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PRE-VOCATIONAL CLASSES - REFORM

(No. 1B/698) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the reform of the pre-vocational classes, he will state where matters stand, indicating if it will be extended by two additional classes and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) curriculum therefor;
- (b) certificate that will be awarded to the students after completion of the five-year course and the equivalence thereof, and
- (c) training programmes elaborated for the teachers therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, as it may be recalled, on Tuesday last, during my intervention on the Budget Speech, I had the opportunity to inform the House of the new policy orientation of my Ministry to create new and expanded opportunities for students of the prevocational sector for their continued education, and their integration in the world of work. I highlighted the need to review the pre-vocational sector, so that it is more attuned to the needs and aspirations of the students.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in this regard, the High Level Technical Committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry, with the objective of finding ways and means to review and revamp this sector in the light of the weaknesses identified. The Committee comprises representatives of

my Ministry, as well as those of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) and the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), and Inspectors of the pre-vocational sector.

Four main groups have been constituted by the Technical Committee on the following issues -

- (i) curriculum, pedagogy and teaching materials;
- (ii) resource requirements;
- (iii) availability of space, and
- (iv) project management.

With regard to the extension of pre-vocational classes beyond three years, I wish to inform the House that all implications are being looked into by the High Level Technical Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry.

This Committee will also look into the curriculum aspects, the issue of recognition and award of certificates, and also the training programme to be elaborated for teachers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in addition to the above, my Ministry is in the process of evaluating programmes, which have been implemented over the past years, and the evaluation will also cover the pre-voc sector. The outcome of such evaluation will help towards bringing any remedial action, as appropriate.

My Ministry will come forward with a full reorganisation plan by early 2011.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would you like to know from the hon. Minister if the results of the last exams of the pre-voc students have been analysed?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. They are being analysed.

Mrs Ribot: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister if, in his review of the pre-vocational departments, everything will be made so that those students can further their studies and be admitted either to *l'École Hotelière* or IVTB?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we are going into that direction.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a few questions, if you would allow me. My first question is: being given that I note that the number of institutions offering only pre-vocational

classes has now increased to seven or eight, will the Minister agree to review this system of educational apartheid and return to the arrangement whereby all schools offer pre-voc and mainstream, and there is no segregation?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't think we can speak of apartheid in this, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not follow well the point that is being raised, because, in fact this is not in our mind; this is not the policy of Government. But we are trying to do everything for this sector. In fact, we are reviewing many things. If hon. Members, on the other side, have got what they consider as important projects or plans, we can look into all these. I think it is a very, very important sector, which we are going to review. The idea of extension of classes is seriously being considered. In fact, if I can give an idea; maybe, by next year, we should start already, on a pilot basis, introducing it in Form IV.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, to provide information for this review, would the Minister agree that there is need for an independent assessment audit review of what has actually taken place over the last seven/eight years and also a tracer study of students having come out of the three years of pre-vocational, to establish its relevance in terms of employability of these young people?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't know whether an independent study is really needed, because there is nothing to hide there. What I can say is that I am myself not much satisfied when looking at what has happened in this sector, because these students, after three years pre-vocational, are doing neither well on the academic side nor well on the vocational side. So, there is something to be done. We are looking into all this but, I can, as I said, take into consideration the points that have been raised.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister agree to consider the international line of thinking today, as recommended by UNESCO, in all the organisations that we do away altogether with the steaming of students after primary and to offer nine years of school?

Mr Speaker: That is not relevant.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, Is the hon. Minister aware that a few schools which use to offer prevocational classes are gradually choosing to discard those classes in the schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are, in fact, very few schools, but the reasons that are lying behind are being studied.

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PRE-VOCATIONAL STREAM - STUDENTS

(No. 1A/200) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Pre-vocational Scheme at secondary level, he will state the percentage of –

- (a) students having joined in 2007 who remained in attendance until the end of their third year, in 2010;
- (b) students having joined in 2007 who successfully passed the third year examinations, in 2010, and
- (c) primary level students having failed the CPE for a second time in 2009 who have joined the Pre-vocational stream in 2010.

Reply: As regard to part (a), the percentage of students having joined the Pre-Vocational Scheme at secondary level in 2007 who remained in attendance until the end of their third year in 2009 is 77.6%. (Note: Those students who joined in 2007 were in their third year in 2009 and not 2010 as stated in the Parliamentary Question).

No. of students admitted to Pre-Voc Year I in 2007	No. of students in attendance in Pre-Voc Year III in <u>2009</u>	Percentage of students who remained in attendance
3,146	2,440	77.6 %

As regard to part (b), out of the 3146 students admitted in 2007, 2440 of them sat for the 3rd year exams in 2009. All of the 2440 students were successful.

No. of students in attendance in Pre-Voc Year III in <u>2009</u>	No. of students who successfully passed the Year III in <u>2009</u>	Percentage of students who passed
2,440	2,440	100 %

As regard to part (c), the percentage of primary level students falling under the category referred to at part (c) is 92.7%.

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SCHOOLS – STUDENTS – PER CAPITA SPENDING

(No. 1A/208) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students, he will state the present per capita spending in respect of the

(a) academic main stream, and

(b) State pre-vocational streams.

Reply: At present, the data collection system at the Statistics Section of the Ministry provides disaggregated information only for student enrolment and staffing in respect of the academic and prevocational streams.

Given that in most state secondary schools, the academic mainstream and prevocational students are integrated within the same cost centre, disaggregated per capita cost for each stream is not available.

My Ministry is compiling the information requested and this will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.