

SIR HARILAL VAGHJEE – DEATH COMMEMORATION (21/07/09)

(No. B/894) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to Sir Harilal Vaghjee, he will state if Government will consider erecting a bust in the yard of the Government House, to pay tribute to him as the first Mauritian Speaker, on the commemoration of his 30th death Anniversary.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government fully recognises the valuable contribution of all Mauritian personalities who have marked the history of Mauritius in an indelible way. My Ministry is currently working on a project to honour such personalities.

As a matter of principle, the families of the personalities concerned are first consulted and if they are agreeable, my Ministry starts the process with the approval of Government.

Sir Harilal Vaghjee is certainly one of those personalities worthy of being honoured. It is precisely to pay tribute to him that the Hall at the New Government Centre situated in the compound housing our Parliament has been named Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall. Should the family be agreeable to have his bust erected, Government will be too glad to undertake the project.

Discussions have started with them.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has made reference to a project, in general, for illustrious Mauritians and so on. Is the hon. Minister aware that, for example, in the lobby of the Lok Sabha in India are present paintings or busts of Parliamentarians and, therefore, in the case of Sir Harilal Vaghjee, this should be considered, because he was the first Speaker? Therefore, can I request the hon. Minister to delink these things and to look into the possibility of us having eminent Parliamentarians of the past present somewhere in the compound?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that for Sir Harilal Vaghjee, there has been some sort of confusion in the minds of certain people because when we looked into the problem - not now, but since some time - we were left under the impression that he himself did not want these types of things, but we have been speaking to the family and we believe that for the erection of the bust it will be ongoing. We will take on board what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is mentioning.

Mr Speaker: Bear in mind that the Leader of the Opposition has said it should be an eminent Parliamentarian! You have to bear this in mind!

Mr Bhagwan: I thank the Minister and I know for sure that the family would be most

agreeable. Can I appeal to the hon. Minister, this year is a very special year, it is the 30th death anniversary, that if the family is agreeable, which I think so, everything will be done to expedite matters before the end of this current year?

Dr. Bunwaree: We are going in that direction.

Mr Bhagwan: I had a visit this morning to the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall, Sir, and I'll invite all the Parliamentarians to do so. Can I state to the hon. Minister who is responsible for the buildings that there is no name? Nobody knows whether it is Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall. There is no photo. The Hall itself has been converted into more than a kitchen. I have been there this morning. Can I appeal to the Government to have at least a fresh look, to have a signboard, to have a photo of late Sir Harilal Vaghjee in the Hall?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.