

17-10-00 (1)

PRIMARY
INFRASTRUCTURE

ALBION - PRIMARY SCHOOL

(No. B/63) **Mrs F. Labelle** (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to a portion of land earmarked for the construction of a primary school at Albion, he will make a statement on the stage the project has reached and indicate when it is likely to be implemented.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, in July last year a plot of land of nearly one arpent at Albion Village was vested in my Ministry to house a proposed primary school should the need have arisen. At a certain point in time, it was proposed to put up a school there to cater for the school children of Albion.

I am, however, informed that after careful examination of the project proposal, it was found that the economic implications did not plead in favour of the implementation of such a project.

According to information received the school population of Albion is only 245 and these children are presently attending either Petite Rivière Government School or Pierre Desvaux De Marigny Government School at Canot. The figure of 245 is considered too low to justify the operation of a school at Albion. It is to be pointed out that more than 100 of these students reside within walking distance from each of the two above-named schools according to information received.

As for the remaining 145 students, my Ministry provides them with bus transport everyday. Now, should there be a change in circumstances, the matter will be reviewed and I remain, of course, open to any suggestion from the hon. Lady.

Mrs Labelle: Sir, the hon. Minister is talking about walking distance. Is he aware that actually a refund of bus fare is being granted to children attending the Petite Rivière Government School and not to those attending the school situated at Gros Cailloux?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not aware and as I said earlier I have an open mind and I would be interested to receive any comments from the hon. lady so that we may review the policy, if need be.

24.10.00 (2)

REUNION ROAD GOVT. SCHOOL, VACOAS - REPAIR WORKS

(No. A/20) Mr S. Sakaram (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state if a survey has been carried out in respect of the repairs to be made to the roof of the Réunion Road Government School, Vacoas.

Reply: A survey was carried out at the beginning of this month by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to assess the extent of repair works to be effected to the roof of Réunion Road Government School, Vacoas.

It was found that the corrugated iron sheets roofing on the boys' toilets and on a block of three classrooms on the first floor was damaged to such an extent that it is beyond economic repair.

The corrugated iron sheets of the boys' toilets are being replaced by new ones. Works started on 16 October 2000 and are expected to be completed by the end of this month.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure will be requested to effect a survey on a number of schools where corrugated iron sheets roofing needs either to be repaired or replaced. For such repair or replacement works it is economically preferable to have it done in bulk rather than on a piecemeal basis. Thereafter, depending on the availability of funds, the works will be undertaken on a priority basis.

**MORCELLEMENT MONTREAL, COROMANDEL – GOVERNMENT
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

(No. B/92) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state when the new Government primary school at Morcellement Montreal, Coromandel, will be operational and indicate –

- (a) the number of classrooms that will be available;
- (b) the expected number of students;
- (c) the highest standard it will cater for; and
- (d) if provision has been made for sports facilities.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the new Government school at Coromandel will be operational in January 2001. The school will have 16 classrooms, including three for Asian languages. So far, 57 students have registered, but applications are still being received. It is, therefore, proposed to have two sections of Standard I in January, next year.

At the start of classes in January 2001, the school will cater only for Standard I. With regard to sports facilities, a high fenced playground is available. A volleyball pitch and a football pitch will soon be ready.

26.05

21.11.00 (4)

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPROVEMENT

(No. A/41) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will make a statement on the measures he has initiated or proposes to initiate in regard to the following primary schools concerning toilets, school yards, preprimary units library and improvements of the infrastructure by the construction of sheds -

- (a) Wooton Government School;
- (b) Robinson Government school;
- (c) Atlee Government school;
- (d) James Toolsy Government school; and
- (e) Midlands Government school, and
- (f) Dubreuil Government school.

The details about the works undertaken or proposed to be undertaken have been compiled and are being circulated (Appendix VII).

attached.

Approved

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

A/41

The Honourable Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands (Mr. Dowarkasing)

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

Whether he will make a statement on the measures he has initiated or proposes to initiate in regard to the following primary schools concerning toilets, school yards, preprimary units library and improvements of the infrastructure by the construction of sheds: (a) Wooton Government school, (b) Robinson Government school (c) Atlee Government school (d) James Toolsy Government school (e) Midlands Government school and (f) Dubreuil Government school?

DRAFT REPLY FOR 21 NOVEMBER 2000

Sir,

The details about the works undertaken or proposed to be undertaken have been compiled and are presented in the annex.

Atlee Govt. School	Files already provided. Upgrading of toilet will be carried out in December.	Fencing and main gate to be repaired. (Est. cost Rs 40,000) Proposal for implementation in December 2000.	Project will be implemented under the proposed Build Operate Transfer System. Request not yet made by H.Teacher.	Already exists	Request not yet made by Head Teacher..
James Toolsee Govt. School	Minor repair works being carried out.	Block wall fencing to be erected o (Est. Cost Rs 400,000)	Request not yet made by H.Teacher.	Already exists	H.Teacher requested to be provided with corrugated iron sheets only. (About 40 sheets)
Midlands Govt. School	New Toilet Block staircase cover just completed. Cost incurred Rs 1 million.	Only part of school yard to be tarred (15 m ²). (Est. cost Rs 5,000) To be implemented by Regional Directorate	Already exists	Already exists	Already exists..

The number of toilets and school yards which needs upgrading as well as the construction of pre-primary units, libraries and sheds which can be provided to the schools depends on the budget allocation for the current financial year. However, funds allocated in the 2000/2001 budget for the construction and improvement of primary schools under item 31-092-001 amount to only Rs 40 million and Improvements, Renovate and Minor Projects under item 31-091-006 amounts to only Rs 20 million. It must be pointed out that sheds are normally erected if need be, by the PTA as they are meant only for parents waiting for their wards.

- Not proposed to be implemented during this financial year 2000/2001 due to unavailability of funds.

In reply to PQ: V/41

Details about works undertaken or to be undertaken in respect of the schools listed hereunder:

SCHOOL	TOILETS	SCHOOL YARDS	PRE-PRIMARY UNITS	LIBRARY	SEEDS
Winton Govt. School	Request made by Head Teacher in June 2000 to upgrade toilets. *(Est. cost Rs 200,000)	Only part of the school yard needs tarring (about 100 m ²) (Est. Cost Rs 50,000) + Block Wall Fencing *(Rs 350,000)	Already exists	No proper Library *(Est. cost Rs 300,000)	Site visit effected in October 2000. Measurements already taken *(Est. cost Rs 30,000). PTA will fund project. Project will start in December 2000. Survey to be carried out.
Robinson Govt. School	Upgrading of Toilets effected in 1998. Cost incurred Rs 71,000. Plumbing items already provided. Services of a plumber will be provided next week.	In good condition	Already exists	No proper library (Request already made by Head Teacher) *(Est. Cost Rs 300,000) Already exists	
Dabrcuil Govt. School		School yard tarred in 1999.	Project will be implemented under the proposed Build Operate Transfer System.		

PRIMARY SCHOOL - FLOREAL - OPERATION

(No. A/43) Mr S. Sakaram (Second Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research) whether, in regard to the primary school already constructed in the region of Floreal, he will -

- (a) state the date of operation and the functions of the school, and
- (b) consider the advisability of using the building temporarily accommodate pupils of the Royal College during repair works carried out there.

Reply: With regard to part (a), the new school at Floreal comprises 15 classrooms, 2 preprimary sections, library, staff room, multi-purpose room, toilets, a canteen and a playground. The school is equipped to be run as a 2-stream primary school.

The primary school will not be operational as from January 2001, it may be used to accommodate some pupils of the Royal College Curepipe during the course of next year while the Royal College will be renovated.

As far as part (b) is concerned, the renovation works at Royal College Curepipe are major works involving the repair of roofs, the gymnasium and the floorings. Alternative accommodation may need therefore to be envisaged to ensure that the students of the college are not penalised. The primary school, because of its proximity and the availability of classrooms may be considered for the accommodation of the students.

(6)

19.12.00

R. SEENEEVASSEN GOVT. SCHOOL, CASSIS – TOILET BLOCKS

(No. B/501) **Mr J.C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in view of the deplorable state of the toilet blocks of Seeneevassen Government School at Cassis, he will liaise with the Ministry of Environment to ensure a rapid solution to the problem.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, following reports received about the defective conditions of the toilets at R. Seeneevassen Government School, a survey was carried out. It has been found that the existing toilet block should be replaced by a new one. In this connection, preliminary drawings have been prepared by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure & Land Transport, and my Ministry has already approved the plans.

The project is estimated to cost around Rs2.245 m. I am informed that funds in the 2000/2001 budget of my Ministry are already committed.

Given the urgency of putting up the new toilet block, a request has been made to the Ministry of Environment for assistance in implementation of a project proposal aimed at improving the overall physical environment at R. Seeneevassen Government School, including the construction of the toilet block. As usual, my colleague of the Ministry of Environment has responded positively and the project will, I am certain, highlight the essential collaboration between Education and Environment in promoting the general well-being of the young citizens of Mauritius.

If all goes according to plans, works should begin early in the new year.

3/04/01

(7)

GROS CAILLOUX – SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE - UPGRADING

(No. B/82) **Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, it is proposed to upgrade the school infrastructure at Gros Cailloux and, if so, when works are likely to start.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in the recent past, the following works have been carried out at Gros Cailloux Government school:

- (i) general internal and external repainting of the whole school block;
- (iii) repairs of cracks and fallen concrete;
- (iv) upgrading of toilet blocks;
- (v) laying of ceramic floor tiles and wall tiles in the toilet block;
- (vi) laying of floor tiles and white glazed wall/tiles in kitchen;
- (vii) fixing of naco blades;
- (viii) upgrading of school playground;
- (ix) levelling of school playground;
- (x) planting of grass on compacted soil;
- (xi) re-installing of existing chain link fencing.

And this is for the past 2/3 years.

The hon. Member will also be pleased to know that the construction of the pre-primary unit has been completed in December 2000 and has been operational since the beginning of this academic year. And further upgrading works will soon be carried out at Gros Cailloux Government School. In actual fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is now finalising the award of a contract for the construction of a block wall in lieu of the existing chain link fencing of 200 m in length and 1.8 metres in height around

the school. Works are expected to start in a month's time and my Ministry is following the matter closely.

The hon. Member is aware that I had a meeting with all three Members of Parliament for Constituency No. 20 at the end of last year where problems of school infrastructure, including Gros Cailloux Government were raised and priorities identified and such priorities will be reflected in the planning for works to be undertaken during the course of the next financial year. If my colleague of the House has had any afterthought or has received any further representations from the public we shall be only too happy to try and accommodate.

YEAR 2001

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – INFRASTRUCTURE - REHABILITATION (03/04/01)

(No. B/137) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in view of the fact that a great number of primary schools are in a deplorable state, he will state what remedial measures are contemplated by him.

Reply: My Ministry is very much aware of the need to rehabilitate and renovate the infrastructure facilities in primary schools. In this context, during the current financial year, relying on the availability of funds, so far, around fifteen primary schools have had their toilet blocks upgraded; fencing works have been carried out in ten schools; five schools will have had their yards tarred and upgraded. General repainting works have been carried out in some twenty schools. Moreover, important repairs have been effected to the roofs of ten schools. These works have cost a total of around Rs20 m.

My Ministry intends to sustain these efforts during the next financial year and subject to funds being available, upgrade the toilet blocks of ten schools, fence off securely ten schools, have around ten school yards upgraded, carry out general repainting works at twenty schools and consequent roof repair at five schools. Other major renovation works e.g. replacement of naco frames and electrical works, will be carried out in some fifteen schools. A total of around Rs25 m. is expected to be spent on these works during the next financial year.

Moreover, my Ministry has regional maintenance teams which operate under the supervision of a Building Engineer and three Technical Officers. Each team comprises Works Overseers, Painters, Carpenters, Plumbers, Cabinet makers and carries out sundry minor works in schools in the various regions over and above the major works I have just referred to earlier.

The fifteen school which have had their toilet blocks upgraded are:-

1. Beewah Madhoo G.S
2. Maheswarnath G.S
3. Petit Raffray G.S
4. E. Anquetil G.S.
5. H. Ramnarain G.S
6. Mohabeer Foogooa G.S
7. Brisee Verdière G.S
8. La Flora G.S
9. Bel Ombre G.S
10. Black River G.S
11. Beau Sejour G.S
12. Jules Koenig G.S
13. S. Murday G.S
14. E. Rochecouste G.S
15. Baichoo Madhoo G.S

**Vallée des Prêtres & Congomah Government Schools
- RENOVATION WORKS**

(No. A/30) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in view of the fact that the renovation of classrooms and the renewal of equipment at the Vallée des Prêtres Government School and at the Congomah Government School are now long overdue, he will state when same will be attended to.

Reply: My Ministry is actively pursuing a programme of renovation of school premises as well as renewal of school equipment.

At Vallée des Prêtres Government School -

- (i) 3 classrooms have uneven flooring. Renovation works will be carried during the Easter vacation so as not to disturb normal classes;
- (ii) leakages occur in two classrooms. Roof waterproofing of classrooms will be considered during the next financial year;
- (iii) classrooms need interior painting which will be undertaken with collaboration of the PTA.

Some repairs/renovations have already been effected by the maintenance team of my Ministry at Vallée des Prêtres Government School. They pertain to the existing toilets (2 wc pans, 6 wc cisterns, all doors, wooden structure supporting corrugated iron sheet roof) and classrooms (leakage, replacement of 10 naco panes, 9 door locks and 2 doors).

As regards the classrooms of Congomah Government School, they need a fresh coat of external paint. The work has already started and will be completed by the beginning of the second term.

In addition, there are some damaged windows and leakages in the roofs of some classes which will be attended to during the coming school holidays.

BAMBOUS GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS – NEW CLASSROOMS (17/04/01)

(No. B/214) Mr J.C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in view of the overpopulation at the two primary schools of Bambous, he will say if he intends to set up new classrooms at those schools or alternatively to consider the advisability of constructing a new school in Bambous.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as the House may be aware, within the context of the proposed reform programme, my Ministry has embarked on an ambitious construction schedule for the conversion of 7 former SSS or State Secondary Schools (Vocational) and the extension of four State Secondary Schools by the end of this year, and further, the construction of 22 new secondary educational institutions by the end of 2002.

Moreover, within the context of information technology development of the country, my Ministry is embarking upon the no less ambitious programme of construction of 222 computer labs and 116 reading rooms in our primary schools.

It is, therefore, obvious, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry will be stretching to the fullest its own resources, as well as those of other Ministries, especially the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, to meet these objectives.

It would, therefore, not be realistic to take on the construction of new primary schools at this juncture. Besides, according to current demographic trends, I am not expecting a marked increase in the primary school population in the years to come. In the light of what obtains, my Ministry will come up with proper arrangements wherever overcrowding problems exist or are likely to crop up.

As for Bambous, I am informed that Bambous A Government School has a school population of 889 pupils in 22 classes whilst in Bambous B Government School, there are 582 pupils in 13 classes. In each class for both schools, there is slightly more than the country average of 37 pupils per class. A plan involving a redefinition of the catchment area is being considered to allow for the redirecting of the excess school population from these schools to Cascavelle Government School which is found at a distance of barely 2 kms from Bambous.

This plan could also cater for any increase in the school population of the area which may come as a result of projected construction of new blocks of NHDC flats in the region.

I wish to inform the House that, where justified, my Ministry will envisage providing free bus transport facilities to ease off any undue hardship to pupils.

Nevertheless, in view of representations received, an overall survey is being carried out to identify problem cases or problem areas and study all possible solutions in the medium to long-term, including construction of new primary schools exceptionally, as and when funds may become available.

Mr Barbier: Can the hon. Minister tell the House what is the recommended number of pupils per class in the primary sector actually?

Mr Obeegadoo: There is no recommended number of pupils. The average is 37 per class at primary level.

Mr Barbier: As far as I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the pre-primary schools, actually it is recommended that the number of pupils per teacher should not be above 30. For example, at the Municipality of Port Louis, we cannot recruit more than 30 pupils per teacher, per class. So, what about the primary sector? Is there no recommendation at all for an acceptable number of pupils per class?

Mr Obeegadoo: What I am aware of, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that beyond a certain number – if I am not mistaken, it is 40 – the Minister's authorisation is required for a class to be run. The average in the country is 37 and our objective, of course, would be to keep lowering the number of students per class. The objective would be 35 and then 30, 25, 20, bettering the situation as we go along. What needs to be understood is that the average is 37, but we have some schools with 11 students in a class and some where it borders upon 50. So, clearly, the population of a school depends not only on the actual demand in the area, but upon the parental perception of the school as well. What we really need is a multi-faceted approach to the problem. But, of course, in line with all the reforms which are being brought about, the ultimate objective is a reduction in the number of students per class.

Mr Chumroo: Is it, therefore, implied that if the Municipality of Port Louis wants to increase the number to 40, it may do so? As far as pre-primary schools are concerned, where the demand is high, can the Municipality of Port Louis be allowed to take up to 40 pupils in a class?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not aware of any particular request from the Municipality of Port Louis in that direction, Sir, but I shall look into it.

Mr Chumroo: If there is a request, they will be allowed to...

Mr Speaker: I have to draw the attention of hon. Members that this question is specifically on Bambous.

Dr. Chady: The Minister talked about the whole island in his reply. He said that it is not acceptable to have classes of above 40 pupils. There are more than 50, 55 in certain classes. I am just passing the information to the Minister of Education, because he makes it look as simple and easy. As usual, this is *bla-bla-bla*.

(Interruptions)

This is why they are not taking it seriously. Can the Minister say when the survey he wants to carry out will start and when it will end?

Mr Obeegadoo: What I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that, naturally, we have had representations from different Members of the House concerning such and such areas.

Various problems have been raised here; problem of 16ème Mile, Albion, Grand Baie, La Flora. So, what is being done is an overall survey to identify what I call problem areas, the problem areas being where we have experienced a sudden rise in the population due, for instance, to movement of population, construction of new NHDC blocks where the resources of the existing primary school are stretched to the limit by a sudden increase in demand. In those cases, we shall envisage all different possible solutions like, as I said, redefinition of catchment area, provision of free bus facilities which is the case in many areas and, exceptionally, where there is no other realistic solution, construction of a new primary school in the medium to long-term, because this, of course, implies huge investments.

At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.35 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

8/05/01

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RIVIERE DES ANGUILLES GOVT. SCHOOL - UPLIFTMENT

(No. B/314) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in view of the fact that the old buildings housing the Rivière des Anguilles Government School are causing great inconvenience to those small school children, especially during the very hot weather and that a new NHDC housing estate now adjoins the existing fencing which is very near to the toilet, he will consider the advisability of arranging for the school to be uplifted and for a proper and appropriate fencing to be put up.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Member for bringing to my personal attention the problems of Rivière des Anguilles Government School.

I am informed that the Rivière des Anguilles Government School is housed in six old blocks of classrooms and a seventh one which is relatively new.

The six old blocks are made up of concrete walls, but have corrugated iron sheet roofing which is not in a very good condition. Furthermore, the 28 classrooms are not provided with the false ceiling.

I am also informed that the NHDC units have been put up only some nine metres away from the toilet blocks of the school, thus causing considerable embarrassment both to school children and to the NHDC residents.

I have arranged for a team of technical officers of my Ministry to carry out, before the end of this month, a detailed survey to assess the extent of works required. Particular attention will be given to the need for replacing the existing chain link fencing between the school toilet blocks and the NHDC compound by a concrete wall. This will enhance the privacy and security of the school children.

Funds permitting, the possibility of providing false ceiling to the classrooms will be explored after the necessary repairs to the roof would have been carried out.

When establishing priorities for infrastructural works to be undertaken in primary schools during the next financial year, due consideration will be given to the case of Rivière des Anguilles Government School.

15-05-01

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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

A/50

The Honourable Third Member for Curriepipe and Midlands (Mr Dowarkasing)

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

Whether, he will state if the survey to determine the infrastructure needs for the primary sector is now over and, if so, whether it has revealed the justification for the setting up of a new primary school at 16eme Mile and, if so, will he state, when construction work is likely to start?

DRAFT REPLY for 15 May 2001

Sir,

In the reply I made to PQ B214 on 17 April 2001, I explained the position of my Ministry on the construction of new primary schools.

Given the scope of such an exercise, a national survey as such has not yet been undertaken. However, following representations made by different quarters for the construction of primary schools in certain specific areas, a preliminary survey was carried out by a Task Force of my Ministry at the beginning of this year. It has come out that new primary schools have to be put up in Bambous, Albion and Argy. ^{and some other} The time implementation schedule will be worked out in due course while giving consideration to ^{the} urgency in each case and more importantly to the availability of funds.

(contd.)

10/7/01
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CA/D20/P09/3

PETITE RIVIERE GOVT. SCHOOL – REPAIR WORKS

(No. B/506) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to Petite Rivière Government School, he will state if he is contemplating to bring immediate repairs thereto, particularly to the roof and to the toilets.

Mr Obegadoo: Sir, I am informed that Petite Rivière Government School consists of an old building, made of stone walls with corrugated iron sheet roofing.

I am also informed that in spite of continuous maintenance and repairs effected to the roof in the recent past, it has been observed that the corrugated iron sheet roofing of part of the main building, as well as of the pre-primary unit, still leaks during heavy rainfall. However, as the roof is not a flat roof, the work cannot be undertaken by the maintenance unit of my Ministry based in the region. I am, therefore, advised that the regional directorate is making arrangements for a proper survey to be carried out, to assess the extent of the repairs to be effected. On the basis of the findings of the survey it will be possible to have clear indications as to the scope of the works to be undertaken and arrangements will then be made to have the necessary works effected during the coming August school holidays.

As for the toilet facilities, once again according to the information given to me, there were problems relating to damaged W.C. pans and defective flushing tanks at the school at the end of last year. However, I am informed that all the faulty items were removed and replaced during the December 2000 holidays, so that the toilets apparently are now in good running order.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the toilets of Petite Rivière Government School, as at yesterday, the pipes were still leaking, flooding the floor, rendering it slippery. The toilets are still in a very bad state. May I request the hon. Minister to press upon the officers so that this situation is remedied?

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Member who surely has information to that effect. I think the only solution there would be to organise a surprise check with the local MPs; We will go to the school to really assess what the situation is and ensure that appropriate remedial measures are taken immediately.

16 Oct 2001
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**SEENEVASSEN GOVT. SCHOOL - TOILET BLOCKS
RECONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/661) **Mr J. C. Barbier** (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the reconstruction of toilet blocks at the Seenevassen Government School at Cassis, he will give the House the reasons for the delay of the project.

The Minister of Fisheries (Mr S. Michel): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to that question. The contract for the construction of a new toilet block at Seenevassen Government School was awarded to the DWC on 13 July 2001. The contract period was 4 months from the 7th day of the handing over of the site to the contractor. The site was scheduled to be handed over on 14 August 2001.

However, I am informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure that, on 10 August 2001, the technicians of the MPI Engineering Division carried out soil tests on the construction site. They found out that there was backfill some 2 metres deep at the projected construction site. This backfill would not have been able to bear the toilet block proposed. In view of the site restriction, no alternate location could be found out in the school compound. It was then decided that the MPI Engineers should re-design the foundation.

The modifications in structural design have been carried out by the MPI. A new quotation has been sought from DWC.

I am now informed by the MPI that works are starting this week.

Mr Barbier: One year has elapsed since I last raised this matter in this House. I am very sad that this project is taking so long; tenders have been launched and the work was to start when they found out that there was a problem with the soil. It appears that after I have put my question, things are going to move. It concerns the children of this country. Can the hon. Minister ask the substantive Minister to look into this project urgently?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Barbier, you have made your point, you can put your next question.

Mr Michel: I'll pass on the remark to the Minister.

YEAR 2002

LE HOCHET PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONSTRUCTION WORKS (26/03/02)

(No. B/21) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if the school construction phase at Le Hochet primary school will be completed by the end of December 2002.

The Minister of Economic Development, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs (Mr K. Khushiram): Mr Speaker, Sir, Phase I of the construction of a new primary school at Le Hochet, Terre Rouge, started in July 2000 and was completed in December 2000. The school became operational as from January 2001.

However, additional classrooms as well as other facilities will now be required at the school as from January 2003. These will be included in Phase II of the construction works.

The officers of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research are at present working on the precise requirements for Phase II of the works. A request will soon be made to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure for the implementation of these Phase II works, which are intended to be completed by end of December 2002.

Mr Chumroo: Being given that the first term is already over, work has not started and there is no sign also that the work is going to start, may I know by when this work will exactly start so that by January next we have the classes ready?

Mr Khushiram: Whatever the time to start, the Ministry of Education is doing its utmost to ensure that the works are completed by the end of the year.

2 APRIL 2002

245

Mr/d05/w05.01

VALE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - DRAINS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/7) Mr A. K. Gungah (Third Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if, following the numerous cases of flooding at the Vale Government School, especially after heavy rainfall, his Ministry has carried out a study thereon and, if so, will he inform the House of the measures taken to solve the problem, indicating whether new drains will be constructed and, if so, the date works are likely to start.

Reply: I am informed that the road outside the school slopes towards the yard and that, after heavy rainfall, water enters the school premises and floods six classrooms.

There are drains on the road, but they prove insufficient during heavy rains, especially as they are very often clogged up. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has been requested to consider the construction of additional drains along the road.

Inside the school, drains exist just outside the classrooms. They are periodically cleared by the school and the regional team. With a view to upgrading the drainage system, the Head Teacher has launched tenders for the digging of a 2 foot-deep canal covered by slabs in front of the 6 classes which are usually flooded. An absorption pit will also be provided. The closing date for the tenders is 05 April 2002 and the works will start on or about 15 April 2002, during the school holidays. Moreover, the National Development Unit has also been requested to provide additional drains inside the school.

9 April 2002

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CAMP DIABLE GOVT. SCHOOL - RENOVATION

(No. B/122) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Camp Diable regarding the dilapidated condition of the Camp Diable Government school and, if so, will he state what action is being taken to upgrade that school.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as far as I am aware, no petition has been received from the inhabitants of Camp Diable. However, the hon. Member may rest assured that the good running condition of all the State primary schools remains one of my priorities.

As for Camp Diable Government School, I am informed that a new classroom block comprising 11 classrooms and a canteen as well as a new toilet block are operational at the school as from the beginning of 2001. There are 3 other classroom blocks at the school, and 2 of them need repair due to the old corrugated iron sheet roofing. This is being attended to by the Maintenance Team of the Education Region and the works will end by the end of April 2002, according to information provided to me.

mr/d06/p14

unrevised

(No. B/122 ctd/....)

The hon. Member may be aware that a retaining wall 65 metres in length is being built along one side of the school and I am told that it is scheduled to be completed by mid-April 2002.

Moreover, according to information received, 350 square metres of the school yard have been tarred up to December 2000 to upgrade the playground and provide space for assembly and other purposes.

Up to the end of school year 2000, there was, in fact, an old dilapidated rented building housing an extension to Camp Diable Government School, run separately as a one-stream school. At the resumption of studies in 2001, all the pupils of that extension were transferred to the present school where in the meantime an additional block and canteen had been built.

23/4/02 12

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L'ESPERANCE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - REPAIRS

(No. A/14) Dr. P. Ramloll (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, being given that the roof of L'Espérance Government school is copiously leaking in rainy weather, despite repairs carried out thereto after cyclone Dina, he will state what remedial action is being taken.

Reply: As the hon. Member is aware, Cyclone Dina damaged the corrugated iron sheet roof of l'Espérance Government school.

Immediately after the cyclone, the visible damage was repaired so that the school was able to resume classes along with other schools on Tuesday 29 January 2002.

However, when a comprehensive survey was subsequently effected, it was observed that, in five classrooms, some leakage of rainwater still occurred during heavy rainfall.

My Ministry will effect the necessary repairs this week, before resumption of studies on 29 April.

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L'AVENIR GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - ASPHALTING WORK

(No. A/15) Dr. P. Ramloll (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state when asphaltting work on the L'Avenir Government school yard is likely to start, being given its muddy nature in raining weather.

Reply: I am informed that, with the assistance of the Parliamentary Private Secretary, hon. Nagalingum, and the National Development Unit, an area of approximately 700m² of the school yard of L'Avenir Government School will be tarred by the end of June this year.

7 May, 2002 (20)

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D09/IF/W04/1

**NHDC GOVT. SCHOOL, CAMP LEVIEUX – SCHOOLYARD -
MAINTENANCE**

(No. A/22) Mr F. Abdoola (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state who is responsible for the maintenance of the schoolyard at the NHDC Government School at Camp Levieux and ascertain why it has been left in its present deplorable environmental condition to the detriment of students.

Reply: I am informed that the general maintenance of the premises is carried out by two labourers posted at the school under the responsibility of the head of the school.

Given that the surface area under grass is about 0.5 hectares and there are only two labourers at the school, the Regional Directorate, I am told, has set up a team of labourers which is sent on a regular basis to the school to clean the yard and to trim the grass.

I am further informed that following a clean-up campaign of the neighbourhood including the school premises by the Ministry of Environment, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and the *forces vives* of the area on 21 April last, there has been a general uplifting of the schoolyard with the planting of trees and the grass of the football pitch has been trimmed.

BON

**ACCUEIL GOVT. SCHOOL - COMPUTER ROOM AND EXTRA-
CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (07/05/02)**

(No. B/271) Mr M. Dulloo (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he has received representations from the inhabitants of Bon Accueil for the urgent implementation of their project for the extension of the Bon Accueil Government School, especially to solve the problem of scarcity of rooms and to provide for a proper computer room and space for the carrying out of extra-curricular activities.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. Sir, my Ministry received a letter from the chairman of the Bon Accueil Village Council around a month ago stressing the need for an extension to Bon Accueil Government School.

Since May 1999, the Ministry of Education had requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to construct four additional classrooms at the school. Tenders were floated in March 2000, but I am informed that the tender exercise was then abandoned owing to lack of funds. The project was revived at the beginning of the current financial year. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is attending anew to the project and DWC has been requested to submit a quotation for the construction works.

Negotiations were held between the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and DWC, and I am informed that the quotation has now been finalised. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure proposes to award the contract to DWC by mid May this year and the contract period will be of 5 months duration. Works will begin at the end of this month and will be completed at the end of October 2002.

These works will consist of the construction of a two-storey block with two classrooms on each floor, that is, a total of 4 classrooms, a staircase, a covered verandah as well as other ancillary infrastructural amenities.

The four classrooms to be built will include one classroom for Standard I and one for Standard VI as well as a staff room and a computer room.

19 June, 2002

(22)

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PRIMARY SCHOOLS – TOILETS – MAINTENANCE

(No. B/394) **Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, for the benefit and convenience of the primary schools population, he will consider the advisability of entrusting the maintenance and cleaning of the toilets to specialised contractors and set up an appropriate squad for the regular checking of such toilets.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I must acknowledge that the state of the toilets in our schools is far from being satisfactory and relevant regulations date back a very long time. In a bid to reverse this situation, my Ministry set up,

Cont'd...

19 June, 2002

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P.Q. No. B/394 (cont'd)

at the beginning of this year, a committee with competent representatives and technicians from various Ministries to *inter alia* conduct a survey; define new norms and standards; identify the necessary works and propose a cleaning and maintenance policy.

The Committee is chaired by Mr P. Mohadeb, Financial Controller of the Tertiary Education Commission. It has as its members the Principal Architect of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, a Senior Engineer from the Wastewater Management Authority, the Chief Inspector from the Wastewater Management Authority, a Principal Health Inspector of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, a Divisional Environment Officer from the Ministry of Environment, a Principal Education Officer from the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, and an Engineer from the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research

I am expecting a comprehensive report with the Committee's recommendations very shortly. As soon as the report is received, an indepth examination of the recommendations will be made and the degree of enforceability of the measures proposed will be determined. Proposals will then be submitted to Government regarding the various problems concerning toilets in our schools.

However, as an interim measure, the Assistant Directors of the various educational regions have been authorised to contract out maintenance and cleaning services for schools up to R 50,000 in their respective regions whenever and wherever the need is felt.

Mr Dowarkasing: Could the hon. Minister ensure that there is, at least, one lady toilet attendant in all schools? I think this is not the case actually.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will have to look into the matter to determine how many such attendants are available.

Cont'd...

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P.Q. No. B/394 (cont'd)

Mr Paya: Could I suggest that the hon. Minister send his technicians to all primary schools for inspection after one O'clock?

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Speaker, As I had thought, I had made it clear that the state of our toilets is far from satisfactory. It is a prime concern of my Ministry and of Government. That is why, after many years, we have set up a committee which is now supposed to be on the ground surveying the state of toilets in schools and coming up with proposals for the improvement of the situation in future.

**L'AVENIR & ST. JULIEN D'HOTMAN GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS – REPAIR WORKS**

(No. B/484) Dr. P. Ramloll (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state what immediate remedial measures are being taken to solve the deplorable and dangerous state of the roof structure at L'Avenir Government school and at St. Julien d'Hotman Government school.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the hon. gentleman would certainly be aware that, apart from the infrastructural development works that are taking place throughout Mauritius in the secondary sector of education, my Ministry is constantly undertaking maintenance works and repairs in the existing primary and secondary schools. In this context, we are attending to the roofing problems of L'Avenir and St. Julien d'Hotman Government Schools.

L'Avenir Government School has, at present, two buildings in use. One of them is a relatively big concrete building, and the other one an old wooden one with a corrugated iron sheet roof. Repair works were carried out to the roof structure of the old building by the Parent Teachers Association in 2001, but some leakage problems, I am informed, still persist. The NDU has been requested to replace all the corrugated iron

CA/D25/P10/5

(No. B/484) (contd)

sheets on the roof by new metal sheeting. It has agreed to do so, in the context of upgrading works, which it will be effecting in Government primary schools of Constituency No.8 in this financial year. In the meantime, the regional maintenance team of my Ministry will continue with the regular routine waterproofing works that it carries out on the roof at various times during the year. These works, which consist in the detection of leaks and subsequent remedial works by the use of flashbands, will be carried out, once more, during the coming holidays in August.

A similar situation exists at St. Julien d'Hotman Government School. Here also, the school consists of two buildings, a concrete building and a stone one with a corrugated iron sheet roof. In spite of regular waterproofing works by the regional maintenance team, leakages still occur on this roof. With a view to resolving the problem, the regional directorate has already earmarked funds for an urgent contracting out of remedial works to the leaking roof. In the meantime, as at L'Avenir Government School, the regional maintenance team will effect waterproofing works during the coming August holidays.

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DR/D28/P09/4

IDRISS GOUMANY PRIMARY SCHOOL - UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/538) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if children attending the Idriss Goumany primary school have to travel daily for schooling and indicate when the construction of the new school is likely to start and the date on which it will be commissioned.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for this welcome opportunity given to me to enlighten the House on the upgrading works at Dr. Idriss Goumany Government School and which have been of great concern to me for some time now.

In fact, during the period 1991-98, there were several reports indicating the appearance of cracks in walls, settlement of ground floor slab in some classrooms and clogged drains on the school premises. However, since these defects were considered as being non-structural in nature, routine maintenance works were carried out.

As from 1999 and up to 2001, more sustained repair works were effected in order to address the problems of cracks and other defects. In a report on the infrastructural state of the school in April 2001, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure stated that classroom Block B had undergone significant structural damage to such an extent as to be beyond repair. The marked deterioration was attributed to the heavy rainfall which had affected Port Louis in the preceding months thereby leading to infiltration of water beneath the foundation as a result of a poor drainage system. Block A, the other classroom block, had not undergone significant structural damage and could be repaired.

Government was apprised of the situation at the end of June 2001 and decided to pull down the existing Block B and construct a new classroom block as well as a toilet block at the school and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure was requested to initiate action accordingly. At no point in time therefore was the construction of a new school, as mentioned in the hon. Member's question, evoked. In order to guarantee the safety of pupils utilising classroom Block B, it was proposed to relocate them elsewhere and

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(No B/538 Cont'd)

after consultations with the PTA of the school and the Regional Directorate, the 218 pupils concerned were then moved to Abdool Raman Abdool Government School and they were provided with free transport by my Ministry from school to school.

According to the first implementation schedule submitted by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure on 21 March 2002 to my Ministry, the works were supposed to start in mid-July 2002 and end in or around mid-December 2002.

However, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure then pointed out that the soil tests which had been carried out had dictated a proposed steel structure as opposed to the traditional concrete building. According to a second implementation schedule therefore submitted by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure on 22 May 2002, the works were to start in September 2002, and end in February 2003.

I am now informed that tenders were launched at the end of May 2002 and after approval of the Central Tender Board, a letter of intent was sent to the selected contractor by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure on 16 September 2002. The letter of award will be shortly issued after all necessary clearances are obtained. The contractor is expected to start works during the second week of November and the expected date of completion of works would be around mid-April 2003.

Let me assure the hon. gentleman once again that we shall leave no stone unturned so that infrastructural works are completed in time for all concerned students to return to Idriss Goumany Government School by the second term of 2003.

Dr. Chady: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister give us the number of children actually attending Idriss Goumany school?

Mr Obegadoo: I do not think I have that figure with me right now Sir, but as I said all students of standards II, III and IV numbering 218 have moved to Abdool Raman Abdool.

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(No B/538 cont'd)

Dr. Chady: According to what the hon. Minister said, there are about 218 students from standards II, III and IV who are travelling to and fro, which is nearly half of the student population of that school.

Mr Obeegadoo: Again Sir, I am afraid the question did not ask for exact figures concerning students remaining at Idriss Goumany. So, I do not have those figures. What I have explained is that every morning there is free transport available so that the parent takes the child as usual to Idriss Goumany, then he benefits from free transport to Abdool Raman Abdool and back in the afternoon. I think that is the very best we can offer and it is being done to ensure the proper continued schooling of students involved.

Dr. Chady: I am asking this question to know the number of classes that students of standards II, III and IV were occupying.

Mr Obeegadoo: From memory, I believe the block which is being pulled down consisted of 8 classrooms; students who have moved, occupied some 6 classrooms. But of course a new building of 8 classrooms is being provided.

Dr. Beebeejaun: These children are aged 6, 7 and 8, is the hon. Minister satisfied that the necessary precautions are taken as to safety and whether they are accompanied on these journeys.

Mr Obeegadoo: These children are aged between 6, 9 or 10. Of course we are doing our best, but as regards security we can take no risk and if the hon. gentleman has any observations and any constructive proposals, we would be very happy to try and accommodate them.

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(No. B/538) contd.

Dr. Beebeejaun: The proposal I am making is to ensure that safety precautions are taken in the transfer of these children.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have explained, Sir, that part of the school is being pulled down. To ensure the safety of the children, who were using that block, they have been moved to another school. Now, as regards those who have stayed on the premises, the competent staff of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure will ensure that the contractor places the appropriate hoarding and my Ministry will also be closely monitoring the situation so that no harm is caused to any student who remains at Idriss Goumany.

Dr. Beebeejaun: About the transport of the 6/7-year old in the buses, we would like to know whether the hon. Minister is satisfied that necessary precautions are being taken and whether they are accompanied?

Mr Obeegadoo: No complaints have reached me concerning transport facilities. Again, if the hon. gentleman has any information, he might impart them to us.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I would appeal to the hon. Minister not to wait for a tragedy or a complaint before he looks into the matter.

Mr Obeegadoo: I do not get the point. These transport arrangements have existed for several months now. There have been no complaints or accidents. I have a very open mind. We are there to ensure that the interests of the children are properly protected - both the hon. gentleman and myself presumably. If there are any suggestions, please make your suggestions to us.

Dr. Beebeejaun: My suggestion is that they should be accompanied.

Dr. Chady: *Je voudrais savoir comment le ministre réconcilie le fait qu'on va reconstruire* part of the said primary school and that construction will start in September 2002 and that it will be commissioned by mid April 2003. How does he reconcile the fact that only one block with 5 or 8 classes will be constructed within 7 months and new schools with 16 or 17 classes will be constructed within less than one year?

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(No. B/538) contd.

Mr Speaker: How is this relevant to the question, hon. Dr. Chady?

Mr Obegadoo: As regards the previous points raised by Dr. Beebeejaun, the free transport is at the disposal of school children and their teachers. I understand that teachers also use such facilities and to that extent the students are indeed accompanied.

As regards construction of schools, hon. Dr. Chady might be aware that this Government is also planning to build primary schools. In the course of this financial year there are two schools which are coming up, one at Grand Sable and one at Bambous. And, every following fiscal year, there will be new primary schools put up and one of our priority areas is, of course, the Port Louis region where schools are very much congested.

At Idriss Goumany, there are constraints as regards space. You cannot build five or six new blocks there. Right now, according to the recommendations, which we have from the Regional Directorate, there is a proposal to put up one block of classrooms there. But, as I said, we will be looking at the possibility, as appropriate, of creating additional schools in the Port Louis region.

At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

**PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS -
INFRASTRUCTURE, EQUIPMENT, ETC.**

5 Nov. 02

25

(No. B/648) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state the measures his Ministry has taken with a view to -

- (a) upgrading equipments and pieces of furniture for the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools; and
- (b) improving the existing infrastructures through minor projects.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as Minister of Education and Scientific Research, I have very much at heart the welfare of school children and the improvement of the school environment so that children are able to study in optimal conditions.

In that respect, with a view to upgrading equipment and formulating a policy concerning the maintenance, repairs and renewal of equipment in our State schools, my Ministry has initiated an audit of all equipment available in the State schools to come up with appropriate recommendations which audit is ongoing.

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Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already taken the following measures to upgrade the equipment and furniture in all our State schools, whether pre-primary, primary or secondary.

Pre-primary Schools

Furniture, infant chairs, tables and mattresses have been replaced in a number of pre-primary units.

All teachers of pre-primary units have been issued with a new teaching kit/materials and all pre-school units have been provided with an improved set of educational materials.

As from 2003, a new set of pedagogical toys and other equipment will be made available to the pre-primary units.

Primary Schools

My Ministry has initiated action to gradually replace desks of standard VI pupils by new ones specially designed and with security locks for storage of books and other equipment of the pupil. This will obviate the need for the pupil to carry heavily loaded bags.

Besides chairs, tables, filing cabinets and cupboards, some primary schools have also been provided with printers, fax machines, high-pressure machines and water tanks and sports and protective equipment. These facilities will be extended to all schools in due course.

ZEP Schools

The ZEP strategy as regards low performing schools, Mr Speaker, Sir, a provision of Rs 8 m. has been made in my Ministry's budget this financial year to improve and upgrade the infrastructure of the soon to be ZEP schools, including renewal and upgrading of classroom furniture.

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(No. B/648 Cont'd)

Secondary Schools

Some 8000 tables and chairs are being purchased for use in the new secondary schools and for the replacement of the old furniture in existing schools.

Equipment such as duplicating and photocopying machines, water pumps and electric/gas cookers are also being purchased for secondary schools this year.

Moreover, items such as bookshelves, stools, filing cabinets, cupboards, computer tables, office chairs and tables are being purchased for both primary and secondary schools to replace the damaged or old ones.

In the context of the implementation of the Mass Computer Proficiency Programme the electrical infrastructure in some 30 State secondary schools has been surveyed and necessary repairs carried out. 262 personal computers, 27 scanners and 3 printers have been purchased and installed in these schools for the benefit of students and other trainees following the computer courses dispensed under this programme which is being implemented by the NPCC in collaboration with my Ministry.

Turning to part (b) of the question Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to minor projects for the improvement of the school infrastructure, I have to inform the House that at the beginning of each financial year, the director of each of the educational regions or zones prepares a priority list of urgent capital projects of a minor nature, to be carried out within the limits of the capital budget allocation made to each regional zone.

These works are then initiated by the way of 3 different channels -

- (i) at the level of the educational regional zones;
- (ii) centrally at the level of my Ministry; or
- (iii) at the level of Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

A large number of maintenance works have been carried out since the end of year 2000 through the 3 main avenues I have just described. I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly an indicative list of the minor projects carried out in the different Education regions during the past

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(No. B/648 Cont'd)

2 years. These works mainly comprise projects relating to waterproofing; tarring and resurfacing; fencing; painting; replacement of damaged naco frames as well as asbestos-cement ones by new galvanized windows and electrical works.

In the wake of cyclone Dina's passage, repair works have been effected in around 15 schools. The repairs varied from school to school, but were quite important in some, for instance at Fond du Sac Government School where the corrugated iron sheet roof structure was replaced at the cost of around Rs 1.1m.

PTAs have also been closely involved in many of the minor projects undertaken at our schools. It is our gratitude and we thank them a lot for that.

Dr. Chady: Along with the list of the minor projects that the Minister is placing in the Library of the National Assembly, could he also provide a list of pre-primary schools and schools which have benefited from furniture and equipment?

Mr Obeegadoo: I'll certainly try to do so, Sir.

Mr Dullo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider arranging for the regular visits of Health Inspectors to those schools in order to ensure that the physical environment stays in healthy conditions?

Mr Obeegadoo: There are Health and Safety Officers who are presently being recruited through the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, some of whom will be posted to the Ministry of Education for that purpose, Sir.

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS - WATER SUPPLY -
BACTERIOLOGICAL TESTS**

(No. B/705) **Dr. B. Hookom** (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will give the number of bacteriological tests carried out on the water supply in primary schools during the last term, giving the names of the schools, the dates the water samples were taken, specifying if they were from tap or tank and the results thereof.

Mr A. Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 117 bacteriological tests were carried out on water samples taken from primary schools islandwide for period 01 August to 14 November 2002.

Sir, with your permission, I am circulating the information asked for. (Appendix 1).

Dr. Beebeejaun: Is there any positive test in the sample taken?

Mr A. Jugnauth: The information is being circulated. There has been one or two which are negative, but very little, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Are they from the tap or from the reservoir?

Mr A. Jugnauth: They are mostly from fibre glass water tanks in schools, Sir.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Are measures being taken to ensure that remedial action be taken?

Mr A. Jugnauth: Of course, Mr Speaker, this has been ongoing!

Dr. David: May we know what are these measures, Mr Speaker, Sir? Can he list them?

Mr A. Jugnauth: These are technical measures which have been taken by the technicians, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. David: Technical measures? The House must know.

Mr A. Jugnauth: If the hon. Minister comes with another question, I will give him all the answers.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! The question has been put twice. I cannot force the Minister to reply.

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION B /705

BACTERIOLOGICAL TESTS CARRIED OUT ON THE WATER SUPPLY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR THE LAST TERM

UPPER PLAINE WILHEMS

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100 ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	Lady Bird pre-primary school	13.8.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
2.	Cité Atlee Govt School	20.8.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
3.	Solferino Municipal Kindergarten	27.8.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
4.	Rev. Espitalier Noel RCA	10.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
5.	L'Arche de Noe PPS	4.10.02	Concrete tank	NIL	NIL
6.	Midlands Govt school	15.10.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
7.	Les Pingouins PPS	15.10.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
8.	Ladybird PPS	15.10.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
9.	Notre Dame de la Confiance RCA	12.11.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL
10.	Curepipe Road Govt School	12.11.02	Fibre glass water tank	NIL	NIL

LOWER PLAINE WILHEMS

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100 ml
1.	Palma Govt school	27.8.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
2.	Belle Rose RCA	3.9.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
3.	Roche Brune Govt school	24.10.02	Tank	NIL	Nil
4.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
5.	Nuckchady Govt school	30.10.02	Tank No.1	NIL	NIL
6.	"	"	Tank No.2	180+	NIL
7.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL

PORT LOUIS

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100 ml	E. Coli MPN/100 ml
1.	Planet Kids Kindergarten	9.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
2.	Pointe Aux Sables Govt School	23.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
3.	Signal Mountain RCA School	8.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
4.	Pere Laval RCA School	21.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
5.	Chitrakoot Govt School	21.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
6.	Les Petits Marins PPS	28.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL

DISTRICT BLACK RIVER

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	Richelieu Govt School	10.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
2.	P. Riviere Govt School	10.9.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
3.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
4.	Gros Cailloux Govt School	15.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
5.	Bambous Govt School	21.10.02	Tank	160	NIL
6.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL

DISTRICT: GRAND PORT

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	La Flora Govt School	9.8.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
2.	Club des Artisans PPS	16.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
3.	Riche en Eau Govt School	23.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL

DISTRICT: PAMPLEMOUSSES/RIVIERE DU REMPART

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	Creve Coeur Govt School	14.8.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
2.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
3.	D'Epinay Govt School	23.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
4.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
5.	Triolet Govt School (Maheswarnath)	5.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
6.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
7.	Trou Aux Biches Govt School	"	Tap	NIL	Nil
8.	Plaine des Papayes Govt School	19.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
9.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
10.	Fond du Sac Govt School	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
11.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
12.	Creve Coeur Govt School	3.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
13.	"	3.10.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
14.	Maheswarnath Govt School	10.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
15.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
16.	Trou Aux Biches Govt School	10.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
17.	Mon Gout Govt School	17.10.02	Tap	2	1
18.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
19.	Congomah Govt School	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
20.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
21.	Arsenal Govt School	24.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
22.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
23.	Pandit Dowlut Govt School Mor. St. André	31.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
24.	Fond du Sac Govt School	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
25.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
26.	Ilot Govt School	15.11.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
27.	Moossun Govt School Goodlands	10.9.02	Tank	NIL	NIL

DISTRICT: SAVANNE

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	Camp Diabie Govt School	27.8.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
2.	"	"	Tap	NIL	NIL
3.	Bel Ombre Govt School	5.9.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
4.	St. Francois D'Assises RCA Baie du Cap	5.9.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
5.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
6.	Chateau Benares Govt School	12.9.02	Tap	NIL	
7.	Permal Soobrayen Govt School	19.9.02	Tank	90	2
8.	Chateau Benares Govt School	26.9.02	Tap	50	1
9.	La Flora Govt School	3.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
10.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
11.	Bois Cheri Govt School	3.10.02	Tank	13	NIL
12.	"	3.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
13.	Chateau Benares Govt School	10.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
14.	Britannia Govt School	24.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
15.	"	"	Tank	35	2
16.	Permal Soobrayen Govt School	30.10.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
17.	Bois Cheri Govt School	7.11.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
18.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
19.	Britannia Govt School	14.11.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
20.	"	14.11.02	Tank	NIL	NIL

DISTRICT: MOKA

	Name of school	Date Sample Taken	Tap or Tank	Results	
				Total Coli MPN/100ml	E. Coli MPN/100ml
1.	Mohunlall Mohit Govt School	7.8.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
2.	"	"	Water tank	NIL	NIL
3.	Sir R. Walter Govt School	21.8.02	Tap (main)	5	NIL
4.	"	"	Tank	13	NIL
5.	Ramsoondur Balgobin Govt School	4.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
6.	Sir R. Walter Govt School	4.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
7.	Adolphe de Plevitz (La Laura Govt School)	18.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
8.	Providence Govt School	26.9.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
9.	"	"	Tap (tank)	NIL	NIL
10.	Rev Walter Govt School	2.10.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
11.	Rev Walter Govt School	"	Tap (tank)	NIL	NIL
12.	Dubreuil Primary Govt School	21.10.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
13.	"	"	Tap (tank)	3	NIL
14.	Camp Thorel Govt School	30.10.02	Tap (tank)	NIL	NIL
15.	"	"	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
16.	Verdun Govt School	30.10.02	Tap	NIL	NIL
17.	"	"	Tank	NIL	NIL
18.	Dubreuil Primary Govt School	13.11.02	Tank	NIL	NIL
19.	St Pierre RCA School	13.11.02	Tap (main)	NIL	NIL
20.	"	"	Tap (tank)	NIL	NIL

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CA/D06/P06/5

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - COMPUTER LABORATORIES

(No. B/221) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to computer laboratories, he will –

- (a) state the progress achieved so far on the project of the construction of same in the primary sector;
- (b) the number of schools already operating same;
- (c) the number of teachers trained; and
- (d) the number of computers purchased so far.

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Speaker Sir, I would like, at the outset, to reaffirm Government's commitment having regard to the School IT Project (SITP). As the House is aware, Government has, in line with its cyber-island ambition, embarked on a major project to set up IT laboratories in all public or publicly funded primary schools to allow for teaching of Information Communication Technology (ICT) from Standard I to Standard VI. This mega project, which is unprecedented in Africa, and which has few known precedents in the developing world, is followed by an Inter-Ministerial High Powered Committee chaired by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. There are also other task forces working under the aegis of this High Powered Committee, one of which is the task force on e-education and e-training which also closely monitors the SITP project.

The School IT Project is in fact in line with the reform proposals contained in the Primary School Curriculum Renewal Project of March 2001, which provides for the introduction of ICT, initially, as a subject by itself in primary schools, before being integrated across the curriculum in 2006 or thereabout.

The project comprises three major components. The first one is the infrastructural part, which consists of the physical setting up of IT labs. The second component relates to the provision of hardware and software for the operation of IT labs. The third component is the teachers – the human ware.

With regard to the infrastructural part, 227 primary schools will be concerned with construction of IT labs. In fact, all primary schools will have, at least, one IT lab. I am informed that tenders for the first lot of 34 IT labs have already been finalised by the Central Tender Board and will be launched soon. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is trying to catch up with the implementation schedule in primary schools where spare rooms are already available for conversion into computer laboratories.

/...

CA/D06/P06/6
(No. B/221) (contd)

Concerning the hardware and software component, an international Request For Information (RFI) was launched by the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunications in July 2001 to identify potential bidders. In December 2001, a panel examined the 37 proposals received from both the pedagogical and technological perspectives. Thereafter, a second team of consultants were enlisted in July 2002 for the drafting of the tender documents, that is, the Request for Proposals (RFPs). The international tender documents in respect of both the project and the project management team were launched concurrently on 18 December 2002. The closing date of submission of bids for both the School IT Project and the project management team was 14 February 2003, but was extended to 07 March at the request of the bidders and with the approval of the Central Tender Board. The bids are currently being evaluated and a decision will be taken in due course. It is to be noted that the scope and magnitude of the project is such that it provides for the supply and installation of more than 6,000 PCs, the networking and cabling equipment, the servers, workstation, peripherals and software, the internet server and the central data centre.

In the meantime, 327 ICT teachers who were recruited have completed their Certificate of Proficiency in Information and Communication Technology Education (CPICTE) at the Mauritius Institute of Education, and have been posted in the primary schools to teach IT on the basis of a contingency plan pending the implementation of the main SITP Project.

The contingency plan provides for ICT to be introduced as a non-examinable subject as from this year, and to be taught in all standards on the basis of the already approved ICT transitional syllabi devised by a panel consisting of officers of my Ministry and the Mauritius Institute of Education and which provide for the basic competencies and skills, which pupils need to acquire and consolidate up to Std VI.

Moreover, the head teachers of primary schools have been sensitised to the need for them to be proactive, and to play a meaningful role in the proposed implementation of IT in our primary schools. Accordingly, they have been requested to identify and operate an IT Corner pending the construction of IT labs. They have also been invited to strive and obtain at least 5 computers for their respective schools, whereas all primary schools, at present time, have at least one or two PCs – some have much more. In this respect, it is encouraging to note that some private sector organisations have voluntarily pledged to donate second-hand computers to primary schools.

D06/IF/P07/1

No. B/221 (contd.)

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard from the Minister that a tender exercise has been launched for computer labs in only 34 schools out of 227. Will there be classrooms that will be converted? May I know also when this IT programme will be introduced whether all the schools in the country will be on the same starting line, that is, no schools will have an advantage over other schools by means of construction or this IT programme?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be quite impossible to believe that one could simultaneously begin the project in all schools. We are progressing in line with the technical resources which are available at my Ministry, at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, at the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications. This is a very ambitious project; and right now, as I said, teachers are in place, the tenders for both the hardware and software are already being analysed and, in the meantime, construction is starting in the sense that we have a number of schools which have spare rooms. These rooms will, as a priority, be converted into IT labs. Then, by phases where there is no space, new IT labs are to be constructed in different schools. The subject is being introduced as a non-examinable one. So, we are moving as fast as we can. In certain areas where you have very proactive PTAs, they have already set up their computer rooms with a certain number of PCs. As for the second-hand PCs which we are receiving from the private sector, we will be targeting schools in the more deprived areas, for instance, the ZEP schools so that in line with the thinking of the hon. Member, no prejudice is caused to poor students in more deprived regions.

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ARYAN VEDIC PRIMARY SCHOOL - TOILETS

(No. B/333) **Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state when the toilets at the Aryan Vedic Primary School will be repaired.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker Sir, Aryan Vedic Primary School is a private primary school run by the Hindu Education Authority. As such, my Ministry does not undertake any repairs to its buildings. The Hindu Education Authority, itself, is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of its buildings.

However, my Ministry does provide a grant to private primary schools for renovation works and in that regard I would like to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/297 of last week.

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ALBION VILLAGE - PRIMARY SCHOOL

(No. B/340) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether Government envisages to put up a primary school at Albion village and, if so will he say when and if land therefor is available.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as I stated at Adjournment Time on 15 April, during the last few years before September 2000 there was unfortunately no systematic programme of construction of new primary schools. As a result, we are now faced with a long list of primary schools to be built in a number of regions where the need is really felt.

My Ministry has therefore carried out an analysis of the situation in each locality, taking into consideration the potential school population size, the number of schools already constructed, the distance presently travelled by school children and future plans. In the course of this exercise, Grand Sable and Bambous have been identified as immediate priorities and construction works should get under way in the near future having regard to those two schools.

We are now drawing up a list of localities in order of priority, where schools have to be built and this list does indeed include Albion which is an upcoming locality with no existing primary schools. Whatever be the order of priority as far as Albion is concerned, we shall certainly look into different ways and means of alleviating the hardship faced by children of the locality pending the construction of a school there.

The House as well as the public at large knows full well that this Government has made and continues to make an unprecedented effort in terms of capital investment in infrastructural developments in education. My Ministry will endeavour to build two primary schools each financial year and "Access for All to Education" remains a cardinal principle of the reforms under way.

LA SOURDINE GOVT. SCHOOL - FENCING

16/3/04
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(No. B/36) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, he will state when La Sourdine Government School in L'Escalier will be fenced and say if funds are available for the purpose.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me confirm that it is indeed the intention of my Ministry to have the school fenced.

The scope of works has already been prepared and tender documents are being finalised. Tenders will be launched shortly and the project will be funded by my Ministry with an estimated cost of around Rs1 m.

It is expected that the works will start by end of April 2004 to be completed by the end of July.

16/3/04



D01P17CO1

ALBION - PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/40) Mr M. Allet (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in view of the fact that there is a rapid expansion in Albion and its surroundings in terms of inhabitants and the availability of State land adjoining the sports complex and the community centre, he will consider the advisability for the early construction of a primary school there.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/530 at our sitting on 20 May 2003 and to recall that the policy of my Ministry is to have two primary schools constructed each financial year in order to facilitate access for all to primary education.

However, because of the absence of a systematic programme of construction of new primary schools prior to September 2000, there is, at present, a considerable backlog which implies that my Ministry has no alternative but to prioritise new projects and to proceed gradually to meet the expectations of the population.

In planning the construction of new primary schools my Ministry has to take into consideration factors such as migration and newly built-up areas, the school population size of already existing schools of the locality and the distance travelled by pupils as well as the number of schools in the region, the closing down of schools and future development plans.

I wish to remind the House that one new primary school is presently under construction at Grand Sable and two new school construction projects will be launched at Bambous and Plaine Verte soon. There are other requests for construction of primary schools at Albion, Argy, Forest Side (16eme Mile) and Grand Gaube, in alphabetical order. The Planning Section of my Ministry has now recommended that Albion be given priority for the following reasons -

D01P17CO2
PQ No. B/40 (contd)

- (i) Albion is a rapidly expanding residential area;
- (ii) The schools in the region, namely Petite Rivière Government School and Desvaux de Marigny Government School Bambous are relatively far away, and
- (iii) The State is spending a considerably amount of money to convey a large number of pupils residing at Albion to Petite Rivière G.S. or Desvaux de Marigny Government School. I can, therefore, confirm that the next primary school to be built after those of Bambous and Petite Rivière will be located at Albion.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 2 - PRIMARY SCHOOL
- CONSTRUCTION

30/3/04
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(No. B/130) **Dr. S. Maudarbocus (Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if there has been any development in the construction/opening of a new primary school in constituency No. 2.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to tackle the problem of overcrowding of primary schools in Port Louis, my Ministry has identified a plot of land of an extent of around 65 perches for the construction of a new primary school at Epidariste Trim Street formerly Nyon Street, Plaine Verte, commonly known as the "White House."

The Ministry of Housing & Lands is presently acquiring the said property, which will thereafter be vested in my Ministry.

D04P14CO4
PQ No. B/130 (contd)

Furthermore, site visits have been effected on several occasions with the representatives of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping, the Ministry of Housing & Lands, the Wastewater Management Authority, the Central Water Authority, the Municipal Council of Port Louis and officers of my Ministry. The purpose of these site visits was to look into possibility of reclaiming additional space for playground facilities for the school by covering the existing canal (Ruisseau La Paix) adjacent to the proposed site with a reinforced concrete slab. This will enable the area of the proposed school to be increased by about 30 perches.

Besides, my Ministry has also undertaken infrastructural works at the following primary schools to accommodate students of the Port Louis region, including the constituency of Port Louis South and Port Louis Central -

(i) Raoul Rivet Govt. School

Repairs to leakages and other upgrading works on the existing toilet block. Works carried out by the Maintenance Unit of my Ministry were completed in the third week of March 2004.

(ii) Surtee Soonee Govt. School

A new high-level blockwall fencing has been erected for the existing football ground. Furthermore, waterproofing works were carried out on the roof of the classroom blocks.

(iii) Young Men Hindu Govt. School

Waterproofing works were carried out on the roof of all school buildings.

(iv) Finally at Dr. O. Beaugeard Govt. School

Works consisting of the construction of a new classroom block, an administrative block and a new toilet block are soon to begin.

D04P14CO5

PQ No. B/130 (contd)

Dr. Maudarbocus: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister say what is the projected capacity of that school in terms of number of seats?

Mr Obeegadoo: I cannot say offhand, it will depend on the total area we have available. Once it is confirmed that we can cover the canal, I will be willing then to make a statement, Sir.

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On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

**GOVERNMENT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS -
UNSERVICEABLE STORES - DISPOSAL**

(No. B/690) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will make a statement on the policy of his Ministry on the disposal of old pieces of furniture in Government primary and secondary schools.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I wish to inform the House that furniture in Government primary and secondary schools are not disposed of on the basis of their being old, but rather on the basis of their being unserviceable. The disposal of the unserviceable furniture, as in all Government Departments, is carried out strictly in accordance with the procedures laid down in Chapter 30.9 of the Financial Management Manual (FMM).

The Accounting Officer authorises the write-off only if he is satisfied that the items of furniture in question cost less than Rs1,000 per unit, are beyond economical repairs, and that there is no question of negligence, irregularity or dishonesty on the part of any officer. Where the unit cost of any one item exceeds Rs1,000, the Accounting Officer, after being satisfied with the explanations given by the Officer-in-Charge of the store, recommends to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development that a Board of Survey be appointed. The Board of Survey submits its findings to the Accounting Officer who, in turn, submits the report to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development along with his own views and recommendations for write-off.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the disposal of unserviceable stores in the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research is an ongoing exercise. In line with existing practice, the Officer-in-Charge of each school communicates to the respective Zonal Director a list of all items of stores, which he/she considers to be unserviceable.

D27/P10/mt/2

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(No. B/690) contd.

The Zonal Directors make appropriate arrangements for the furniture to be inspected by Senior Officers with a view to ascertaining the real state of the items. A thorough examination of the items is then carried out by the Chief Purchasing and Supply Officer of the Ministry, who, thereafter, forward his recommendation for write-off to the Accounting Officer of the Ministry, for consideration and approval.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleague, the Minister of Education and Scientific Research, is aware of the fact that the unserviceable stores should not be kept for too long a period in school premises. With a view to speeding up the procedures, he has asked the officials of his Ministry to revisit the whole system and to come up with concrete recommendations as soon as possible.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in most of the school premises there are unserviceable desks lying in schoolyards. Maybe, the Board of Survey could speed up matters so that school premises do get rid of these unserviceable desks and so on.

Mr Fowdar: I'll certainly convey the comments to the hon. Minister.

24/8/04

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D28/P09/mt/6

**SIR HARILAL VAGHJEE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL,
TRIOLET - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORK**

(No. B/722) **Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he has received protests from the Parent-Teacher's Association of Sir Harilal Vaghjee Government School located in Triolet owing to the poor infrastructural work and whether he has been made aware of a sit-in thereat on Tuesday 17 August 2004 and, if so, will he state if such sit-in was as a result of the protest.

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I thank the hon. gentleman for his question for indeed there has been parental protest at Sir Harilal Vaghjee primary school on 17 August 2004 and the question provides me with the opportunity to briefly recall the circumstances thereof.

Save for a new concrete block in 1974, the school, built of wood with corrugated iron sheet roofing was built in 1953 and has never been structurally renovated since then.

Following representations from the Parent-Teacher's Association and local Members of Parliament, consultations were held in 2003 and two major complaints emerged. Firstly, presence of pigeons and/or rats in the gap between the false ceilings and the roof as well as the general state of the roof and, secondly, the lack of electrification of one part of the school.

During the end of year holidays in December 2003/January 2004, repairs were carried out to the roofing and improvements made, but all works had to be stopped after the suspicion arose that asbestos dust was being spread as a result of such works. A full investigation was carried out during the first part of 2004, which fortunately yielded a report certifying the absence of asbestos cement and, therefore, confirming that there was no asbestos-linked danger. In the meantime, the Parent-Teacher's Association requested the pulling down of all the wooden buildings and the erection of what would be tantamount to a new primary school.

D28/P09/mt/7

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(No. B/722) contd.

In May 2004, accompanied by the Parliamentary Private Secretary for the region, hon. Dr. Jhurry, I visited the school and explained to the PTA that a new construction would take years and the following was instead agreed to -

- (i) simple matters such as removal and disposal of false ceiling panels already taken down would be undertaken immediately. I can report that indeed such works were effected on time;

.../....

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(PQ No. B/722 ctd....)

- (ii) during the August holidays, electrification of the one block devoid of electricity would be carried out. I understand same has now been completed. Further, all existing false ceilings were to be removed during the holidays. I understand that also was effected before resumption of studies. However, tarpaulins could not be placed on the roof by mid-August as the DWC required a further ten days to do so;
- (iii) the replacement of the existing corrugated iron sheet roofing by zinc aluminium sheets and the installation of new false ceilings would be effected between November 2004 and January 2005.

Classes resumed on Monday 16 August 2004 on the basis of assurances that the building was structurally sound and safe. However, on the day of resumption, it was apparently found that the entry of pigeons had in no way been stopped and it was suspected that there might be leakages in case of rain. Hence, parental protest on the first and second days of resumption. Understandably, parents were distressed by the turn of events.

I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a full and proper inspection of the school and in particular of that part of the school where repairs had been undertaken should have been effected immediately prior to resumption of studies and the Ministry's headquarters informed of any subsisting problems. That was not done and I have ordered a full departmental inquiry as to the reasons for such a failing and disciplinary action will ensue should negligence or would neglect of duties be established.

In order to ensure proper schooling during the third term, the following arrangements have been implemented as from Wednesday 18 August -

- (i) Standards III to VI have been accommodated at Triolet State Secondary School with free transport facilities from Sir Harilal Vaghjee primary school;
-

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(PQ No. B/722 ctd....)

- (ii) Standards I and II have been accommodated in the concrete block of the primary school;
- (iii) measures have been taken for the replacement of the old roof to be undertaken earlier so that the school is in a proper state of repairs before resumption of studies in 2005.

Those arrangements have been agreed to by the parents. In consultation with parents, the situation is being closely monitored and further improvements to the new arrangements will be brought about as and when necessary.

I wish to thank Members of Parliament for the Constituency for their assistance in addressing the problems at Sir Harilal Vaghjee primary school.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister on two things. Firstly, there was a renovation, when Mr Bhagwan was Minister of Environment in 1996, it was not a structural one. Secondly, it is not just pigeons, which is the main concern; if I may ask the Minister to look into it. I talked to him on the phone. There are gaping holes in the roof and I don't think there were repairs, because the holes are there. Can the Minister look into it?

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me repeat. Then, as now, my colleague, Minister Bhagwan, has been doing a very good job at the Ministry of Environment, but what I said was that there had been no structural renovation since 1953, that is, for 51 years! As regards the alleged gaping holes, as I said, the building was certified on the 13 of August by a team of technicians from the Ministries of Education, Public Infrastructure and Health as structurally sound and safe. However, we are inquiring into why, there have been failings, if any.

Mr Speaker: We will take other supplementary questions after lunch.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

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(PQ No. B/722 ctd....)

Dr. Hookoom: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House whether Government had undertaken to cause necessary repairs of the said school in February this year?

Mr Obegadoo: I have explained at length that in May of this year, I was present and I agreed on a certain course of action together with the PTA and that included complete redoing of the roofing structure on the whole building.

Dr. Hookoom: Sir, it is only after the sit-in of the children's parents that they have been transferred to other schools. Will the children get used to their new surroundings at this time of the year?

Mr Obegadoo: There is absolutely no problem. My feedback is that things are working out very well. Now, why weren't students transferred earlier? Because the initial fear was that of asbestos, which would have meant removing all students, but there just isn't space anywhere else. Now that it is clear that there is no danger linked to asbestos - the idea was to work on the roof and precisely not to displace children - there was an agreement with the PTA that the work should be done at the end of the year. That was going on very well. Unfortunately, in the last stage of remedial work scheduled for the August holidays, a problem did arise. Why that problem arose is being inquired into? As I said, if somebody is at fault, we shall take disciplinary action, but then because the problem is there and cannot be denied, we had to look for an immediate solution again with the agreement of parents and staff. The upper classes have temporarily been moved to Triolet SSS; and I am happy to say that the arrangement is working out very well.

Dr. Hookoom: Won't a change in the surroundings at this time have an effect on the exam results of the students?

Mr Obegadoo: I don't see any reason why that should be the case, Sir.

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(PQ No. B/722 etd....)

Mr Hurnam: Mr Speaker, would the Minister agree that well before 2004, there were meetings between PTA and the Ministry with a view to improving the infrastructure of the school?

Mr Obegadoo: Certainly and let me repeat what I said, meetings took place in 2003 and the hon. gentleman was one of the persons who very helpfully drew our attention to the problems there - in fact, he was the first. The works were scheduled for end of 2003, beginning of 2004. When the works started, the suspicion of asbestos arose and the technicians ordered the works to be stopped there and then for a full investigation, which was carried out at the beginning of this year. This was why in May, we agreed on a specific course of action with the PTA.

Mr Hurnam: The hon. Minister had visited the locus and he had taken stock of the situation. I have not heard the Minister say anything about the toilet facilities, which are presently prevalent there.

Mr Obegadoo: Well, the toilets at Sir Harilal Vaghjee Government School, as in many schools, are not in the state I would have hoped they should be. As the hon. gentleman is aware, this Government has redefined the norms for toilets. We are, at present, working with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure in a phased manner to renovate school toilets all around the Republic, including Sir Harilal Vaghjee Government School in Triolet.

Mr Hurnam: Would the hon. Minister consider, in the light of his recent visit in May 2004, the pulling down of the three corrugated iron sheet buildings and replacing them by a concrete building inclusive of the toilets and the rest of the infrastructure?

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PQ No. B/722 (contd)

Mr Obeegadoo: That will have to be done eventually; that would be the ideal, but, honestly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot take commitment that same can be done within the next six months as we are now under extreme pressure in terms of secondary infrastructure for resumption of studies in 2005. But certainly Sir Harilal Vaghjee Government School will be given priority of consideration for such works in the future.

Mr Hurnam: The last question, Mr Speaker, is whether the hon. Minister will consider moving the other two classes which the Parents/Teachers Association would wish to be moved to SSS Triolet.

Mr Obeegadoo: Ideally it would have been the simplest solution to move all the students to the same place. As at present, there is no space at SSS Triolet and the second problem is that small children of Standards I and II cannot use the toilets which exist in the secondary school. So, that is a further complication, but we are in constant contact, dialogue with the parents; and if a more satisfactory solution can be found, we shall certainly consider it.

Mr Hurman: Would the hon. Minister consider looking at the toilet facilities as soon as possible for those children who are there?

Mr Obeegadoo: That is always a priority, Sir.

ATLEE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUND

26/10/04

(No. B/802) **Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether there is any project for the renovation and rehabilitation of the Lady Sarojini Jugnauth children playground at Atlee Government School.

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Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, the NDU has awarded a contract to the DWC for the reconstruction of the children’s playground at Atlee Government School.

The site was handed over to the contractor on 08 October 2004. However, following a request from the school Head Teacher that the works be carried out after the end of the year exams, it has been decided that construction works would start on 15 November 2004. The project is expected to be completed by the end of January.

YEAR 2005

CHITRAKOOT GOVT. SCHOOL, VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES - RENOVATION (01/03/05)

(No. B/162) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure & Land Transport whether he will state if there is any project for the renovation of the Chitrakoot Government School at Vallée des Prêtres.

Mr Guinness: I would like to inform the House that Chitrakoot Government School consisting of three one-storeyed classroom blocks (Blocks A, B and C) adjacent to one another, is located on hilly land in the vicinity of Vallée des Prêtres mountainous region.

Three survey reports have been prepared on the state of the school building on 18 April 2003, 16 July 2003 and lately on 09 June 2004. According to the survey reports, the school building is, in general, structurally sound. At certain places, however, cracks in the blockwall have appeared implying ongoing relative settlement between foundations. The external blockwall of a classroom in the pre-primary block needs immediate repairs to prevent spalling of blockwall, which may constitute a hazard to school children. I have been informed that in October 2004, the Maintenance Unit of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, in the light of the finding of the survey report, undertook minor work such as removal of spalling in one classroom and repair of a 12-metre stretch of boundary blockwall. It is necessary to carry out major repairs to prevent further degradation of the school blocks and reinforce them. The repair work will consolidate the school building and extend its lifespan. The renovation work will last approximately four months. Arrangements are being made to complete formalities for the renovation work of the school.

SOOKUN GAYA PRIMARY GOVT. SCHOOL – INFRASTRUCTURE (16/08/05)

(No. I B/63) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he has been made aware that the classrooms, toilets and other infrastructure at the Sookun Gaya Primary Government School in Constituency No. 18 are in a pitiable state and, if so, will he consider taking the appropriate remedial measures.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, a survey was carried out at Sookun Gaya

Government School on 12 August 2005 by the Directorate zone 4, and I am informed that the general state of the school is good. The classrooms as well as the toilet block are in a good state, except for the roof in one classroom which is leaking and one defective cistern tank in the toilet block. Moreover, the school has requested that a staircase be closed.

Measures have been taken to replace the defective cistern tank before the resumption of the third term on 18 August 2005. The classroom leakage and staircase closing will be effected together around mid-September 2005 and completed some two weeks later.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the state of affairs with the roof leaking has been the case since the last five years? And whether there has been any attention to Sookun Gaya Primary Government School during the last five years?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as Sookun Gaya Government School is concerned, no urgent priority works were identified at the school for the financial years - 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.

RIPAILLES & COTE D'OR GOVT. SCHOOLS (23/08/05)

(No. I B/132) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether his Ministry has any plan for the reopening of the Ripailles and of the Côte d'Or primary schools.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the ex-Ripailles Govt. School also known as R. Ghoorah Govt. School was closed down in 1994 because it was under-populated, *i.e.* it had around 60 pupils only. The pupils were partly diverted to Nouvelle Découverte Govt. School and partly to Mohunlall Mohit Govt. School. Free bus transport facilities are being provided to date to the pupils to attend school in the morning and back to their residence in the afternoon.

Presently, 52 pupils from Ripailles are attending Nouvelle Découverte Govt. School and 50 are attending Mohunlall Mohit Govt. School. Ripailles Govt. School was converted into a Basic Secondary School in April 1995. The Basic Secondary School Project was launched by the Ministry of Education with a view to catering for all pupils who had not passed the CPE Exam after a second attempt and who could not be admitted

to a secondary school. This project was renamed as State Secondary School (Vocational).

The State Secondary School (Vocational) at Ripailles was closed down in December 2002, because it had only four students who were subsequently directed to other State Secondary Schools (Vocational). The building is presently not being used. Three blocks have been condemned and one block of six classes needs repairs and maintenance. As regards part (b), the ex-Luchmeenaraidoo Govt. School at Côte d'Or, I am informed that the school was closed down on 26 April 2004 due to its very low school population which stood at 32 pupils in April 2004, and the following measures were taken by my Ministry –

- (i) the transfer of 32 pupils to S. Soobiah Govt. School. Parents opted for S. Soobiah Govt. School instead of the other schools found in the vicinity;
- (ii) the provision of transport facilities to the 32 pupils from Côte d'Or to S. Soobiah Govt. School in the morning and back in the afternoon, and
- (iii) admission for the year 2005 in Std I for pupils residing in the locality or in the vicinity in any schools in the region.

The building is presently not being used.
Closures are effected –

- (i) as a result of declining school population below 150, and
- (ii) after consultation with PTA, local population and MPs.

Therefore, in view of the low student population in both regions, and the fact that the Ministry has other high priority projects, it is not planned to reopen the two schools.

PERMAL SOOBRAYEN PRIMARY SCHOOL - WATERPROOFING WORKS (30/08/05)

(No. I B/185) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he has been made aware of the problems faced by the primary school students of the Permal Soobrayen Government in Souillac when it rains and, if so, will he say what remedial measures are envisaged.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Head Teacher of the school has informed the Directorate on 27 January 2005 that the roof of

the building was leaking and that water had seeped through cracks in the walls during rainy weather.

A survey was carried out by the Technical Officer on 07 February 2005 following which it was decided to repair the cracks and leakages in the walls in the first instance. The contract for the works was awarded on 22 April 2005 and the works were completed on 19 June 2005.

The waterproofing works on the two classroom blocks will be carried out during the November/December vacation when pupils will be away for a sufficient long period.

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS – DECEMBER 1995 TO
SEPTEMBER 2000 AND SEPTEMBER 2000 TO JULY 2005 –
CONSTRUCTION – CAPITAL BUDGET (06/09/05)**

(No. I B/208) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the construction of primary and secondary schools during each of the periods December 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to July 2005, he will state the capital budget allocated for the projects therefor.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are certainly aware that funds are provided in the capital budget on a financial year basis and disbursed as per progress of works and provision of contracts.

Primary Schools

Allocation for construction of primary schools for period 1995/1996 to 2005/2006 (which covers period 1995 to July 2005), was made under one item “construction/improvement of primary schools”.

For the financial years 1995/1996 to 2000/2001 (which covers period 1995 to September 2000) the total amount allocated for the construction and improvement of State primary schools was Rs285.6 m. The actual amount spent for that period was Rs257.7 m.

For financial years 2000/2001 to 2005/2006 (which covers period September 2000 to July 2005), allocation for construction of State primary schools is Rs821 m. The actual amount spent was only Rs171 m.

Secondary Schools

For secondary schools from 1995/1996 to 2000/2001 allocation for

construction was made under one item “construction/improvement of secondary schools” whereas for financial years 2001/2002 to 2005/2006, a new item “construction/conversion/extension of secondary schools” was created to cater for construction of secondary schools among others.

For the financial years 1995/1996 to 2000/2001 (which covers the period December 1995 to September 2000), the total amount allocated for the construction/improvement/conversion/extension of State secondary schools was Rs650.9 m. The actual amount spent for that period was Rs559.1 m.

For financial years 2000/2001 to 2005/2006 (which covers the period September 2000 to July 2005), Rs4,232 m. were allocated for construction/improvement/conversion/extension of State secondary schools. Of these, only Rs1,893.3 m. were spent.

Sir, as I have already made it crystal clear to this House, in spite of this substantial allocation of funds, between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006, due to poor planning and poor project management, the construction/improvement of secondary schools programme has not been on target.

Please refer to my reply to PQ B/79 and B/141 wherein I indicated that this situation has caused and is causing serious prejudice to the student community and their parents.

The situation is now being closely monitored and action has been taken to alleviate the difficulties of the students for the new academic year 2006.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can explain to the House the serious delays in the completion of the project?

Mr Gokhool: I have already indicated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that according to me, and my Ministry, this is due to poor planning and poor project management.

ALBION PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT (06/09/05)

(No. I B/215) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Albion Primary School project, he will state –

- (a) the extent of land available, and
- (b) when works are scheduled to start.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am informed that a plot of land of an extent of 0A99 at Albion was vested in my Ministry in September 1981. In May 2004, my Ministry made a request to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for a larger portion of land for a primary school project. As a result, an additional 0A71 has been identified to be annexed to the existing plot, to make a total area of 1A70. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is presently effecting a topographical survey of that area.

I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. I B/141 last week wherein I stated that a school mapping and space audit exercise would be carried out as a matter of urgency. Once the exercise is completed, a policy decision would be taken as to where new primary schools would be constructed. In that context, the Albion School Project will be considered.

JEAN LEBRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RECONSTRUCTION (06/09/05)

(No. I B/227) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Jean Lebrun Government School, he will state –

- (a) if there is a project for the reconstruction of the school and, if so, indicate at what stage is the project, and
- (b) indicate the date when the reconstruction works are likely to start and the expected date of completion.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 29 December 2004, the Head Teacher of the school reported the presence of cracks in four of the five school blocks.

A site visit was effected by a technical team of the Ministry on 03 February 2005, following which the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) was requested to carry out a full structural survey of the school and propose remedial actions.

A preliminary structural survey of the school was carried out on 28 February and 19 March 2005 and a report was submitted to the Ministry of Education on 05 April 2005.

My Ministry then sent the necessary requirements to the MPI to enable the latter to plan for eventual works at the school.

The MPI is currently carrying out a complete topographical survey of the school premises which is expected to be completed by mid September 2005. Thereafter, a decision will be taken.

MOHUNLALL MOHIT GOVT. SCHOOL - ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS, PRE-PRIMARY COMPLEX, ETC. (06/09/05)

(No. I B/231) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the Mohunlall Mohit Government School at L'Avenir, he will inform the House if the members of the Parent Teachers Association wrote to his Ministry in the year 2004 concerning –

- (a) the additional classrooms;
- (b) the pre-primary complex;
- (c) the fencing of the school compound;
- (d) the provision of an IT room and a reading room and, if so, will he state if he is aware that nothing has been done since the year 2004 and whether he will take the above matter into consideration to the general satisfaction of stakeholders.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before replying to the hon. Member, I wish to inform the House with deep regret that the person of Pandit Mohunlall Mohit passed away on Friday last. Pandit Mohunlall Mohit was a national figure, a social worker and his contribution to the promotion of education was appreciated by one and all. I take this opportunity to present our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. I am informed that the Director of Zone 2 (Beau Bassin/Rose Hill & East) had received a letter from the Parent Teachers Association of the school on 15 December 2004, requesting for –

- (a) additional classrooms;
- (b) a pre-primary complex;
- (c) the fencing of the school compound, and
- (d) the provision of an IT room and a reading room.

However, according to the Directorate, as there were other pressing works at the school, namely the re-roofing of a block of 6 classrooms, tiling and painting works in that same block as well as the construction of a new

toilet block, these works were attended to instead.

The fencing works will be undertaken in the course of 2006 and completed by September 2006. As for the construction of additional classrooms, an IT room and a reading room, my Ministry will carry out an audit of all additional facilities required in Government primary schools shortly and the requirements of Mohunlall Mohit Government School will be considered, once the report of the audit is obtained.

With regard to the pre-primary complex, a survey has been initiated to find out whether space is available. A decision will be taken in the light of the survey report.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there are new settlements there, will the hon. Minister consider speeding up matters and see that these facilities are extended to the Mohunlall Mohit Government School.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of the audit which will be carried out, I will ask the officers to take this point into consideration.

**MOHUNLALL MOHIT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL, L'AVENIR
– TOILET BLOCK (06/09/05)**

(No. I B/232) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if there has been a project for the construction of a new toilet block at the Mohunlall Mohit Government School at l'Avenir and, if so, will he state –

- (a) if the toilet block has been handed over to his Ministry by the contractor;
- (b) if all the facilities mentioned in the contract have been installed and, if not, what measures his Ministry will take to set matters right, and
- (c) the cost of the project and the sum paid to the contractor.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. I am advised that my Ministry submitted on 29 January 2003 a request to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure for the construction of a toilet block at Mohunlall Mohit Government School, l'Avenir.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am also advised that it was handed over by the contractor to the Ministry of Education through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure on 21 July 2005.

As regards part (b) of the question, the answer is yes. All the facilities have been installed, both inside and outside. However, as at now, the toilet block is not operational. This is due to the accumulation of water inside the septic tank, although the toilet block is not in use. At the time of excavation, there was no sign of water accumulation in the septic tanks and absorption pits. Since the MPI and the contractor did not detect any problem, they proceeded with the construction.

Even before the handing over of the toilet block, the MPI initiated action in collaboration with the Wastewater Management Authority to resolve the issue. A site visit was effected by both organisations on 12 April 2005. Thereafter, trial pits were excavated. Two options submitted by the WMA were being studied by the MPI to solve the problem.

We have now been informed by the MPI that they have decided upon one option, namely the emptying of the septic tanks, the enlargement of the absorption pits and the provision of a proper drainage system in the periphery of the disposal system to re-route the runoff water. The MPI has also informed us that the toilet may be operational by the end of October 2005.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, the cost of the project is Rs3.2 m. The sum paid to the contractor as at 28 February 2005 is Rs1.85 m.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to my information, not all the facilities have been extended, and I can table a letter to that effect. For example, the hand dryers have not been fixed. As mentioned by the hon. Minister, this building costs some Rs3 m. and is not operational because the floor and the ground are at the same level and water seeps in easily, thus rendering it impossible to be operational. I would request the hon. Minister to take steps so that matters be sped up to make the building operational.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I said, at the time when excavation was being done, there was no sign of water accumulation. I have taken note of the information provided by the hon. Member and will pass it on to the people concerned, who will look into the matter. As regards the facilities, if the hon. Member can indicate to me which facility is not available, I will look into the matter.

**RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES GOVERNMENT SCHOOL -
RENOVATION WORKS (18/10/05)**

(No. I B/361) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Rivière des Anguilles Government School, he will state –

- (a) when renovation works were last carried out;
- (b) the expenditure incurred for renovation works between the years 2000 to 2005, and
- (c) if there is any project for all necessary renovation works to be carried out and, if so, the details thereof.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), renovation works at Rivière des Anguilles Government School were last carried out in the year 2004, in respect of the electrical system of the school. As regards part (b), in 2002, an amount of Rs205,500 was spent for three major projects, namely the construction of a boundary block wall, upgrading of the toilet block and replacement of the naco frames. In 2003, a total amount of Rs893,600 was spent for re-roofing works in four classroom blocks as well as re-flooring works, painting works and minor upgrading works.

In 2004, a sum of Rs50,000 was spent for electrical works. As regards part (c), I am advised that the following renovation works still need to be carried out at the school –

- (i) re-roofing works in a block of three classrooms to be handled by my Ministry and estimated at Rs700,000. These works are targeted for the November/December 2005 school vacation subject to contingency arrangements being made possible for the resumption of studies in January 2006. These arrangements are required since the works will span over a ten week period from the starting date expected to be early December 2005;
- (ii) upgrading of the school yard estimated at Rs90,000 again to be handled by my Ministry, during the November/December 2005 school vacation, and
- (iii) construction of a new toilet block by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping is programmed

tentatively during the last quarter of this financial year with an expected contract period of six months.

**CAMP THOREL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - FOOTBALL GROUND
- LEVELLING WORKS (25/10/05)**

(No. I A/6) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will consider the advisability of having the football ground at Camp Thorel Government School levelled.

Reply: A contract was awarded on 14 May 2004 by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) to the Development Works Corporation (DWC) for the fencing and uplift of the football ground at Camp Thorel Government School for the contract sum of Rs3,497,610.15. The project was completed in September 2005.

The tender documents for levelling works, including cut and fill, are being prepared and works are expected to start next year.

YEAR 2006

GRSE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - RENOVATION WORKS (21/03/06)

(No. B/22) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if there is any project for renovation works at the Grand River South East Government School and, if so, whether the works have started, indicating -

- (a) the name of the contractor;
- (b) the progress achieved so far, and
- (c) the expected date of completion.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am informed that renovation works are being carried out at Grand River South East Government School by the district contractor of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping, namely, Power Contractors Ltd since 06 March 2006. The works consist of, *inter alia* –

- (a) replacement of corrugated iron sheets in three school blocks
- (b) replacement of timber trusses and purlins in one block, and
- (c) replacement of light partitioning and false ceiling in three

school blocks.

I am given to understand that works by the new contractor are ongoing in one block. As at 15 March 2006, removal of CIS roof was 80% completed, manufacturing of timber trusses was completed at 75%, removal of high partition and false ceiling was 80% completed. All these works are due to be fully completed by 15 May 2006. The contractor will then undertake works in the remaining 2 blocks and they are expected to be completed by 24 July 2006.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the MPI, has ensured that minimum disturbance is caused to the pupils and staff of the school.

Mr Bundhoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether work was stopped or suspended for some time and the reasons thereof?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, work did stop at some point in time because once the corrugated iron sheets were removed it was then found that the timber trusses were not in good condition. It was thought important to remove the trusses as well and complete the work so that we do not have problems.

Mr Bundhoo: Since the question concerns the Grand River South East Government School, may I ask the hon. Minister to look into the transport problems being faced by the students who are being temporarily moved to Bel Air SSS?

Mr Gokhool: I will look into it.

Mr Guinness: It seems that the demolition works were done since November last. Is it the same contractor who has been given the work or was there a previous contractor? Why is the delay? In November, the parents were told that, by end of first term, the school would have been ready. But by now it is not ready.

Mr Gokhool: The hon. Member is well informed. It was the DWC which was doing the work and because of the delay, we wanted to expedite matters, the contractor was changed.

Mr Guinness: In the contract, is it only the corrugated sheets that was included and not the removal of the timber? Is it afterwards that the timber has been removed?

Mr Gokhool: The contract was for the removal of corrugated iron sheets. Once the sheets were removed then it was found that the trusses were in bad condition.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guinness: It is a school which dates fifty years back or even more. How can it be that when the Quantity Surveyor came on the site he sees only the corrugated sheets and not the wood?

Mr Gokhool: This is a technical matter.

Mr Speaker: Last question.

Mr Bundhoo: May I ask the hon. Minister for how long this problem dates back to and why nothing was done under the previous Government?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! I said order.

Mr Gokhool: In fact, the problem of the school was referred to the MPI on 10 June 2005.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. I have said last question. Next question!

**BAICHOO MADHOO GOVT. SCHOOL – RECREATIONAL GROUND,
TOILET BLOCK, ETC.**

(No. B/62) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Baichoo Madhoo Government School, he will state if an inquiry will be carried out to determine the reasons for which works on the recreational ground have not yet been completed and the recreational ground has remained unopened for use for the last few years.

Reply: I am given to understand that the Municipality of Quatre Bornes agreed in April 2004 to provide sports amenities and facilities at Baichoo Madhoo Government School for the benefit of both students and nearby residents. A meeting was accordingly held under the chairmanship of the Mayor and was attended by the Director and other officers of Zone 4. In July 2004, tenders were invited by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes for the upgrading and fencing of the football playground as well as the construction of a toilet block at Baichoo Madhoo Government School.

I am advised that the works have not yet been completed because the contractor appointed by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes had vacated the site since May 2005, after completing about only 60% of the works.

In June 2005, the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes requested the contractor to complete all outstanding works within a period of 15 days failing which, consideration would be given to terminate his contract. However, no reply was received from the contractor and the contract was terminated in July 2005.

I am advised that works are currently in progress and are being carried out by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes in-house labour. The works are expected to be completed by end of April 2006.

**MON TRESOR MON DESERT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL –
CONDITIONS (04/04/06)**

(No. B/139) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the unhygienic conditions prevailing at the compound of the Mon Trésor Mon Désert Primary school in Constituency No. 12 and, if so, will he state what remedial measures have been or will be taken.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that a team from the Zone Directorate has effected a site visit at Mon Trésor Mon Désert Government School on Monday 27 March 2006.

I am informed that no unhygienic condition, as such, was noted to prevail at school -

- (i) toilets were clean and well kept;
- (ii) the school yard was clean and grass trimmed;
- (iii) tap water is available, the fibre glass water tanks had last been cleaned on 6 January 2006;
- (iv) adequate number of bins are available all around the school premises;
- (v) classrooms are well ventilated and lighted, and
- (vi) construction of a larger concrete bin with metal cover, in replacement of the existing concrete bin, is under consideration.

However, due to the recent heavy rainfalls, leaves and fruits from the badamier tree got scattered in the school yard. These were collected and heaped and have already been removed by the scavenging section of the District Council.

The collection of garbage at school will henceforth be done by the District Council every Saturday morning.

The state of cleanliness of the school compound is being closely monitored by the Zone Directorate and the Head of School.

**DAGOTIERE GOVT. PRIMARY SCHOOL – SCHOOL YARD –
MAINTENANCE (11/04/06)**

(No. B/212) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the school yard and the roof of the Dagotière Government Primary School and, if so, will he state what appropriate remedial measures he proposes to take.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the yard of the school which is officially known as Ramsomeer Government School was, in fact, in an unsatisfactory state owing mainly to dense vegetation in the backyard. However, the backyard was sprayed last week to avert potential problems from mosquitoes.

Further, instructions have been issued to the zone to ensure that regular maintenance of the schoolyard be undertaken. I am informed that the PTA is also collaborating with the head of the school to deal with this problem.

With regard to the roof of the school, my Ministry is aware that two of the three school blocks need repair works. To this end, a preliminary survey was carried out by a technical team of my Ministry on 28 March 2006 and the works have been estimated at around Rs2 m for both blocks.

According to the existing procedures for the implementation of projects costing more than Rs1 m, the project was referred to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and shipping on 06 April 2006. That Ministry will have to carry out a detailed survey and subsequently draw up a scope of works before tendering out the works.

My Ministry will liaise closely with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure for the works to be carried out during the most appropriate period for the school taking into consideration any contingency arrangements that may have to be made for the pupils in order to minimise any disruption to their studies.

MESNIL GOVT. SCHOOL – OLD WOODEN BUILDING (18/04/06)

(No. B/302) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if the Permanent Secretary of his Ministry is in the presence of a letter dated 11 June 2003 from the Headteacher of the Mesnil Government School requesting that an old wooden building be demolished and, if so, will he give the reasons for which –

- (a) action has not been taken thereon;
- (b) no explanation given to the Headteacher or the Parents Teachers Association of the said school.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, I was myself concerned that the correspondence dated 11 June was not attended to. I have had the record checked and I am informed that the Zone Director of my Ministry did receive a letter dated 11 June 2003 from the Headteacher of Mesnil Government School representing the demolition of an old wooden building. In June 2004, a site visit was effected by my predecessor in presence of the PTA, but no action was taken.

Following a recent visit by the Zone Director it was found that –
(i) no activities are presently being carried out in that building,
and
(ii) one of the rooms is temporarily used as a shelter for the watchman.

However, my Ministry is satisfied that the said building needs to be pulled down and this will be done as soon as possible.

The scope of the work is being prepared by my Ministry and floating of tenders will be undertaken by the end of this month. Thereafter, the works will be carried out.

Dr. Hawoldar: Sir, may I thank the hon. Minister for the attention given to this request because there is another letter which is dated 29 March which has been sent to the Ministry. The electrical connection to the school is through this old wooden building. May I make a request to see to it that this is changed? Because we do not want a child to get burnt in an old wooden building to react to the situation.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, this is being looked into in the scope of works. The main meter and the switch will be shifted from the old building.

COTE D'OR – SMALL PLANTERS – RELOCATION (25/04/06)

(No. B/365) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, following the decision to put up a Police compound in Vacoas on a plot of land commonly known as Defence land, he will state if the project for the relocation of small planters presently cultivating vegetables thereat and in the vicinity thereof to new plots in Cote d'Or has been implemented

Dr. Boolell: Following the transfer of a portion of land on which stood the Police Quarters to the Ministry of Education for the proposed

construction of the Vacoas State Secondary School, a decision was taken by the then Government in April 2004, for an extent of approximately 6 *arpents* of land at Closel Vacoas to be released for the construction of the new Police Quarters.

The 6 *arpents* of land are occupied by 11 planters whom the then Government proposed to relocate on a total extent of 13 *arpents* at Côte d'Or. Irrigation facilities and land preparation works were also to be undertaken by Government prior to allocation of the lands to the planters.

My Ministry has now been informed by the Commissioner of Police that they are no longer proceeding with the construction of the Police Quarters. The issue of relocation of the planters concerned no longer arises.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister then confirm whether the land will be given back to the people using it prior to the decision of having the Police compound there?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

COTE D'OR - GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – SMEs (25/04/06)

(No. B/407) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in view of the shortage of sites in the region of Côte d'Or, he will consider the advisability of placing the site of the Government School thereat, and which is no longer in use, at the disposal of persons working in the field of mechanic, panel beating, woodcraft and other similar jobs and, if not, why not.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources that though the Government School at Côte d'Or is not presently in use, it may be required to conduct National Trade Certificate Foundation Courses as from next year.

As stated in the Government Programme 2005-2010, the policy of my Ministry is to establish specialised zones for the benefit of SMEs with the appropriate support in each district. To this end, a committee comprising, *inter alia*, representatives from my Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, Development Bank of Mauritius Limited and Business Parks of

Mauritius Limited has been set up to make an audit of existing available space and to conduct a matching exercise in terms of demand for and supply of industrial space.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the Minister consider the possibility of setting up same at Ecroignard where there are existing old schools ...

Mr Speaker: This is specific to one particular place. The hon. Member may come with a substantive question. Next question, please!

**FOND DU SAC GOVERNMENT SCHOOL -
YARD TARRING (25/04/06)**

(No. B/415) Mr R.N. Guttee (Third Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the yard of the Fond du Sac Government School and, if so, will he state the measures that will be taken as a matter of priority to have the yard tarred.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware of the state of the yard of the Fond du Sac Government School. The technicians of my Ministry have visited the school and have submitted a report on the school yard. According to that report, around 40% of the school yard is tarred, the remainder being covered with soil and small pebbles. Moreover, on the tarred part, there are some mild depressions and cracks caused by the roots of big trees in the yard.

The technicians of my Ministry have also advised me that mere retarring of the schoolyard will not resolve the issue since a drainage system will also have to be put up within the yard. This will have to be connected appropriately with the drainage system on the road outside the school premises.

Owing to this, my Ministry has made a request to the National Development Unit, which is presently carrying out works along the road leading to the school and to also consider carrying out the tarring and drainage works inside the school premises. I have just consulted my colleague and he is agreeable to

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question, please.

**PERMAL SOOBRAYEN PRIMARY GOVT, SCHOOL – TOILETS -
RENOVATION (09/05/06)**

(No. B/458) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he is aware that the toilets of the Permal Soobrayen Primary Government School were due to be renovated during the Easter holidays and, if yes, will he state if the renovation works have been completed and, if not, the expected date of completion.

Reply: I have been informed that, following a decision by the PTA to have the toilets repaired –

- (i) painting works have started at the school during the recent Easter holidays. The works comprise a new coating of paint on the walls and ceilings of the toilet blocks. Around 45% of the works have been completed. They are planned to be completed by mid May 2006;
- (ii) the paints were provided by the hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac, Mr Mardemootoo.

I wish to add that –

- (a) minor renovation works were carried out in one of the two toilet blocks of the school during March/April 2005. Materials were supplied by this Ministry and labour provided by the PTA;
- (b) the sewerage network of the toilet blocks is functioning and water is available. The toilets are considered as being of a reasonable standard;
- (c) floor tiling works during the July/August 2006 school vacation.

16ÈME MILLE FOREST SIDE – SCHOOL PROJECT (16/05/06)

(No. B/521) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if there is a project for the construction of a new school at 16ème mille Forest Side and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not clear from the question

whether the hon. Member is referring to a primary or a secondary school.

However, on the assumption that this is a primary school, I am advised that in April 2005, the previous Government had decided that a new primary school would be put up at 16ème mille, Forest Side in the course of the financial year 2005-2006. No funds were specifically allocated to the project.

In July 2005, my Ministry carried out a school mapping exercise as a result of which a new priority list for new primary school constructions was drawn up. It took into account the fact that the pupils in 16ème mille area are all being channelled to the two nearest primary schools, Midlands Government School and James Toolsy Government School in Curepipe where spare capacity existed. Moreover, the pupils being directed towards Midlands Government School, 81 in number, benefit from transport arrangements provided by my Ministry.

In the light of the above, the need for a new school at 16ème mille is not felt for the time being. The hon. Member may rest assured that, as soon as the need arises, the matter will be looked into.

**MUTTEEPUTH FOWDAR GOVT. SCHOOL, CAMP DE MASQUE
PAVE – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS (23/05/06)**

(No. B/597) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mutteeputh Fowdur Government School at Camp de Masque Pavé, he will state if he is aware of –

- (a) the derelict conditions of the toilets;
- (b) the repeated water shortage problems, and
- (c) the flooding of the classrooms caused by broken window frames during heavy rainfalls and, if so, will he state the remedial measures he proposes to take, as a matter of priority.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, there are recurrent backlog of recurrent repairs and maintenance problems in some schools. Coming to part (a) of the question asked by the hon. Member, I would like to inform the House that there are problems with regard to some of the flush tanks in the toilets.

These will be replaced during the coming school holidays to avoid inconvenience to the pupils, as the whole toilet block will have to be closed

for the purpose.

In the meantime, optimum use is being made of the toilets which are in a good state.

With regard to part (b) which relates to the repeated water shortage problems, I am informed that this is due to the regular water supply cuts in the region. However, a 2,500 litre capacity water tank is being immediately purchased and needful will be done to fix same as soon as possible.

As regards part (c), it has not been possible to replace the damaged naco frames up to now. However, a proper survey will be carried out by my Ministry in two weeks' time. The works proper will be effected as soon as the November/December 2006 school vacation starts, since these comprehensive works which may last up to 10 weeks have to be carried out in the absence of pupils. In the meantime, to avert inconvenience to the pupils, temporary remedial works will be carried out by the Maintenance Unit of the zone.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Minister if he can consider the possibility, together with the hon. Minister of Environment, hon. Minister Seeburn and hon. Sayed-Hossen, of fixing a date and time so that they can *de visu* look at the situation?

Mr Gokhool: I am taking note of the request and I'll inform the hon. Member when we can make the visit.

**RENGANADEN SEENEEVASSEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL,
CASSIS – RENOVATION WORKS (30/05/06)**

(No. B/694) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School at Cassis, he will state if he is aware that the iron-sheeting roof need to be replaced and, if so, will he state if renovation works will be carried out, indicating when the tendering exercise will be launched and the estimated cost thereof.

Reply: A formal request was made by the Head Teacher to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in August 2004 for re-roofing

works at the school. However, nothing was undertaken up to July 2005 with regard to these works in spite of the fact that Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School was, and still is considered to be a ZEP school. Just after my assumption of office in July 2005, various representations were made by parents to me regarding the bad state of the school particularly the roof and the old toilet block.

On 20 March 2006, I personally took the initiative of chairing a meeting whereby technicians of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping were, *inter-alia* present to discuss the matter. As a result of that initiative, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping urgently entrusted the re-roofing works at the school to its District Contractor (Deeya Construction Ltd) on 10 April 2006 for a contract sum of Rs3m.

These works will be completed by tomorrow and the associated electrical works will, on their part, be completed by the end of June 2006. As regards the old toilet block, it is to be noted that in March 2002, the Head Teacher of the school made a request to the Ministry of Education for the pulling down of the latter but the request fell in deaf ears. Another request was made by the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life as a result of a sanitary inspection of the school in September 2004 but it suffered the same fate.

It was only after July 2005 that the matter was revived and these works were undertaken and completed by the field unit of the Ministry of Local Government in April 2006.

I am tabling photographs of the poor state of the building prior to the renovation works and thereafter. The photographs speak for themselves.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS – ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS (11/07/06)

(No. B/976) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state the measures Government proposes to take to ensure that school buildings are free from asbestos.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that following the decision of an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by the then Minister of

Health and Quality of Life in January 2004, a survey was carried out in 2004 in all primary and secondary educational institutions of the country – a total of some 428 schools in all – to detect the presence of asbestos – containing materials in those schools and to assess the health risk to the school population.

The survey team comprised technicians of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport; the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life; the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations as well as my Ministry. At the close of the survey, a report was put up, broadly recommending three lines of action –

- (i) immediate action, involving 104 schools, where the asbestos-containing materials are in relatively small quantities and can be dealt with easily and safely by the Maintenance Unit of my Ministry;
- (ii) short-term action, involving 19 schools where the materials containing asbestos are in a relatively large quantities and in a damaged/friable state, warranting the contracting out of the works to licensed contractors, and
- (iii) long term action, involving 67 schools relating to asbestos – containing materials in relatively large quantities but in a good state and thus not justifying removal for the time being, except if there is a total ban policy on asbestos by government.

During winter school vacation of July/August 2005, my Ministry embarked and completed a comprehensive asbestos removal exercise in the 104 schools where immediate action had been recommended in the report.

With regard to the short-term action I mentioned earlier and which involves 19 schools with relatively large quantities of asbestos-containing materials, two of those schools, Sir Harilall Vaghjee Government School and Labourdonnais Government School, have already had asbestoscontaining materials, especially, false ceilings, removed in the context of major rehabilitation works effected in those schools by the DWC.

Moreover, MPI is attending to a comprehensive upgrading and rehabilitation of Dr. Maurice Curé State College where the works which would start in around two months' time will also require the destruction of school blocks with asbestos-containing roofs.

I am advised that, prior to the winding up of the DWC, only that organisation as well as a private contractor were registered to carry out works on asbestos. Now that the DWC is winding up, only that private contractor will be left for those works. This will further constrain remedial

actions with regard to the problem. Moreover, the asbestos-removal works can only be carried out during the protracted November/December school vacation period.

Mr Speaker Sir, I should, however, like to point out that the asbestos problem has been and is still being dealt with at the level of a Technical Committee on asbestos, which comprises my Ministry as well as other Ministries and Departments and which last met on 01 June 2006. In this context, my Ministry will liaise with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to find a solution to the current shortage of contractors for asbestos removal. A programme of work will then be worked out.

However, in the meantime, my Ministry is closely monitoring the situation in those schools to minimise to the risks to pupils and staff. This is done through regular inspection of the asbestos-containing items and where necessary immediate treatment is effected in order to eliminate the risk of dissemination of asbestos fibres.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, asbestos is being removed from the schools, can I ask the hon. Minister how it is being disposed of?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the removal is done and the asbestos taken to Mare Chicose. This is the information that I have.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2004 a survey was done to assess the health risk of the student community. Can we know something about this assessment of health risk, whether it has been done and what has been the result?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, the hon. Member is right, the report was produced in 2004, the report is available and he may consult the report, but it is important to note that action started in 2005.

Mr Mohamed: The hon. Minister talked about the Technical Committee on asbestos. Can I know from the hon. Minister when was this committee set up initially?

Mr Gokhool: I think the report was produced in 2004. I have to check the date as to when the committee was set up.

Mr Mohamed: If I understand correctly that committee was set up prior to 2004 obviously before the report was delivered; and the hon.

Minister stated that the committee is still working, I mean two years on they are still working. Has the hon. Minister considered renewing the people who are on that committee if they are still working?

Mr Gokhool: What I said is once the report was submitted, action has been taken. I have given a list of measures which have been implemented.

This is a very complex problem involving not only the Ministry of Education, but other Ministries are involved where the problem of asbestos exists. Therefore, the committee is looking at the problem in a global manner.

Mr Mohamed: One last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the manner in which asbestos is disposed of – the hon. Minister said it is being taken to Mare Chicose - in line with the recommendations of the Technical Committee?

Mr Gokhool: I think this should be one of the recommendations, because my Ministry is not directly concerned with the disposal; it is done by the responsible Ministries.

RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES/SOULLAC – STATE-OWNED SCHOOLS (11/07/06)

(No. B/981) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the State-owned schools in the Constituency of Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, he will state –

- (a) if a survey has been carried out to assess the state of the infrastructure thereof, and
- (b) the improvement works and repairs that have been carried out thereto since July 2005 to date.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that infrastructural assessment surveys are carried out prior to the beginning of a financial year in each of the four educational zones and not in individual constituencies with a view to drawing up a priority list of improvement works and repairs.

During the financial year, works are then carried out according to a priority list within the limits of the budget provision.

I am tabling a list of those improvement works and repairs that have been carried out in the schools of the Constituency of Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac since July 2005 to date.

Mr Mohamed: Even though I have not perused the list that the hon. Minister proposes to table yet, but the situation is such that the fence around the primary school in La Flora is still in a very bad state and almost non-existent. May I ask the hon. Minister, therefore, to see to it that the fence is repaired and that finally the toilet block, which was being promised at Rivière des Anguilles school, be finally built in the following few months. The toilet is very important as the hon. Minister would understand.

Mr Gokhool: I think the hon. Member would have to take a look at the list of works which are being done, but I would like to thank the hon. Member, like other hon. Members of the House who are showing a keen interest with regard to repairs and maintenance problems in many of our schools. Because this is one of the biggest shortcomings and without proper repairs and maintenance, we cannot provide quality education.

That is why I welcome the interest being shown by hon. Members and I have taken good note of the two problems that have been raised. I am sure these would be taken care of in the list of works.

**PANDIT JUGDISH SHARMA RADHAY GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL - INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS (18/07/06)**

(No. B/1057) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the problems of the Congomah Government School, following the landslide at the Congomah Village and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Pandit Jugdish Sharma Radhay Government School at Congomah.

I am aware that the school is presently suffering from several problems with regard to its infrastructure. Following my visit to the school last December and that effected by the hon. Member on 05 July 2006 with the PTA, Officers of my Ministry and the National Development Unit, the following main problems were identified -
roof leakage in the school building;

the unsatisfactory condition of the school yard;
the lack of classrooms;
the need for painting of the classrooms.

With regard to the leakage issue, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) was requested by my Ministry on 07 March 2006 to initiate action to resolve that issue.

In this connection, the MPI has, with the help of my Ministry, just completed a survey of the roof of the building. It will carry out the necessary re-roofing works in the November/December 2006 school vacation as requested by the PTA during the visit I mentioned earlier by the Hon Member, in order not to unduly disturb the school activities. Concerning the tarring of the schoolyard, the NDU was requested by my Ministry on 12 July 2006 to attend to the issue.

As for the additional classrooms, I am informed that, because of financial constraints this financial year, this will be considered anew during the next financial year. For the time being however, the MPI has been requested by my Ministry to convert an available open space on the first floor into a classroom while the re-roofing works will be effected during the November/December vacation.

As concerns the painting of the classrooms, paint will be provided in the course of this week by my Ministry, and, in the context of community involvement promoted by my Ministry, the PTA has been requested to arrange for the provision of labour, for the works to be carried out during the present school holidays.

**PANDIT SHARMA RADHAY GOVERNMENT SCHOOL,
CONGOMAH – COMPUTER ROOM (31/10/06)**

(No. B/1231) Mrs B. Juggoo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he has received representations from the Pandit Sharma Radhay Government School, Congomah, in regard to the computer room and, if so, will he state the remedial actions that will be taken.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, Sir, I have not personally received any representation from the Pandit Sharma Radhay Government School at Congomah regarding the computer room. However, I am informed that in November 2005, the Head Teacher of the said school addressed a request to

the zone director, in respect of a series of school infrastructural issues, including the need for a computer room.

Some of the demands contained in the request of the Head Teacher were attended to, but the question of the computer room remained outstanding for lack of space.

Alternatively, the computer room has been accommodated in the library of the school as a temporary measure.

The request for a computer room was again raised in the course of a meeting which officials of my Ministry had with the hon. Member on 05 July 2006 and it has been agreed that the matter would be looked into in the context of new proposals for the next financial year.

Computer classes will continue to be held in the library until such time that a new computer room will be constructed.

Mrs Juggoo: May I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the staff room is being used as a store and the computer room right now?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, my information is that the library is being used as a computer room, but I'll check what the hon. Member is saying.

MONT IDA GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS (07/11/06)

(No. B/1329) Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the infrastructure and of the playground of the Mont Ida Government School and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: My Ministry has received a request from the school in March 2006 for several infrastructural works to be carried there. I would like to inform the House that before the end of every financial year the four Education Zones of my Ministry submit a list of maintenance projects to be implemented during the following financial year. In respect of S. Ramudhin Government School at Mont Ida, the Director of the Zone did submit a list which included a project for the replacement of naco frames. Thus a survey was carried out in August 2006 by officers of my Ministry and it was

observed that the naco frames effectively required replacement and the building some painting.

Since the replacement of the nacoframes was viewed as urgent, tender documents have been prepared by mid September 2006. Tenders were floated and evaluated. However, since only one bid was received and it was on the high side, tenders will be floated anew by mid November 2006. Works are expected to start around mid December 2006 and are scheduled to be completed by end February 2007. External painting will be carried out after completion of the naco frame works.

The following infrastructural works will be carried out by the zone during this financial year –

Interior painting – works will begin by the 3rd week of November and will be completed by third week of December 2006 in collaboration with the PTA.

Tiling in three classrooms – works will start by mid of November and will be completed by mid December 2006 in collaboration with the PTA.

Demolition of concrete water tank – works will start by 13 November 2006 and will be completed by end November 2006.

Concerning the playground, I am informed that some derocking and leveling works are required. These will be considered by the Zone in the priority list for financial year 2007/2008.

NOTRE DAME GOVT. SCHOOL – SCHOOL YARD – FENCING (07/11/06)

(No. B/1336) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resouces whether he will state if he has received representations from the Notre Dame Government School, Notre Dame, in regard to the fencing of the school yard and, if so, will he state the actions that will be taken.

Reply: You will recall that on 18 July 2006, I informed the House that my Ministry had indeed received letters from the Head Teacher in May 2005 in connection with the fencing of the school.

This project has been earmarked for implementation during this Financial Year and the Ministry of Housing and Lands was requested on 6

July 2006 to demarcate the land. This land demarcation is mandatory in order to avoid encroachment of land by the Ministry or by neighbours.

A reminder was again sent to the Ministry of Housing and Lands on 25 September 2006.

I am now informed that the land has been demarcated. A meeting will be held next week with the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU), the District Council of Pamplemousses/Riviere du Rempart and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) for the necessary clearances. Works will be carried out by Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and are expected to start by mid November 2006 and are tentatively scheduled to be completed by mid March 2007.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 – GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS – IMPROVEMENTS – JULY 2005 TO NOVEMBER 2006 (07/11/06)

(No. B/1340) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Government schools in Constituency No. 13, he will state the improvements that have been brought thereto since July 2005 to date.

(Withdrawn)

ALBION – GOVERNMENT SCHOOL (07/11/06)

(No. A/5) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a new Government school at Albion, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I would like to refer the hon. Member to PQ B/63 which my predecessor replied to in October 2000. He stated that –
“After careful examination of the project proposal, it was found that the economic implications did not plead in favour of the implementation of such a project.

According to information received, the school population of Albion at that time was only 245 and these children attended either Pierre Desvaux de Marigny Government School at Canot or Petite Rivière Government School. The figure of 245 was considered too low to justify the operation of a school at Albion. More than 100 of these

students resided within walking distance from each of the two abovementioned schools.”

As at now, the school population has decreased to 179. These pupils of Albion are presently attending Pierre Desvaux de Marigny Government School at Canot and Petite Rivière Government Schools.

Furthermore, given the difficult economic situation and the low school population, my Ministry is not considering this project as a priority for this financial year.

Presently, my Ministry is carrying out a school mapping exercise. This exercise focuses on the demand for admission to standard 1 at primary level. The mapping exercise also takes into account such factors like new housing developments and population growth. In the light of the outcome of this school mapping exercise, a priority list of regions where new primary schools need to be constructed will be finalised.

**RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES/SOULLAC - GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS - IMPROVEMENTS**

66
debate no. 34
of 21/11/06

(No. B/1431) Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Government schools in Constituency No. 13, he will state the improvements that have been brought thereto since July 2005 to date.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that at our sitting of 11 July 2006, I tabled a list of infrastructural improvement works that have been carried out in the schools of Constituency of Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac from July 2005 to July 2006.

I am now informed that since that date there has been further improvement works that have been carried out up to now. I am therefore once again tabling a list of those improvement works.

JG/D34/P07/4
(PQ No. B/1431 cont'd)

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I would also like to inform the hon. Member that under the School IT Project, electrical works have been carried out in primary schools so as to enable them to accommodate five computers in the first instance. Works started in May 2006 and were completed in October 2006.

I wish to reassure the hon. Member that my Ministry is ensuring a close monitoring and follow-up of the different projects for a timely completion.

Mr Mardemootoo: Concerning Sir Claude Noël Government School at L'Escalier, despite several visits by the Ministry of Works, until now nothing has been done. Can I ask the Minister to look into the matter? We should not wait for the roof to collapse like in the case of Piton Government School.

Mr Gokhool: I have the information which I am tabling, but I am taking note of the point mentioned by the hon. Member and I will look into it.

Mr Mohamed: In regard to the same school, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he did receive a letter, dated 10 November 2006 from a group of parents of l'Escalier regarding the renovation works at that particular school which have not been carried out and that they are very unhappy with that situation?

Mr Gokhool: The hon. Member is mentioning a letter dated 10 November. There is a whole procedure in terms of work that has to be undertaken. The zone established the priority and that is submitted to the headquarters and we look at the work that has to be carried out comprehensively for all schools. But this will be taken into account when the programming for the work will be done. I cannot say at this stage.

(67)

Written Answers
debate no 24 of 2/11/06

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**ONESIPHO BEAUGEARD GOVERNMENT SCHOOL
- RENOVATION & EXTENSION WORKS**

(No. B/1468) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Edith Cavell Government School also known as *l'Ecole* Onesipho Beauguard, he will state if the works undertaken thereat constitute renovation and extension or a complete pulling down and replacement of the existing building.

Reply: (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources) Dr Onesipho Beauguard Government School found at Edith Cavell Street, Port Louis comprises three buildings: two relatively new reinforced concrete buildings and an old stonewall-timber building. It is this old stonewall-timber building, built in around 1830, which is at issue.

In early 2002, representations were obtained from the staff of the school, and reports were submitted by our technicians, indicating that the building was in a poor structural state. Consequently, my Ministry requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (MPI), in June 2002, to effect a detailed survey and submit a structural report. In October 2002, the MPI submitted the structural report to this Ministry where, among other things, it emphasized the dangerous nature of the roof and other structures of the building.

As a result of the report of the MPI, this Ministry considered in the first instance, the preservation of the building through consolidation/upgrading/renovation works as it was judged to have historical value. However, the costs were deemed exorbitant by the technicians of that Ministry. Moreover, additional floor area was needed at the school to cater for missing facilities. My Ministry therefore requested the MPI to demolish the building in April 2003 and to put up three new buildings, an Administrative/Classroom Block, a Classroom Block and a Toilet Block.

The demolition of the stonewall-timber building was a sine qua non condition for the erection of the new buildings since the total surface area of the land upon which the school is built is less than one Arpent (1A) whereas a school with that population size should have a surface area of about 2A.

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On 28 July 2003, the Ministry of Arts and Culture informed us that the then Minister of Arts and Culture had, under Section 6(2) of the National Monuments Act 1985, approved the proposed demolition of the stonewall-timber building. That Ministry also informed us then that action was being initiated at their end to remove the said school from the National Monuments list.

I need to point out that all the pupils of the school – 513 in number – are presently accommodated in a building some two kilometers from the school. Thus, my Ministry has been incurring substantial rental and transport costs for more than three years now. Moreover, the PTA of the school has agreed to the moving of the pupils on the condition that it be a very temporary arrangement.

The designs of the MPI have lent a colonial cachet to the Administrative/Classroom Block - one of the three new blocks proposed - similar to that of the present building. Award of contract for "Renovation and Extension to Dr O. Beugeard G.S." was made on 12 October 2006. The works include the renovation of Teachers' Centre, blockwall, and a classroom block. Extension works will also be carried out in the shape of the construction of a new Administrative/Classroom Block, a new Classroom Block and a new Toilet Block. The scope of works also comprise demolition of the old stonewall-timber building. The demolition works started on 26 October 2006 but stopped on 11 November 2006 following a Court Order. The Court proceedings are still on and I am therefore not in a position to give a definitive answer as to the way forward. I may only add that my Ministry will insist that the style of the old building be preserved as much as possible in the construction of the new buildings.

VALE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RENOVATION WORKS (28/11/06)

(No. B/1547) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a new wing and the upliftment works to the playground at the Vale Government School, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The project comprises a toilet block, covered link and the upgrading of the football ground. This contract was awarded to the DWC in August 2005 and works are ongoing. Following the decision to close the DWC, a new tender exercise has been initiated for the completion of the

remaining works, that is, internal and external rendering, plumbing and electrical installation, finishing works, such as tiling, painting and the upgrading of the football pitch.

The tender documents for this new contract were sent to the Central Tender Board on 24 November 2006 and the tentative implementation programme for the completion of the remaining works is as follows –

- Approval of CTB – mid December 2006
- Tender procedures and award – end February 2007
- Construction to start by mid-March 2007 and to be completed by mid-June 2007

JEAN LEBRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – CONSTRUCTION (28/11/06)

(No. B/1512) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the new building at the Jean Lebrun Government School, he will state when will

–

- (a) the final architectural drawings be ready;
- (b) the tender be launched, and
- (c) the constructions work start.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the tentative implementation programme for the first phase comprising the pre-primary unit and 8 classrooms is as follows –

- (i) Completion of working drawings (architectural and structural) and tender documents – End of February 2007
- (ii) Tender procedures and award – end of April 2007
- (iii) Construction to start by mid May 2007 and to be completed by mid November 2007

YEAR 2007

MAIN ROAD/NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – ROAD – UPGRADING (27/03/07)

(No. B/60) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the road leading from the main road

to the Nouvelle Découverte Government School which is causing hardship to the students and, if so, will he urgently consider the advisability of requesting that upgrading works be carried out thereat, together with the provision for drains and pavements and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that patching works had recently been effected to the road leading from the main road to the Nouvelle Découverte Government School. However, due to the rainy season and with the passage of cyclone Gamede, the road in question has sustained damage.

I am further informed that the road will now have to be resurfaced with premix asphalt. The estimated cost including construction of drains and pavements on both sides of the road is Rs350,000.

Given that the Moka/Flacq District Council will not be in a position to undertake these works, due to financial constraint, my Ministry is exploring the possibility of funding same in this financial year.

BAMBOUS (GEOFFROY) PRIMARY SCHOOL (SECOND PHASE) - CONSTRUCTION (10/04/07)

(No. B/96) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Bambous (Geoffroy) Primary School, he will state when will the construction of its second phase start.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may wish to be informed that in Bambous, there were two primary schools at the beginning of 2004, namely Bambous A Government School and New Bambous G.S. Over time, these two schools had become overcrowded such that the population in most classes was over 40 pupils. The then Government decided to have a third school constructed in the region, namely Bambous (Geoffroy) G.S.

Phase I works, comprising the construction of one classroom block and a toilet block were begun at Bambous (Geoffroy) in December 2004 and completed in August 2005. Thus, pupils could be accommodated in Standards I and II in the new building in January 2006. In 2007, pupils of Standards II and III were accommodated there and those of Standard I have been temporarily accommodated in Bambous A and New Bambous G.S. With regard to the Phase II works, the construction of a second sixclassroom block at the school, tenders were launched by the Central Tender Board on 23 March 2007, with closing date fixed for 02 May 2007. Along that schedule,

the works are expected to start around mid-June 2007 and completed by the end of November 2007.

MOOSUN PRIMARY SCHOOL – BOIS ROUGE – REPAIRS (10/04/07)

(No. B/125) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that part of the school building of the Moosun Primary School of Bois Rouge, Goodlands, is in a bad state and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: In February 2006, a site visit by the technicians of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources revealed that the infrastructure of the Ramlagun Moosun Government School was suffering from widespread detachment of concrete as well as localised exposure of the steel reinforcement in external columns and ceilings.

As a result, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (MPI) was immediately requested to carry out a thorough structural investigation of the school and to effect any immediate repairs, if necessary.

In May 2006, MPI submitted an interim report to this Ministry where it indicated the urgent measures that needed to be implemented pending the submission of a structural report. These measures were –

- a reinforced concrete tank situated on the roof of the toilet block has been put out of use as the roof was showing signs of distress, and
- the existing covered link to the toilet block has been propped up to avoid sudden failure of the columns supporting it.

As a result, action was taken by my Ministry to implement those measures, namely the putting out of use of a reinforced concrete tank and the propping up of a covered link at the school.

The structural report was submitted to my Ministry on 23 March 2007. The report indicated that three of the seven school blocks had roofs which were in a bad state. Following the recommendations of that report, my Ministry decided on 03 April 2007 to request the MPI to pull down the three blocks in question, tentatively as from the beginning of the November/December 2007 school vacation, and to have them replaced by a new 12-classroom block, tentatively by the end of the first term of 2008.

Moreover, by that date, general remedial works would be carried out in three of the four remaining blocks. The necessary contingency arrangements will be effected by my Ministry.

A meeting was held on 10 January 2007 between officers of my Ministry, the staff of the school and the PTA to discuss the security measures to be taken in the context of resumption of studies in 2007. These measures were –

- (1) removal of loose concrete chunks on the ceilings by the maintenance team;
- (2) ensuring by the maintenance team that the 22 props that had been put up during the November/December 2007 school vacation were still properly fixed;
- (3) confirming with school that water tank above toilet block was put out of use as recommended in the interim report of the MPI submitted in May 2006.

In the meantime, a close follow-up of the state of the school is being effected by the maintenance team of my Ministry and the MPI.

JEAN LEBRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – CONSTRUCTION PROJECT (17/04/07)

(No. B/176) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Jean Lebrun Government School, he will state if he is aware that the building is structurally unsafe and that there was a project for a new building, the construction of which was due to start in April 2007 and, if so, will he state if construction has started and if not –

- (a) whether it has been rescheduled, and
- (b) when works are likely to start.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question.

A survey carried out in 2005 revealed that the buildings housing the Jean Lebrun Government School were structurally safe.

As regards the project for a new building to accommodate the preprimary unit and eight classrooms, the works have been re-scheduled as the Engineering Section of my Ministry has advised a soil investigation of the

site. The Geotechnical Investigation report is expected by mid-June 2007 and the construction of the new building is expected to start in July 2007 and to be completed by the end of January 2008.

NOTRE DAME PRIMARY SCHOOL – FENCING (08/05/07)

(No. B/276) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the fencing of the school yard of the Notre Dame Primary School, he will state where matters stand following the visit he effected thereat last year.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 05 July 2006, officers of my Ministry accompanied the hon. Member and officers of the NDU for a site visit at the school. During that site visit, the importance of fencing works at the school was confirmed, and the following actions have been initiated.

(a) It was placed in the priority list of works to be undertaken by my Ministry in financial year 2006-07. As is done in similar cases, the Ministry of Housing & Lands was requested, on 06 July 2006, to carry out a survey with a view to demarcating the school boundaries. Land demarcation is mandatory to avoid encroachment of land of the Ministry by neighbours. The Ministry of Housing and Lands submitted the survey plan to my Ministry at the end of November 2006.

(b). Clearances had then to be obtained from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit as well as the District Council. The survey plan from the Ministry of Housing and Lands was therefore forwarded to those two bodies on 26 December 2006. The clearance from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit was obtained on 07 February 2007 and that from the District Council on 03 April 2007.

(c) Those clearances were then forwarded to the MPI on 09 April 2007 for initiation of construction procedures. On 16 April 2007, my Ministry confirmed to MPI the availability of funds of the order of Rs1.6 m. corresponding to the estimates MPI had put up in the meantime for the project.

(a) A preliminary meeting was held on site on 27 April 2007 between the MPI and its District Contractor, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, & Officers of my Ministry and the School Administration to decide on the time schedule and other important details regarding the implementation of the works.

Handing over to the District Contractor was effected on 07

May 2007. The works are scheduled to start on 10 May 2007 and be completed on 30 August 2007. The delay with regard to the completion date originally estimated, namely mid-March 2007, is due to the submission of the various clearances to my Ministry.

CHITRAKOOT GOVT. SCHOOL – REPAIRS (08/05/07)

(No. B/278) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Chitrakoot Government School at Vallée des Prêtres, he will state the remedial measures, taken, if any, following the landslides that took place in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, heavy rainfall occurred in the region of Chitrakoot during the months of February and March 2004. This caused damage to buildings in the Chitrakoot area. On 14 May 2004, this Ministry requested the MPI to carry out a structural survey of the school building. The MPI submitted the structural survey report to this Ministry on 09 June 2004.

In that report, the main observations of the MPI were that the building was structurally safe and sound but required consolidation works. It recommended urgent remedial measures.

As a result, the Maintenance Unit of Education Zone I carried out the following works-

- remedial works concerning covering of cracks and spalled concrete in the pre-primary unit in August 2004;
- replacement of naco frames by timber structures;
- removal of spalled concrete in classrooms;
- repair works to block wall, the last three works being done in September 2004.

On 24 March 2005, a year later, Cyclone Hennie passed over the country and among other things caused a landslide in the region of Chitrakoot. A number of buildings in the area were affected by the cyclone.

A visit was effected at the school by officers of the MPI, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources and other Ministries on 25 March 2005.

The following measures were subsequently taken by my Ministry -
(a) The pre-primary pupils were transferred to Vallée des Prêtres

Government School on 28 March 2005.

(b) Filling of cracks throughout the school as well as repainting of the school building was done in April 2005, during the Easter vacation.

On its part, the Ministry of Environment effected cleaning of the drains inside the school yard as well as those in the vicinity of the school at the end of March 2005.

On 25 April 2005, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources requested the Ministry of Housing & Lands to identify a suitable plot of land in the Chitrakoot region for the construction of a new school. Two plots of land were identified by that Ministry on 18 May 2005. However, on 16 August 2005, the Ministry of Environment & NDU advised my Ministry not to proceed with the construction of a school in that area until the results of a geotechnical investigation it planned to carry out in the area. The first phase of the investigation, involving mainly the drilling of boreholes, started in September 2005 and ended in October 2005. The second phase, comprising the drilling of other boreholes and the installation of relevant instruments, started in February 2007 and is expected to be completed in September 2007. There will then be a monitoring exercise at least up to September 2008. This will be followed by a final study to determine any remedial works required for stabilisation of the area, tentatively up to the end of 2009.

With regard to the year 2006, heavy rains fell in the Chitrakoot region in February of that year. As a result, my Ministry made a request to the MPI on 06 March 2006 for structural assessment of the school building. On 22 March 2006, the structural report was submitted by the MPI.

Consequent upon one of the recommendations made in that report, consolidation measures on the defective suspended beams in Standard V and VI classrooms were effected on 16 March 2006.

Moreover, according to the other recommendation of the report, that the pupils be moved to a safer building in the near future, my Ministry evoked three options to move the pupils. However, neither the parents nor the staff agreed to those options. Consequently, I had a meeting with the PTA on 26 May 2006 where the two main decisions taken were -

(a) My Ministry would construct a light structure within the school premises to accommodate the whole school population.

(b) In the meantime, the pupils would be transferred to safe classrooms of the school. The transfer was actually completed on 05 June 2006.

With regard to the construction of the light structure, the request was made to the MPI on the same day. That Ministry floated tenders in December 2006 and January 2007, with closing date of 24 January 2007.

The lowest bid obtained as a result of that exercise was Rs16.3 m. while the estimates had been Rs10.7 m. This difference led to lengthy correspondence between the MPI and the CTB. Award of contract was finally approved by the CTB on 02 May 2007. The works are expected to start by the end of May 2007, to be completed by the end of October 2007.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many tenders were received?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know the number, but the procedures have now been completed by CTB. I believe they must have followed all the required procedures.

Mrs Juggoo: In view of the difference of Rs16.3 m. and the estimates that we expected of Rs10.3 m., would there be a change in the schedule of implementation?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have given the time frame. The works are expected to start end of May and will be completed in October 2007.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the results of the soil tests with regard to the land to be used for a new school will be made available by the year 2009?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the study is being carried out by the Ministry of Environment & NDU. I'll pass on the information to the Ministry concerned.

S. RAMUDHIN GOVT. SCHOOL – REPAIRS (08/05/07)

(No. B/280) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he is aware that the building and the yard of the Sooroojarsad Ramoodin Government School at Mont Ida is in a bad state and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any, indicating when.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 14 March 2006, my Ministry

received a written request from the PTA of the S. Ramudhin Government School for the replacement of naco frames at the school. Tender documents were prepared by mid-September 2006. Tenders were floated in October 2006 and evaluated in November 2006. However, only one bid was received and its value was more than the estimated value of works, which was of the order of Rs600 000.

As a result, my Ministry sought the advice of the CTB thereupon on 07 November 2006. The CTB replied that the problem lay outside its scope since the value of the bid obtained was below Rs1 m. Subsequently, my Ministry decided to go for a second tender exercise.

However, black metal sections, which are the basic materials for the manufacture of naco frames, became unavailable on the local market at the beginning of November 2006. So, the technicians of my Ministry had to liaise with the CTB and the MPI for a new set of specifications for the second tender exercise.

Meetings and correspondence between my Ministry and those two organisations on that issue lasted till the middle of January 2007.

Subsequently, the specifications recommended by the MPI were included in the tender documents for the second tender exercise. This was launched on 05 March 2007, with closing date of 27 March 2007. Evaluation was done on 02 April 2007. My Ministry is processing the issue with a view to awarding a contract, tentatively by mid-May 2007. Works may start by the first week of June 2007 and be completed by mid-September 2007.

Moreover, officers of my Ministry went to meet the PTA at the school on 23 August 2006. The latter told them of two other priority works at the school, namely external painting of the school building and construction of a metallic canopy. However, adequate funds were not available at that point in time for those projects.

Nonetheless, on 20 February 2007, my Ministry decided to embark upon those two projects with funds unutilised from other capital projects. A survey was effected in mid-March 2007. Scope of works are presently under preparation for the construction of the metallic canopy. It is expected that the start of the works would be around mid-August 2007, and the completion around the end of October 2007. As for the painting of the school, this would start by the beginning of June 2007 to be terminated by the beginning of August 2007.

Problems regarding the yard of the school were also highlighted during the meeting of 23 August 2006 between officers of my Ministry and the PTA, which I mentioned before. They concerned the rocky nature of the playground. As mentioned in the reply I made to PQ B/1329, derocking and levelling works will be carried out at the school in financial year 2007/2008.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understand the hon. Minister correctly, the exercise of replacing the nacos have been going on for the last 18 months and now we have to wait for another six months. May I ask the hon. Minister what can be done in order to ensure that these nacos are replaced and how can he assure us that there will be no further delay, at least, for the implementation of these nacos?

Mr Gokhool: I am very sensitive to the point being made by the hon. Member as regards delay. But the hon. Member should also know that my Ministry has to liaise with other Ministries, like the MPI and other agencies and also has to refer these projects to the CTB. So, I have no complete control on the duration of the project. We can commission the project, but when we take into account all the various complex and complicated procedures, I myself am very impatient about the delay it takes. I am very sympathetic to the point the hon. Member has raised, but this is the situation.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the technicians at his Ministry were not aware that contract below Rs1 m. does not fall within the purview of the CTB, and why, in the first place, was it sent there?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have an estimated value of Rs600,000. When the tenders were received, they were above. We cannot decide on our own, because there is an estimated value which is put. That's why we refer the matter for the advice of the CTB.

VALE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – EXTENSION WORKS(15/05/07)

(No. B/399) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that works for the extension of the Vale Government School which were started by the Development Works Corporation have stopped since a long time and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that are envisaged.

Reply: The extension of the Vale Government School comprises a toilet block, covered link and the upgrading of the football ground. This

contract was awarded to the DWC in August 2005 and works due for completion in July 2006 were excessively delayed.

Subsequent to the Government's decision to close the DWC, the following outstanding works -

- (i) internal and external rendering;
 - (ii) plumbing and electrical installation;
 - (iii) finishing works, such as tiling, painting; and
 - (iv) the upgrading of the football pitch
- were awarded to another contractor after a new tender exercise and will be completed in July 2007.

BELLE MARE – PRIMARY SCHOOL (29/05/07)

(No. B/534) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if it is proposed to construct a primary school at Belle Mare, indicating –

- (a) the number of school children residing at Belle Mare currently, attending school at Quatre Cocos and Mare La Chaux Government schools, and
- (b) if a school mapping exercise has been carried out in the region.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that the number of pupils residing at Belle Mare who are presently attending Quatre Cocos Government School and Mare La Chaux Government School is 149 and 73, respectively, a total of 222 pupils.

A new school there would, therefore, be one which would comprise only 6 classrooms, and only one stream, that is, one section for each of the six standards.

However, the establishment of such a one-stream school at this stage is not a priority for my Ministry, especially in the context, where we have to optimise the use of funds available to the Ministry.

Moreover, a new classroom block comprising six classrooms will be completed by the beginning of August 2007 at Quatre Cocos Government School. This additional infrastructural element will help to ease the problem of school access in the region.

Nonetheless, should there be need in the future for the construction of a primary school at Belle Mare and should additional funds be made available,

my Ministry will review the situation.

With regard to the issue of school mapping exercise, I am advised that there has been no recent request for the construction of a primary school at Belle Mare. Consequently, no school mapping exercise has been carried out for the area. However, now that the hon. Member has kindly indicated the need for such an exercise in the Belle Mare region, my Ministry will carry out a school mapping exercise with regard to that region.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking of two things. One is education for all and quality education, and providing school services where the children are, probably, should be one of the priorities. Can the Minister tell us what are the priorities for these 222 children attending school properly in their village, and whether this is not a priority?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not the only area where we have pupils going to school in another area, but we have made arrangements for facilities to be available to these pupils. As regards construction of new schools, it is a comprehensive exercise which is done for the whole of the Republic and then a decision is taken. Secondly, we have to take into account the availability of land, demographic factors and also the availability of funds.

It is a complex exercise, Mr Speaker, Sir, but as I said to the hon. Member, we will keep that request in view, if we are in a position to provide the funds and also include the school in the list of priorities.

Dr. Mungur: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know when the school mapping exercise will be conducted?

Mr Gokhool: The school mapping exercise is an ongoing exercise. But for the region of Belle Mare, I will request my officers to carry out a school mapping exercise.

**ERNEST FLORENT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – LAND LEASE,
ETC. (24/07/07)**

(No. B/843) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Ernest Florent Government School, he will state if he is aware of –

- (a) representations made regarding the deplorable state of the compound wall, and
- (b) requests made for

- (i) the landscaping of the school yard;
- (ii) the setting up of a children's playground, and
- (iii) the construction of three additional classrooms and, if so, where matters stand in each case.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been made aware of the bad state of the boundary block wall. In fact, a request was received from the Head Teacher on 13 July 2007 for the upgrading of the block wall.

Following a site visit effected by the technical team of my Ministry on 20 July 2007, it has been observed that though the wall is relatively old, it is generally in a good structural condition. However, a stretch of around 10 m of the wall has been affected by a '*badamier*' tree located near the wall.

The Zonal Directorate of my Ministry is presently making arrangements for the felling of the tree. It is expected that it would be removed around mid August 2007. I am advised that the immediate danger to the stability of the wall lies in the presence of the roots of the '*badamier*' tree. Hence, the felling down of the tree will remove the immediate problem to the structure of the wall. Subsequently, MPI will carry out rehabilitation works over a stretch of around 20 m of the wall during this financial year.

With regard to part (b) of the question for the upgrading of the school yard and provision of recreational facilities for the pupils, owing to the rocky nature of a major part of the school yard, my Ministry has requested the MPI to carry out comprehensive upgrading of the yard. In the meantime, my Ministry has written to the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit for landscaping works at the school. These works will not only embellish the school environment, but will also enhance safety of the pupils in the yard.

Concerning the setting up of a children's playground at the school, this can only be effected after MPI has carried out the major upgrading of the school yard I mentioned earlier. The Pre-School Trust Fund has been requested to do the needful.

As concerns the additional classrooms, my Ministry did receive a request on 05 May 2006 for the construction of three classrooms which is a one-stream school, with some 237 pupils and a pupil-teacher ratio of around 1:35. However, owing to more urgent priorities in the Zone, the request could not be satisfied up to now. It will be entertained during this financial year.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what has been the reply from the Ministry of Environment?

Mr Gokhool: I have to say to the hon. Member that it takes some time. I am myself concerned about it and I'll see to it that matters are expedited.

Mr Bundhoo: May I also ask the hon. Minister what has been the outcome, if any, of any visit from the technicians of the MPI?

Mr Gokhool: Normally, the first visits are carried out by the technical section of my Ministry, which has been done. If there is need for a joint visit between technicians of my Ministry and MPI, this can be looked into.

Mr Bundhoo: May I, Mr Speaker, Sir, ask the hon. Minister to explain why there is no need for three additional classrooms? I cannot understand that properly.

Mr Gokhool: We have to establish the need in terms of whether the classrooms are overcrowded. I said that the pupil-teacher ratio is 1:35 and the norm is 1:40. This is the situation at present.

Mr Bundhoo: May I ask the hon. Minister if he will consider the possibility of having a meeting at the school with the PTA and other stakeholders at the Ernest Florent Government School?

Mr Gokhool: I have in mind to visit schools in that constituency. I had informed earlier I will include the visit to the school in the plan of visit for the constituency.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister if two weeks ago there was a strike at the school and the reasons thereof? Could the Minister enlighten me?

Mr Gokhool: It depends on what you mean by strike. I have not heard of any strike at the school.

Mr Guinness: I think my good friend, hon. Bundhoo, can confirm that there was a strike at the school. I see it very strange that the Minister does not know that there was a strike at the school.

Mr Gokhool: In Mauritius, if a couple of parents comes in front of the school, it is also qualified as a strike.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the Minister since when the criteria of a pupil teacher ratio 1:40 exist in our schools?

Mr Gokhool: It has been there for quite a long time. In effect, we will have to move towards a lower pupil-teacher ratio. But this has been there during the last Government. It is not something new that I had created.

Mr Guinness: It has been there, but it is not official. The hon. Minister said officially it has to be 1:40.

Mr Gokhool: This is the norm which is used.

**RENGANADEN SEENEVASSEN GOVT. SCHOOL, CASSIS –
FOOTBALL PITCH – LOCAL TEAMS (31/07/07)**

(No. B/939) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the football pitch of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School at Cassis, he will state if it will be placed at the disposal of the local teams and, if so, the conditions that will be attached thereto.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that any local team wishing to make use of the football pitch of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Government School should first apply to the Head Teacher with the relevant details. The latter will then consult the PTA and Zonal Directorate before arriving at a decision after having considered the merits of the request and the availability of the pitch.

Should the request be agreed to, the Head Teacher will send a letter of authorisation to the team, detailing the conditions for the use of the facility. I am tabling a copy of the conditions.

Those conditions are primarily to ensure the integrity of the pitch as well as the rest of the school premises while allowing the local community to benefit from the use of the pitch.

I need to point out that additionally schools have been requested to carefully assess the security aspects before making any decision on applications, especially in view of the numerous thefts that have occurred in our schools of late.

PTA, CHITRAKOOT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL/

PRIME MINISTER – MEETING (06/11/07)

(No. B/1043) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will state if he has had a meeting with the Parents Teachers. Association of the Chitrakoot Government School and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

L'AVENIR, ST. PIERRE – MOHUNLALL MOHIT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL (06/11/07)

(No. A/38) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resource whether he is aware if the classes for the pre-primary school children of L.Avenir, St. Pierre, are run in one of the classrooms of the primary school thereat and, if so, will he consider the advisability of having a pre-primary complex constructed at the Mohunlall Mohit Government School.

Reply: I am aware that the pre-primary school operated by the Pre- School Trust Fund is housed in one of the classrooms of the Mohunlall Mohit Government School. This is not an unusual situation. In fact, 90 out of the 179 pre-primary schools operating under the aegis of the Pre-School Trust Fund are housed in primary school classrooms and not purposely built pre- primary schools.

The classroom housing the pre-primary school at the Mohunlall Mohit Government School is of an area of 49 sq. mts and there are only 30 pupils in a pre-school setting in the class.

This is in accordance with the prescribed norms for pre-primary schools.

The Ministry does not propose to construct a pre-primary complex at the Mohunlall Mohit Government School for the following reasons, namely - the number of classrooms is sufficient to cater for both the pre primary unit and the primary school; part of the school premises is liable to be waterlogged during heavy rainfall; it will not be cost effective as there is no high and additional demand for pre primary seats can be met by the 3 private pre -primary schools which have the capacity to accommodate children of other pre primary going age of the locality, and it is the policy of Government to encourage the private sector to partake in the delivery of pre-primary education.

**PTA/CHITRAKOOT GOVT. SCHOOL/PRIME MINISTER – MEETING
(20/11/07)**

(No. B/1105) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, he will state if he has had a meeting with the parents of the students attending the Chitrakoot Government School and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am replying to Parliamentary Questions B/1105, B/1143 and B/1173 together as they relate to the same issue.
The reply is in the affirmative.

I indeed received a group of parents of the pupils of the Chitrakoot Government School in my office on 15 November 2007.
During the meeting, I explained to them that the safety and security of the pupils and teachers of the school have been the main concern of the Government ever since the structural safety of the school was put into question by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the engineers of the National Development Unit.

I also emphasized on the fact that the Government is very much conscious of the distress and anxiety that is associated with the shifting of school. Government therefore wanted to spare the pupils and parents the trauma of moving to the new school.

Following the discussions with the parents, the engineers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the National Development Unit and GIBBS (Mauritius) Ltd and a reassessment of the situation, it has now been decided that :

- (a) the pupils of Chitrakoot Government School would not be transferred to another school;
- (b) as a temporary measure, the existing building would be repaired to enable classes to resume in January 2008; and
- (c) a plot of land outside the risk zone would be identified for the construction of a new school which would be operational in 2009.

Moreover, a special committee, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit, has been set up to prepare the implementation plan for the rehabilitation of the existing school complex.

The repair works will be executed by a team of technicians and workers drawn from several Ministries.

The scope of work would comprise -
(a) restoration of building including structural repairs, finishing and

flooring, openings, plumbing and electrical works; and
(b) external works including tarmac, drains, boundary wall, landscaping and other minor works.

I can inform the House that rehabilitation works have already started yesterday and is expected to be completed by end of December 2007, weather permitting.

The NDU will continue to operate the monitoring system in place for the identification and measurement of any landslide and will liaise with the Cyclone and Natural Disaster Committee in my Office.

The special committee will meet once weekly to monitor work progress until completion.

CHITRAKOOT – SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION – CONSULTANT REPORT (20/11/07)

(No. B/1143) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if Government has taken the decision not to proceed with the construction of a school at Chitrakoot, Vallée des Prêtres, on the basis of the final report submitted by the consultant appointed to look into the landslide problem.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1105)

CHITRAKOOT – SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION – REPRESENTATIONS (20/11/07)

(No. B/1173) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he has received any representation for the construction of a new school at Chitrakoot, Vallée des Prêtres.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1105)

YEAR 2008

VERDUN PRIMARY SCHOOL – BACKYARD – UPGRADING (13/05/08)

(No. B/466) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Verdun Primary School, he will state if –

- (a) he is aware that the state of the backyard thereof constitutes health hazards and risks of accident, and if so, will he consider the advisability of liaising with the competent authorities for it to be upgraded, and
- (b) adequate amenities will be provided thereat for the school children.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am indeed aware of the existence of a plot of bare land at the back of Verdun G.S which is unlevelled and which may constitute health hazards and risks of accident if not properly maintained.

I am advised that in the past the land has been cleared several times, and action has been initiated for its proper regular maintenance.

With a view to carrying out comprehensive and permanent upgrading works on that plot of land, a visit was effected by officers of my Ministry on Thursday 08 May 2008.

Following a letter from the hon. Member himself dated 25 April 2008 and the subsequent above-mentioned site visit, the Moka/Flacq District Council was requested on 08 May 2008 to consider carrying out the necessary upgrading, levelling and fencing works on that plot of bare land. It is expected that those works may begin around the end of August 2008 to be completed by December 2008.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the school has basic amenities such as drinking water, sanitation facilities, concrete benches, a football playground and items of play equipment. However, some of these items need to be upgraded and the Pre-school

Trust Fund has been requested to attend to the issue.

L'AVENIR PRIMARY SCHOOL – CONSTRUCTION WORKS (13/05/08)

(No. B/467) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the L'Avenir Primary School, he will state if he is aware that construction works thereat have stopped after the completion of the fencing of the yard, leaving the landscaping of the yard incomplete and, if so, will he use his good offices to see that the works be completed and that the tarmac be tarred.

Mr Gokhool: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the construction works at the Mohunlall Mohit Government School at L'Avenir Government School pertained to the construction of a blockwall only. The construction of the blockwall

was carried out by the District Contractor of MPI from 14 May 2007 and completed on 13 September 2007. The question that construction works have stopped does not arise.

At the end of the construction of the blockwall, it was reported that the Contractor had effected the clearing of the site to the satisfaction of our Technical Officer at the time of handing over, as well as that of the District Engineer of the MPI.

As far as landscaping is concerned, I am informed that following recent heavy rainfall the grass and bushes in the backyard of the school have grown tall and will have to be trimmed. This will be undertaken by the end of the week.

As regards the tarmac, although it was judged to be in a relatively good condition at the time of the blockwall construction works, its condition has indeed been reported to have deteriorated somewhat since the heavy rainfall. As a result, my Ministry has written to the MPI for tarring of the tarmac. It is expected that the works would start by the end of June 2008 and be completed by the beginning of August 2008.

**DR O. BEAUGEARD GOVERNMENT SCHOOL
– RENOVATION WORKS (27/05/08)**

(No. B/580) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands)

asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the renovation and extension works which were to be carried out at the Dr. Onesipho Beugeard Government School, Edith Cavell Street, Port Louis, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Environment and National Development Unit (Mr A.

Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Following consultations with the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Ministry and Education & Human Resources, the National Heritage Fund and this Ministry, it has been decided to rehabilitate the old building.

The new design concept, incorporating recommendations made by the National Heritage Fund, has already been finalised with the Ministry of Education & Human Resources.

The National Heritage Fund has recommended that building materials from the old building which have been removed by the previous contractor be re-used.

On the strength of the letter dated 11 May 2007 from the National Heritage Fund, the following had been considered in the renovation and refurbishment of the building -

- (a) reutilization of building elements coming from the demolition so as to reconstitute the roof to its original state, in particular the use of roof singles;
- (b) as far as possible to re-utilize elements from the demolition building, for example, windows and door openings, elements for the wooden floor and wooden staircase, etc;
- (c) re-utilization of existing carved iron balusters for verandahs and staircase;

- (d) provision for entrance floor in grey and white marble;
- (e) provision for peripheric verandah at first floor with iron style columns as per original building architecture;

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- (f) restoration of the demolished building to its original urban colonial architecture, and
- (g) restoration of existing boundary wall.

The Ministry of Education & Human Resources has already approved the preliminary drawings.

I am informed that the National Heritage Fund Board has, on 16 May 2008, approved the plans for the project. However, the decision of the Board has not yet been communicated to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. The Ministry will incorporate the comments of the National Heritage Trust Fund Board in the design which will then be submitted to the Building Plans Committee for approval. Once the plans are approved, tender documents will be prepared for approval at the Central Procurement Board and the launching of tender by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister state whether Edith Cavell Govt. School is a national heritage building?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in July 2003, request was made by the then Minister to have that building declassified. Unfortunately, that couldn't be done and, if I am not mistaken, the matter went to the Court, and there has been a settlement between the two groups.

Mr Guimbeau: Is it still a national heritage building.

Mr Bachoo: I don't have the information, but I believe it to be so. That is the reason why all conditions were imposed before the refurbishment of the building.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state whether the National Heritage Trust has done a complete inventory of all the components of the whole building?

Mr Bachoo: That must have been the reason why they have imposed so many conditions. They might have gone for the details.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to table the documents concerning the house of Dr. Onesipho Beugeard.

HIGHLANDS GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – DRAIN (17/06/08)

(No. B/699) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Environment & National Development Unit whether, in regard to the project for the extension of a drain near the Highlands Government School, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the project for the construction of drain near Highlands Government School was entrusted to Road Development Authority on November 2007 with funding by the National Development Unit of my Ministry.

The most cost effective solution to the problem of flooding in that region is to have part of the drain cross private properties to finally discharge storm water run off to the nearby river. The project has been delayed because authorization was not obtained by one landowner.

I am advised that the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix is negotiating with another property owner in order to obtain way leave. It is expected that clearance from the property owner would be conveyed soon.

Once necessary way leave would be granted measures would be taken to embark on the drain scheme.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I just inform the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is too much noise in the House, please!

Dr. Hawoldar: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, but may I inform him at the same time that the property owner himself has backed out. May I ask him whether he can look into the case? With all the experts that he has at the Ministry, the consultants, the engineers, the architects and so on, could they not devise another system where a drain could be built to get rid of this water? Children are having their shoes and socks wet every morning and this has been going on for years, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have myself been fighting for this project for the last three years.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, unfortunately, we have got the problem of way leave. The hon. Member is aware that we have made every effort in order to get the persons to accept. The best solution will be after the Budget, I think there must be a site visit conducted by all the stakeholders in the presence of all the Members concerned.

(Interruptions)

I don't want the MBC; we don't utilise the MBC. We will go on the spot and try to find what is the best solution to this problem.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it has been envisaged to place in that particular area some sort of absorption drain?

Mr Bachoo: Absorption drain will not serve any purpose because that is a very dangerous place and it is prone to floods. Absorption drain won't be of any help.

Mr Speaker: Let me give hon. Soodhun a chance to ask questions.

Mr Soodhun: Thank you, Sir. This issue is very delicate. The drain work has stopped near the mosque and the rest you know very well, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I am suggesting to the hon. Minister is to come with a solution, even we can do it in the middle of the road which has been done in the past.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us are concerned with this issue and I can assure the hon. Member that we are looking into it, because Dr. Hawoldar has been on that spot many times along with technicians.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bachoo: This question has been asked by the hon. Member and, of course, I am going to listen to what he has said. I can assure him that I will do the needful.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has said that he is going to do the needful.

Pass -
29/7/08 (90)

DR/D26/W04/01

**QUEEN VICTORIA ROMAN CATHOLIC AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL - FENCES**

(No. B/1015) **Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the fences surrounding the Queen Victoria Roman Catholic Aided Primary School, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I should like to kindly point out to the hon. Member that the infrastructural developments connected with Roman Catholic Aided School buildings is the responsibility of the Bureau of Catholic Education and the schools themselves.

The hon. Member would also wish to be informed that there exists a framework for cooperation between the Ministry on one side and the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority on the other with regard to infrastructural issues. An item exists in the Budget of my Ministry for the provision of a total of Rs4 m. each year to the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority for infrastructural works considered as priorities for them. My Ministry contributes in the proportion of 2/3 while those organisations contribute 1/3 of the costs.

In the context of that cooperation, I am informed that comprehensive extension/renovation works were carried out at Queen Victoria RCA primary school in 2004. I am further informed that within those works, the upgrading of the fencing of the school was also attended to. However, the fencing surrounding of the Queen Victoria RCA school is old and obviously needs to be replaced.

I am informed that actions have already been initiated by the Bureau Catholic Education to have the present fencing replaced by a more appropriate and solid one. The perimeter of the school yard is around 300 metres. The works are expected to start by next year.

**SCHOOLS – SECURITY AND CLEANING SERVICES –
CONTRACT (05/08/08)**

(No. B/1061) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the contract awarded for the security and cleaning services in the schools, he will state –

(a) the names of the companies thereof;

- (b) the value thereof, indicating if performance bonds were required;
- (c) if there has been any late payment by his Ministry, and
- (d) if he has received any complaint from the workers of the companies and, if so, the nature thereof.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that –

- (a) Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd was awarded the contract for providing “Watch and Security Services” in schools and other institutions of my Ministry with effect from 01 November 2006;
- (b) Mauriclean Ltd, Tropical Cleaning Co. Ltd, Silver Clean Co. Ltd and Special Cleaning Services were awarded the contract for providing cleaning services in schools and other institutions from 01 October 2005 to 30 September 2007. These contracts were renewed on the same terms and conditions on a month-to-month basis on approval of the Central Procurement Board pending award of a new contract. However, as provided in the contract conditions, in some schools where performance was not satisfactory, Best Super Clean & Moolchand Cleaning Services were awarded a short-term contract to provide their services pending award of a new contract following a fresh exercise.

Regarding part (b) of the question –

- (i) Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd was awarded the contract for the monthly sum of Rs1,914,658 with effect from 01 November 2006, for renewal periods of six months up to a maximum period of two years upon satisfactory performance.
- (ii) (a) Mauriclean Ltd was awarded the contract for cleaning of toilets and the contract value is Rs11,845,508.20 for 2 years.
- (b) Tropical Cleaning Co. Ltd was awarded the contract for cleaning of premises and the contract value is Rs117,990 for 2 years.
- (c) Silver Clean Co. Ltd was awarded the contract for cleaning of toilets and the contract value is Rs284,050 for 2 years.
- (d) Special Cleaning Services Ltd was awarded the contract for cleaning of toilets and premises and the contract value is Rs2,864,098 for toilets and Rs6,497,088 for premises

for 2 years.

(e) Best Super Clean was awarded the contract for cleaning of toilets and premises for period 08.01.07 to 30.09.07 and the contract value is Rs60,210.00 for R. Ramguttu Hindu Aided School and Rs72,375.00 for Colonel Maingard Prevoc SSS. As from 01 October 2007, the contract is on a month-to-month basis.

(f) Moolchand Cleaning Services was awarded the contract for cleaning of premises for period 10.05.07 to 30.09.07 and the contract value is Rs127,454.50. As from 01 October 2007 the contract is on a month-to-month basis.

(iii) In order to guarantee due performance of their obligations by contractors, performance bonds were required for all contracts.

However, for a month-to-month contract, the same terms and conditions are applied. Liquidated damages are thus claimed for non performance of contractual service.

Regarding part (c) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that as far as cleaning services are concerned, there has been no late payment. However, regarding the contract for security services, we have been facing a lot of problems recently with the company. I am given to understand that there was a dispute between Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd and CIM Finance Ltd, a financial institution with whom Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd was working. On 26 January 2007, the company requested that all payments be credited to CIM Finance Ltd by direct banking at the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Cooperation, Port Louis. Since it was understood that CIM Finance Ltd was a financial institution and the payment due to Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd could be credited to CIM Finance as requested, Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd was informed on 12 February 2007 that "the Ministry is agreeable to its request but does not in any way contract any liability in issuing this letter." Payment was made to CIM account as from 27 February 2007.

On 22 June 2007, the Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd requested my Ministry to forward all payment directly to its account at Baroda Bank Ltd, Curepipe. Payment was consequently credited to Baroda Bank Ltd on 29 June 2007. On 31 July 2007, the company wrote once again to request the Ministry to remit directly to the account of CIM Finance Ltd, at Hong Kong Bank, the proceeds of all its invoices. Payment was accordingly made to the CIM Finance on 13 October 2007.

On 24 October 2007, the Keep pace Security Guard Ltd once again

requested my Ministry to forward, with immediate effect, all their payments directly to their bank as they were not working with CIM Finance Ltd. My Ministry agreed to such request on the condition that we would not be held responsible for any liability or settlements of any claim which may arise either from CIM Finance Ltd or any other banking or other institution with which Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd may have dealings/agreements, and that settlement of any such claim/s would be its direct responsibility.

On 04 December 2007 and 31 January 2008, CIM Finance Ltd claimed that payment for services provided by Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd should be made payable to it in view of a factoring agreement signed between them. On 11 February 2008, the Solicitor of Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd wrote to say that his client has retained his services to settle matter with CIM Finance Ltd and that needful will be done in due course and Ministry should pay to Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd as service provider. On 30 April 2008, Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd requested the Ministry to withhold payment pending a written confirmation from CIM Finance's legal adviser of an agreement reached between the two companies.

No copy of the agreement signed between the two companies in April 2006, whereby CIM Finance Ltd claimed payment, was submitted to the Ministry nor was any copy sought by the Ministry, as we dealt with only one contractor and paid to accounts specified in the letter.

In the meantime, on 03 June 2008, CIM Finance Ltd has served a *mise en demeure* on my Ministry to claim payment of Rs9,073,323.32 for services provided by Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd. This amount was already settled by my Ministry, part to Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd as per contractor's request. Consequently, payment in respect of bills for period 2008 onwards are still outstanding, since my Ministry is not in a position to effect payments to two claimants. Furthermore, Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd has ceased to provide its services to our schools as from 12 June 2008 on financial grounds. Invoices for the months of May and June 2008 have still not been obtained. Legal advice is actually being sought to finalise the payments due to the companies

Regarding part (d) of the question, I have been informed that some employees of Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd have registered a complaint with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment that they have not been paid their salaries for part of March, April, May and up to 11 June 2008. Even though I sympathise heartily with these workers, it is the responsibility of the security company to pay its employees. I understand

that the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment is taking up the issue regarding the non payment of salaries to workers

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order not to have any recurrence of such an embarrassing situation, my Ministry will see to it that in all its new tendering exercise, a new clause will be inserted wherein bidders are informed that the Ministry will not be liable to any third party with whom the selected service provider may have a contract, whether signed before, during or after the award of contract for providing services to my Ministry.

In addition, my Ministry is now having recourse, on a pilot basis, to have alarm system installed in high risk schools.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, like we say in Creole, in the meantime, '*cabri pé manz feyaz*'. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a case where workers have not received their salary for the past four months, because of arrangements that have been made between Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd and the Ministry of Education. We understand that when workers have not been paid their salary, they have not reported to their work, which means that the work has not been performed correctly. The Minister is saying that the contract is ongoing. May I know whether the hon. Minister is satisfied with the performance of that security contractor?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, it's a multi-barrelled question. Let me clear one point. The contract is between my Ministry and Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd. Keep Pace has entered into arrangement with CIM Finance. At times, it has given instruction that we pay to CIM, which we have done. Then, Keep Pace has withdrawn that instruction. The problem is not really between my Ministry and Keep Pace. They have to sort out their problems, between Keep Pace and CIM, and then the Ministry will have no problem in settling the amount. Furthermore, there is a *mise en demeure*.

Once the *mise en demeure* is there, we cannot settle the accounts. The fact is that the matter has been referred to the Ministry of Labour & Industrial Relations. It is not a simple matter. It is quite complicated, and we have to let the law take its course.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether those arrangements were made before or after the contract was awarded?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, these arrangements were made before the contract was awarded.

CHITRACOOT – LANDSLIDE – SPONSORED LOAN SCHEME (05/08/08)

(No. B/1072) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the inhabitants of Chitracoot who were given plots of land after the landslide thereat, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Housing Corporation, information as to if consideration will be given for an increase in the amount of the loan granted to them for the purpose of building houses.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Dr. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, some families residing in the region of Chitracoot have been victims of landslide in that region and some residential units were damaged. In fact, specific representations were made by 13 families for concessionary loan facilities from the Mauritius Housing Company under the Government Sponsored Loan Scheme to enable them build another housing unit on land leased to them at a different region namely, le Hochet, Terre Rouge.

The cases of these families were examined by the MHC, and I was informed that none of these families could benefit as per the eligibility criteria set under the Government Sponsored Loan since, amongst others, their monthly family income exceeded the income threshold requirement of Rs8,500.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a Government, we could not be insensitive to the plight of these families for assistance. We exceptionally relaxed the eligibility criteria to enable these families benefit from the concessionary loans under the Government Loan Scheme.

I am advised that out of the 13 families, only four applied for the Government Sponsored loan and were granted the maximum loan of Rs 325,000 at a fixed rate of 6.5% per annum, whereas one who had applied for a smaller amount was granted the same. The remaining eight families, I am told, have not so far applied.

Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as loans above the maximum amount of Rs 325,000 fixed under GSL are concerned, MHC is prepared to advance additional loans at an interest rate currently applicable to its normal loan subject to the repayment capacity of the families concerned.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that some of the

people among the 13 families are approximately 60 years old, that's why they could not apply for the loan? Some are getting their land transferred on their children's name and they would, therefore, request that the loan of Rs325,000 be given on a 6% basis. They were requesting that the sum of Rs25,000 was for documentation and only Rs300,000 remain for building the house. After the increase of price in building materials and so forth, they are requesting for Rs500,000 rather than Rs300,000.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I intervened to waive the criteria with respect to eligibility and what the hon. lady is asking is that we waive another criteria with respect to the ceiling. I understand that this might cause some problems, but I will request the MHC, as a measure of exception, to look into it.

**MOHABEER BURRENCHOBAY PRIMARY SCHOOL –
BLOCKWALL – CONSTRUCTION (12/08/08)**

(No. B/1107) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the widening of the Rishi Dayanand Road, along the wall of the Mohabeer Burrenchobay Primary School, in Plaine Magnien, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to answer this question. Mr Speaker, Sir, in January 2008, the Ministry of Education decided to erect a boundary blockwall along the Mohabeer Burrenchobay Primary School. We wrote to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for delimitation of the land so as to enable us to construct the blockwall. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and Grand Port Savanne District Council were subsequently written to for the prescribed clearances. The latter requested that a set-back of 1.5 metres be observed for the new wall.

In the meantime, a request was received in March 2008 from an inhabitant of Plaine Magnien for the widening of the Rishi Dayanand Road. Following the above request, the Ministry of Education wrote to the Grand Port Savanne District Council for the widening of the road in front of the school.

The District Council replied on 08 August 2008 that it is agreeable to undertake the road widening works once the new blockwall is put up, with the requisite set-back.

All the clearances for the blockwall have now been obtained by the Ministry of Education to enable its construction. It is expected that the works may start in September 2008 and to be completed in November 2008. As agreed, the District Council will then effect the widening of the road.

**QUEEN VICTORIA ROMAN CATHOLIC AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL – FENCES (29/07/08)**

(No. B/1015) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the bad state of the fences surrounding the Queen Victoria Roman Catholic Aided Primary School, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I should like to kindly point out to the hon. Member that the infrastructural developments connected with Roman Catholic Aided School buildings is the responsibility of the Bureau of Catholic Education and the schools themselves.

The hon. Member would also wish to be informed that there exists a framework for cooperation between the Ministry on one side and the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority on the other with regard to infrastructural issues. An item exists in the Budget of my Ministry for the provision of a total of Rs4 m. each year to the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Hindu Education Authority for infrastructural works considered as priorities for them. My Ministry contributes in the proportion of 2/3 while those organisations contribute 1/3 of the costs.

In the context of that cooperation, I am informed that comprehensive extension/renovation works were carried out at Queen Victoria RCA primary school in 2004. I am further informed that within those works, the upgrading of the fencing of the school was also attended to. However, the fencing surrounding of the Queen Victoria RCA school is old and obviously needs to be replaced.

I am informed that actions have already been initiated by the Bureau Catholic Education to have the present fencing replaced by a more appropriate and solid one. The perimeter of the school yard is around 300 metres. The works are expected to start by next year.