modalities of the funding

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker Sir, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute embarked on the computerisation of the Indian Immigration Archives in January 1999 with a view to providing access to a complete structural database on Indian Immigration.

The project comprises of the following three phases -

- (i) data capture, that is, feeding of data;
- (ii) digitisation, that is, feeding of photograph; and
- (iii) provision of worldwide access through the Internet.

Due to the human resource and financial constraints, only 15% of the records have been captured so far.

On 01 August 2006, the MGI has submitted a project proposal to my Ministry for UNESCO to finance the project and to include the Indian Immigration Archives in the UNESCO memory of the World Register.

Further to the administrative procedures, the request was transmitted to UNESCO by the Secretary General of the Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO, which is the Chief Technical Officer of my Ministry on 01 September 2006.

A grant of Rs10,726,400 would be required by the MGI for the completion of the project. Unesco has its own procedures for selection of project for funding purposes.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm to the House if there is a similar project by any other organisation which intends or has requested for the digitization of the immigrants archives?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware whether there is any specific project for digitization apart from the project from MGI. But there are some discussions going on between the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and MGI. I have to check whether there is another project because I don't think it will make sense to have two projects on digitization.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that worldwide family information found in archival records or genealogical data bank are protected by the respective country's legal framework? Therefore, will the hon. Minister confirm if the Archives Act makes provision for the protection of the sensitive, private, confidential information ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, I won't allow this question. If the question which the hon. Member is asking is in the Archives Act, it is an official document, he can check it himself.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information, there is another organisation which is looking for digitization of this immigrant information. These are very sensitive information and I am given to understand that it will also be on the internet. I don't think anybody in this House would like such family history or genealogical and ancestral information to be made available everywhere for public access.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has a very valid point. I had taken note and I will check the information and see what is the practice and what are the implications. In fact, these information are of a sensitive nature.

### **MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL SCHOOL – HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (08/05/07)**

**(No. B/300) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to students for the Higher School Certificate at the Mahatma Gandhi National School at Moka, he will state –

- (a) Government policy regarding the minimum number of students opting for any particular subject for it to be offered;
- (b) the number of groups of third year students, indicating the number of students in each –
  - i. group;
  - ii. subject area per group;
- (c) if classes are conducted separately for the third year students, and
- (d) if he will consider the advisability of combining the second and third year students.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr. Speaker Sir, the reply is as follows –  
(a) The Government policy regarding the minimum number of students opting for any particular subject for it to be offered is as given below -  
- 18 and above for any given subject, and  
- 10 and above for an Oriental language

By virtue of its statutes, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) is responsible for the promotion of oriental languages and culture.

Accordingly, the minimum number of students may be less than 10 for Oriental languages taking into consideration the demand for the subject. As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, there are 6 groups of third year students who follow classes jointly with second year students. I am circulating the information. (**Appendix II**)

With regard to part (d) of the question, as indicated in part (c) of the reply, second and third year students are mixed as far as possible, according to subject combinations, thus maintaining class size.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there are at least four groups of third year HSC classes with a total of thirty students in all? The Minister insisted on the optimisation of resources in his last Parliamentary Question some minutes back. May I know whether this optimisation of resources is a selective policy or a national policy?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a Government policy, but MGI has got its own statutes and is governed by the statutes as they are. As I said, there are different groups of third year students, and as far as possible, what MGI does, is to combine its students with second year students so as to optimise the resources. And this is the information I am tabling.

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the MGI still has the specificity of offering a wide range of subjects at HSC level?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it has its specificity as regards the wide range of subjects. It has to focus on the promotion of Oriental languages.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I take it from the Minister that

due to the separate statutes he is talking about regarding MGI, this allows MGI to have a teacher who does not even have a time-table? Because he was talking about a teacher who does not have even a time-table. This is the case at MGI. Can I know from the Minister whether this is acceptable at MGI?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I take note of the hon. Member's remark. If that is the case, I am going to look at it, because I am not aware at this stage.

### **MAHATMA GANDHI AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE INSTITUTES – DIRECTORS (29/05/07)**

**(No. B/546) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if the Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute has been appointed and, if so, will he state the names of the incumbents.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the MGI and RTI are concerned, there is a position of Director-General which is presently occupied. Posts of Director, MGI, Director (Schooling) and Director, RTI are also provided in the legislation.

In line with the new strategy for MGI and RTI, the new Council set up in January 2006 examined the issue for the appointment of Director, MGI and was of the view that there was a need for re-allocation of duties and responsibilities which would require amendment to the legislation, and this is being looked into.

Meanwhile, the senior most officers have been assigned duties of Officer-in-Charge to look after secondary schooling and tertiary education at MGI.

As regards the post of Director, RTI, I am informed by the Director-General, MGI, that procedures are under way for the recruitment of a Director, RTI. I am further informed that the Head, Department of Bhojpuri, Folklore and Oral Traditions at the MGI has been assigned the duties of Officer-in-Charge, RTI with effect from 21 November 2006 to ensure the smooth running of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute.

**Mrs Perrier:** Can the hon. Minister say whether the post has been advertised internally and nationwide?

**Mr Gokhool:** I have the information that the recruitment procedures are under way. I don't have further information on that issue.

**Mrs Perrier:** May we know from the hon. Minister when the interviews were held?

**Mr Gokhool:** No interviews were held. There is a recruitment process and it takes a number of steps to reach for the interview. I have to check about the advertisement, but this is the information I have and I am giving it to the House.

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### WORLD HINDI SECRETARIAT- OPERATION

(No. B/588) **Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if the World Hindi Secretariat is now operational.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to announce that the World Hindi Secretariat is now operational.

It is to be recalled that, despite Agreements signed with the Indian side in 1999 and 2003, the World Hindi Secretariat Act which was passed by the National Assembly in November 2002 was proclaimed only in September 2005. This led, almost immediately after, to the finalisation of the Mauritian Members on the Governing Council. Since then, the Mauritian side has taken several other important initiatives, one of which was the recruitment of the Secretary-General of the World Hindi Secretariat.

Another major event that has just taken place on 24 and 25 May 2007, is the first meeting of the Executive Board of the World Hindi Secretariat, where both the Mauritian and Indian sides discussed and reached agreement on all issues on the agenda.

I would like to highlight that the above recommendations will now be considered by the Governing Council (Mauritian and Indian sides) at its first meeting to be held in India in July 2007, on a date to be mutually agreed upon.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can inform the House when the idea of setting up the World Hindi Secretariat was mooted?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth recalling that the idea of the setting-up of the World Hindi Secretariat goes back to 1975 during the First World Hindi Conference and it was mooted by late Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam. This project took the form of a resolution at the Second Conference held in Mauritius in 1976. In 1996, after the advent of

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the Government led by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the World Hindi Secretariat Unit was set up in the Ministry of Education and since then a number of initiatives have been taken, pre-eminent among them being the signing of an MoU between India and Mauritius on 20 August 1999 outlining the objectives, functioning and the financing of the Secretariat.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can inform the House the reason for the delay in making the Secretariat operational a long time after passing the law?

**Mr Gokhool:** In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I was looking at the dossier, I was myself amazed that a law was passed and five years have gone by and it was not proclaimed. I took it as a priority and got the Act proclaimed.

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(No. B/588) (Contd)

**Mr Varma:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister kindly inform the House who is the officer-in-charge of the World Hindi Secretariat?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, right now, we have a Secretary-General, namely Dr. Mrs Arun.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a plan of activities which has been prepared by the Secretariat?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, at the Executive Board meeting of 24 and 25 May, a number of resolutions were taken, among which there is the resolution for the construction of the World Hindi Secretariat building in Mauritius by the Indian Government on land at Phoenix, provided by the Government of Mauritius. Secondly, there is the project to recruit the Deputy Secretary-General by the Indian side within the next two months. We also have as project the celebration of the Hindi day and the centenary celebration of late Harivansh Rai Bachan. and Kaka Hatharasi, scheduled for 28 June 2007 at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. These are among the main projects, which have been approved for the time being.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the conference that is going to be held in New York around July, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Mauritian participation is envisaged?

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in effect, the principle that an official delegation participates has been approved by Government. So, it is obvious that Mauritius will participate.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us the name of the Secretary-General and when was he recruited?

**Mr Gokhool:** The Secretary-General was recruited this year, and the name is Dr. Mrs Arun.

MGSS – STUDENTS, PLAYFIELDS, ETC.

(No. B/1220) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister for Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to each of the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools, he will state –

- (a) the number of students as at October 2007;
- (b) the area of the school yard;
- (c) if they are equipped with playfields and, if not, when will they be provided with same, and
- (d) if additional classroom blocks and or specialist rooms will be constructed and, if so, indicate –
  - (i) when, and
  - (ii) the expected dates of completion thereof.

**Reply:** I should like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made on 27 March 2007 to PQ No. B/58.

With respect to part (a), I am advised that the total number of students, as at October 2007, a Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School, is 712. The number at MGSS Flacq is 628; at MGSS Solferino: 572; at MGSS Nouvelle France: 360.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the area of the school yard at Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School is about 1500 square metres, that at MGSS Flacq: 2000 square metres; at MGSS Solferino: 2500 square metres; at MGSS Moka: 2000 square metres and at MGSS Nouvelle France: 2000 square metres.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the Ranbindranath Tagore Secondary School as well as the MGSS Nouvelle France do have playfields. At MGSS Central Flacq which, at present, has no play facilities proper, volleyball/basket ball pitches will be constructed in the next phase of the works, phase IV. The works are expected to start in June/July 2008 to be terminated around October 2008. MGSS Solferino too does not have playfields, but a temporary playfield will be constructed there by October 2008 pending the construction of a football ground at a later stage.

No playfields exist at this juncture at MGSS Moka as well, but with the help of the PTA of the school, the MGI will, as from early December 2007, prepare an area of around 1100 square metres which the student will use as temporary playground. Moreover, another temporary play area of 900 square metres will be set up by the MPI by August 2008 until the construction of a football playground there by January 2009.

With regard to part (d) of the question, an additional block of 12 classrooms is presently being designed by the MPI at the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School and its construction will be terminated during the third term of 2008. At MGSS Central Flacq, a Computer/Library Block is presently being designed by the MPI, its completion tentatively scheduled for November/December 2008. The remaining blocks, viz. design Technology/Home Economics Block and Dance/Music Block will be put up in the next financial year 2008/2009. At MGSS Solferino, a classroom block is being designed by the MPI and is expected to be completed by November/December 2008. The Library/Computer Block and Design Technology Block will be put up within the next financial year 2008/2009 and the Dance/Music Block within financial year 2009/2010. As for MGSS Moka, an Administration Block is being designed by the MPI, and is expected to be completed by January/February 2009. The Design Technology Block and the Computer/Library Block will be put up during the next financial year 2008/2009, and the Dance/Music Block, during financial year 2009/2010. Finally, at MGSS Nouvelle France, a Design Technology/Home Economics Block will be put up during the next financial year, tentatively to be completed by March/April 2009.