

SECONDARY

INFRASTRUCTURE

YEAR 2001

**MARCEL CABON STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – WALL – REPAIR
(17/04/01)**

(No. B/215) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state what action he proposes to take for the repair of the wall behind Marcel Cabon State Secondary School, which was damaged following flooding of the school yard in December last.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, immediately after it was reported that the wall behind Marcel Cabon State Secondary School had been damaged, my Ministry assessed the extent and nature of work that was required. Thereafter, tenders have been floated, and a contract has been awarded for the erection of a reinforced concrete retaining wall of 28.5 m in length in replacement of the damaged wall. The contract period is six weeks.

Works have already started last week, with the demolition of the damaged boundary block wall and construction of the new wall should be completed in six weeks' time.

10/7/01 (2)

D20/P11/mt/2

SCHOOLS - CONSTRUCTION - TENDERS

(No. B/509) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a State secondary school in Plaine Magnien, Grand' Baie, Surinam, Beau Bassin, Lallmatie and Bel Air, he will, in respect of each school -

- (a) give the date/s the tenders were launched, and
- (b) state when construction works were completed and the costs thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ. No. B/453 and to add that every project implemented by a responsible Government requires a pre-tender planning from the very inception so that taxpayers' money is not wasted down the drain. This has been the case with the project for the construction of State schools under the able leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth in the years prior to 1995.

Following the signature of a loan Agreement with the World Bank, Government decided in May 1995 that five new State secondary schools be constructed at Plaine Magnien, Grand Baie, Lallmatie, Beau Bassin and Phoenix through the then Ministry of Works. The construction of a sixth school at Chemin Grenier could not materialise because of non-availability of an appropriate site. With regard to the five schools, a pre-qualification exercise was carried out through the Central Tender Board at the end of August 1995 after the approval of the preliminary design in mid-July 1995. All design and preparatory works were undertaken by the technicians of the Ministry in record time and the Government had decided to remunerate them for their extra efforts. However, I would hasten to add that the Government which took over did not honour the commitment.

I have to inform the House that the project was implemented in two phases. The Building Plans Committee for Phase I was held on 02 June 1995, and the project was approved by the then Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth on 08 June 1995. The construction of the schools started in September 1995 and was completed by the end of December 1995.

D20/P11/mt/3

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As for Phase II of the project, the plans were approved at the Building Plans Committee held on 06 December 1995, and the project value was estimated at Rs267 m. I am tabling a copy of the Minutes of Proceedings of the Building Plans Committee held on 06 December 1995 for the information of the House.

Though the Building Plans Committee had already approved the construction of the second phase in the beginning of December 1995, the tenders for the schools at Plaine Magnien, Grand Baie and Lallmatie were launched on 23 April 1996 and that at Beau Bassin on 15 May 1996. The construction was completed on 16 February 1998, 24 November 1997, 15 November 1997 and 07 April 1998 respectively. It should be noted that the total contract value, which was estimated at Rs267 m. in 1995, had increased to Rs307,521,666 in 1998.

As far as the school at Surinam is concerned, the project was originally meant to be implemented at Chemin Grenier, but owing to lack of a suitable site it was shifted to Surinam. The construction of Phase I of this school was already approved at the Building Plans Committee held on 02 June 1995. As regards the State secondary school at Bel Air, it was only in February 1997, i.e. two years later, that the previous Government started the implementation despite the fact that the loan for construction had already been negotiated and Commitment fees were being paid to the World Bank.

The tenders for these two schools, that is, Surinam and Bel Air were launched on 27 February 1997 and the projects were completed on 31 December 1998 for the total sum of Rs133,659,941.43

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have been replaced in schools by substitutes made, for example, from ceramic.

I am therefore informed that there should now be no pieces of equipment or material containing asbestos still in use in our laboratories.

A final word concerning Rodrigues. I am advised that in Rodrigues, a survey was conducted in early 1999, and it was found that there was the presence of asbestos in one primary school viz St Esprit RCA School out of the 13 existing schools. In December 1999, all the asbestos sheets were removed from that building.

Further, no presence of asbestos has been detected in REDCO colleges.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Sir, may I ask the Minister how is the asbestos disposed of? What happen to them when they are removed from the walls or ceilings?

Mr Obeegadoo: I must confess, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I do not have the exact information in my possession now as to the means of disposal of asbestos. We shall convey the information to the Member.

Dr. Beebeejaun: It is very important because the danger is being shifted from one place to another. Will the Minister check whether in Europe these are buried? The asbestos removed is buried and if it is left in the nature it is making the problem worse.

Mr Obeegadoo: We'll liaise with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to ascertain the exact means of disposal and we shall inform the Member accordingly.

D28/IF/P09/1

SCHOOL BUILDINGS - ASBESTOS

(No. B/744) **Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member of Port Louis South and Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether a survey is being carried out with a view to ascertaining the presence of asbestos in school buildings, both in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues and, if so, will he state the results thereof and the preventive measures he intends to adopt.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, Government, fully conscious of the danger posed by the asbestos threat, has initiated action to commission a survey of houses, Government buildings and offices built in the early 1960s with material containing asbestos to assess the risk they represent to occupiers.

As regards the educational field, at present, whenever my Ministry requests the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to carry out renovation works in our schools, the latter Ministry replaces any asbestos sheet or other item made of asbestos found. That will be the case, for instance, at Royal College Curepipe where major renovation works are about to begin; and this will continue to be the case until all traces of asbestos are removed from our school infrastructure.

Since around 1993, all the construction works relating to our school infrastructure are in reinforced concrete, so that no false roofing is effected. Hence, asbestos has not been involved in new construction works ever since that date.

The hon. Member might further be interested to learn that after identification of primary schools where there were existing false ceilings with asbestos elements in 1996 and 1997 a contract was awarded for replacement and disposal of asbestos sheets in 12 primary schools.

Further since 1998, a campaign has been launched at my Ministry to eliminate the presence of asbestos from science laboratories in schools. Asbestos was a widely used heat insulator in these laboratories in such items as pipe clays, wire-gauze elements, asbestos sheets and mats. These items

YEAR 2002

GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CONSTRUCTION – BUDGETARY PROVISIONS (02/04/02)

(No. B/89) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Rivière du Rempart & Piton) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to budgetary provisions for this financial year for the construction of Government secondary schools, he will state-

- (a) the sum earmarked;
- (b) the stages reached in the construction works; and
- (c) the amount spent to date.

Reply: The answer is as follows:-

(a) For the financial year 2001/2002, the sum earmarked for the construction of Government secondary schools in mainland Mauritius is R 1 billion. As regards Rodrigues, I am informed that the sum earmarked is R 41.8 m.

(b) The information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

(c) In respect of mainland Mauritius, the amount spent to date is R 108.6 m. and as regards Rodrigues, I am informed that the amount spent to date is R 7.2 m.

Given the magnitude and particular nature of school infrastructural development works, it is all too normal and understandable that disbursements should be very slow in the first semester of the financial year, catching up thereafter. It is to be kept in mind that disbursements are linked to progression of actual construction whereas same comes only the end of a long and complex process involving, in turn, identification and acquisition of land, surveying of sites acquired and soil tests, preparation of structural and architectural specifications and actual tendering procedures. Even after award of a contract, the size and timing of disbursements are determined by the schedule of payments particular to each construction contract. Hence, as actual construction works get under way, the quantum of disbursements, of course, do pick up.

As explained on many occasions, construction works are being phased in such a manner that all our new State secondary schools and Form VI colleges will be in a

position to admit students as planned in 2003. Progress is being closely monitored in monthly meetings chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and weekly meetings chaired by the Minister of Public Infrastructure.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Deputy Prime Minister, my colleague Ministers responsible for Public Infrastructure and Housing & Lands, as well as their staff and that of the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research, for their participation in commitment and dedication to the implementation of what is an unprecedented harnessing of the State's resources to redefine the educational landscape of our country.

19 June, 2002
202 (5)

D13/W01/mt/1

Debate No. 13 of 04.06.02

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

LA TOUR KOENIG - STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS (GIRLS) - EXTENSION

(No. B/395) Mr J. C. Barbier (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if his Ministry has any project for the extension of the State Secondary School of La Tour Koenig and, if so, will he provide the House with all the details thereof.

Reply: The extension works at La Tour Koenig State Secondary School (Girls) have already been effected. The contract was awarded to the Development Works Corporation on 06 April 2001.

The scope of works of the project comprised a new classroom block of 12 classrooms on three levels and a new toilet block. Works started on 20 April 2001 and was completed on 10 January 2002. The building was handed over on 17 May 2002.

However, there are still some minor outstanding works relating to water proofing of the roof which are being completed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping.

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CA/D27/P09/3

**STATE-OWNED COLLEGES/SCHOOLS – SPORTS FACILITIES
TO LOCAL INHABITANTS**

(No. B/516) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for **Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac**) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether his Ministry proposes to make available in the near future the sports facilities in State-owned colleges and schools to inhabitants.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as the hon. Member is well aware by now, the policy of the Government is to fully integrate schools within their respective local communities, by placing as many school facilities as possible at the disposal of local inhabitants. Moreover, by making optimum use of resources in this way, Government will be able to make much-needed savings. Thus, the sports resources of schools will be put to the use of both the students and the inhabitants. However, Government intends to go further still, and arrange for the sports infrastructure of the Ministry of Youth & Sports and local authorities, to be used by schools having no such facilities.

Sports infrastructure of existing schools will be upgraded and provided with additional facilities provided by the Ministry of Youth & Sports in due course. In this context, that Ministry has already set up floodlights at some schools, so that the playground facilities could be used outside school hours. Moreover, such facilities, as toilets and changing rooms, would be put up by that Ministry or the Ministry of Education next to school playgrounds, for the use of local inhabitants. Specific agreements could be entered into between the Ministry of Education, on the one hand, and the Ministry of Youth & Sports, as well as between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Local Government, on the other hand, to provide for safekeeping of school amenities.

As for schools, now under construction, their sports facilities, such as football grounds, volley-ball/basket ball pitches, are being located in such a way as to give easy access to the public after school hours. They are being fenced round, with separate gates appropriately placed, so that the public has no access to the school compound proper, and in due course, we will provide these sports fields, with their own separate changing rooms and lavatories, so that, again, inhabitants may make use of those facilities without entering the school compound.

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(No. B/516) (contd)

Mr Paya: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Minister whether the sports facilities will be managed by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Youth & Sports, after school hours.

Mr Obeegadoo: All different possibilities can be considered. Right now, we have introduced this new policy, whereby clubs, recognised groups of young people in the locality, can come to the school and, once they have fulfilled certain procedures, are allowed use of facilities after school hours. In the future, this will be generalised. We need to take on board, in each school, the PTAs who, at times, have invested themselves in the facilities and are very reluctant to see other people coming in. There has been some bad experience in the past, with people damaging toilets, removing taps and so on. So, we are working on a protocol, to guard against such matters. In the event, it will not matter whether Education or Local Government or Sports will manage it, in terms of providing security services after school hours. But, we are actively trying to find the most appropriate formula, which does not mean that we should have one single formula imposed on each and every school. We will be flexible there, and we are working towards that.

/...

26/11/02

(7)

MGI SECONDARY SCHOOLS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/719) Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether -

- (a) he will state if the construction of new MGI secondary schools have started and, if so, will he give the number thereof;
- (b) their respective locations;
- (c) the amount budgeted for each of them, and
- (d) their expected date of completion.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Infrastructural Development Programme in secondary education, three Mahatma Gandhi secondary schools are to become operational next year and will be located at Soffe, Vacoas, Moka and Centre de Flacq.

...

None of the construction works have actually started, but in the case of Solferino, Vacoas, construction has been entrusted to Development Works Corporation and site clearance begins this week. In the case of Moka and Centre de Flacq, the tender exercises are nearing completion. There has been a delay in all three projects due to the unavailability of an Indian Architect, whereas it stands to reason that all three schools should in their architectural design have a distinctive Indian character.

An amount of Rs80 m. has been earmarked for each of these schools under the relevant vote item of my Ministry.

As publicly announced, it is planned that all three Mahatma Gandhi secondary schools will have a first phase of construction completed in the first quarter of next year, so that the schools may be operational by second term. Final completion is expected in the course of year 2003.

To avoid any inconvenience to students admitted to the three Mahatma Gandhi secondary schools, they will be temporarily accommodated at MGI, Moka, with free transport facilities from Solferino and Centre de Flacq before returning to the schools of their choice by second term next year.

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**RIVIERE DES ANGUILLES - SIX FORM COLLEGE
- CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

(No. B/427) Dr. A. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state when construction work on the proposed State Secondary School at Rivière des Anguilles for Upper Six pupils is due to start.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, construction works on the Rivière des Anguilles Sixth Form College project have started since 02 June 2003.

YEAR 2004

MAHATMA GANDHI SECONDARY SCHOOL, MOKA – BUS STOP (27/03/04)

(No. B/59) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that most buses plying on their way to Moka, St. Pierre, Nouvelle Découverte and Dagotière do not stop at the lay-bye at the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, Moka, to pick up students in the afternoon and, if so, will he state the remedial steps that have been or will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the National Transport Authority that buses do not stop near the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School in the direction of St. Pierre as there is no bus stop or lay-by in front of the school, but further down near the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

I have requested the National Transport Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to examine the advisability of constructing a bus stop and a bus lay-by near the school.

29/6/04

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DR/D23/P06/3

SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTION - ACREAGE OF LAND

(No. B/562) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether in regard to the construction of schools, he will state -

- (a) if one is to be constructed at Route Militaire, Port Louis and, if so, what area of land it will occupy;
- (b) the average acreage of land on which schools are being constructed island wide, and
- (c) whether the issue of space has been taken into account for the ring road in the region of the school, if any, being constructed at Route Militaire.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, as the House is by now aware, within the perspective of the major infrastructural developments in education, the opportunity has been taken to establish general standards pertaining to the size of school premises. Thus, new primary schools are being built on two *arpents* of land, secondary schools on five *arpents* and Sixth Form colleges on six to seven *arpents*. Such extensive grounds are to provide sports and other facilities serving not only the school community but also the public at large.

In the case of Port Louis Centre, due to the scarcity of vacant land, no construction of school was initially envisaged with the exception of Colline Monneron where two girls' schools are being constructed although the particularities of the site have made building works complex and extremely time consuming. However, persistent and strong requests for additional school facilities have been made by Members of Parliament and local community organisations of the Plaine Verte region. In addition, successive admission exercises since 2002 have confirmed the need for more school places both at primary and secondary levels in the region.

Accordingly, as from 2002, a comprehensive search for appropriate land was undertaken in that region as a result of which only two plots could be identified:

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(No. B/562 Cont'd)

- In the first place, a private plot of land of 0.65 *Arpents* at Nyon Street, Plaine Verte on which lies a dilapidated building, but of impressive architecture known as the "White House" was identified and has since been acquired by the State. Because of the restricted extent of land, it is projected that a relatively small primary school will be built there as from this year.
- In the second case following a site visit in the presence of the then Minister of Housing and Lands, the Ministers of Public Utilities and Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms as well as local Members of Parliament including the Minister of Social Security, a strip of land bordering Route Militaire and the projected path of the Port Louis Ring Road was identified for the construction of a girls' secondary school. I wish to stress that the said plot was earmarked precisely because no other land was or is available.

In both cases, school buildings are being specifically designed having regard to the particular configuration of land available. The restricted space available implies that outdoor sports facilities will not be as extensive as in other newly constructed schools. However, indoor facilities will wherever possible be provided to compensate therefor.

My Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir, feels duty bound to provide the population of Port Louis with additional educational facilities and we shall leave no stone unturned to ensure that the two new projected schools are built as soon as can be.

Dr. Chady: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I understand, it seems that the Girls Secondary School will be constructed on less than one *arpent* of land.

Mr Obeegadoo: In fact, Sir, the extent of land at Route Militaire is two *arpents* 58.

Dr. Chady: The Minister said that there has been an extensive search. May I inform him that squatters are constructing on the mountain just behind Mamade Elahee stadium. There is plenty of State land on the other side of Route Militaire. And when we were at the Ministry, we requested the Minister of Housing to study the possibility...

(Interruptions)

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DR/D23/P06/5
(No. B/562 Cont'd)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the hon. gentleman that together with all those concerned, we have looked attentively, for a very long time, for land available. If he has any other suggestions, I have an open mind, but believe me, we have tried our level best to find land in the region.

(PQ B/563 - See after PQ B/559)

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

B/623 The Honourable First Member for Piton and Riviere du Rempart (Dr Jeetah)

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

Whether he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Malinga, Nouvelle Decouverte, Ripailles, Beau Bois, L'Avenir, Circonstance and St Pierre praying for a State College to be built in Circonstance and, if so, will he state if their request will be acceded to?

DRAFT REPLY TO PQ. B/623—TUESDAY 27 July 2004

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

I have indeed received a petition from *inter alia*, inhabitants of Circonstance, Saint Pierre for a State College to be built there. Since the term State College refers to Sixth Form College, I would wish to remind the Honourable Gentleman that admission to such colleges is effected on a national and not a regional basis. Sixth Form Colleges are located so as to be accessible to students from all over the island of Mauritius and the precise locations determined on the basis of a detailed analysis of demand and of a careful planning exercise.

2. I am informed that as a result of the reforms in education, the number of Lower Six seats available in the State sector has increased from 2,246 in January 2000 to 3,700 in January 2004. This is a more than 50% increase. It is further to be noted that new Sixth Form Colleges have been constructed at Piton and Bon Accueil and four such colleges are being built or completed in this present financial year at Port Louis (Colline Monneron), Camp de Masque, Nouvelle France and Rivière des Anguilles. As such, seats are available for all prospective Lower Six students either in State or private sectors and the need does not accordingly arise for a State College at Circonstance, Saint Pierre.

10 27/7/04

CIRCONSTANCE, ST PIERRE - STATE COLLEGE

(No. B/623) **Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Malinga, Nouvelle Découverte, Ripailles, Beau Bois, L'Avenir, Circonstance and St. Pierre praying for a State college to be built in Circonstance and, if so, will he state if their request will be acceded to.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have indeed received a petition from, *inter alia*, inhabitants of Circonstance, Saint Pierre for a State college to be built there. Since the term State college refers to sixth form college, I would wish to remind the hon. gentleman that, admission to such colleges is effected on a national and not a regional basis. Sixth form colleges are located so as to be accessible to students from all over the island of Mauritius and the precise locations determined on the basis of a detailed analysis of a projected demand and of a careful planning exercise.

I am also informed that as a result of the reforms in education, the number of Lower Six seats available in the State sector has increased from 2,200 in January 2000 to 3,700 in January 2004, that is, a more than 50% increase. It is further to be noted that new sixth form colleges have been completed at Piton and Bon Accueil and four such colleges are being built or completed in the present fiscal year at Port Louis (Colline Monneron), Camp de Masque, Nouvelle France and Rivière des Anguilles. As such, seats are available for all prospective Lower Sixth students either in State or private sectors and the need does not accordingly arise for a State college at Circonstance, Saint Pierre.

(PQ No. B/624 - see after PQ No. B/608)

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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.

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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.

YEAR**2005**

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - CONSTRUCTION -
JANUARY 1995 TO SEPTEMBER 2000/SEPTEMBER 2000
TO FEBRUARY 2005 (22/02/05)**

(No. B/128) Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will for each of the periods January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date, give a list of the State Secondary Schools built, indicating their location.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. Government embarked, as from the very first month of its mandate, upon an ambitious programme of

secondary school construction.

By means of that programme, the Government wanted to translate into action its political will to abolish CPE ranking, regionalise admission to secondary schools and introduce compulsory education up to the age of sixteen.

The first element of this construction programme consisted in the conversion of former State Secondary Schools (Vocational) into new State Secondary Schools catering for Form 1 to Form V students. Thus, the former SSS(V)s at Bambous (Boys), Triolet (Boys), Forest Side (Girls) and St Aubin (Boys) underwent conversion works as early as the second half of the year 2001. Accordingly, they were able to admit their first batches of Form 1 students as from the resumption of studies in the year 2002.

In parallel, the procedures for the construction of new SSSs/sixth Form State Colleges got underway at the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, to name but these three Ministries. The first such school to spring up from the ground was Phoenix SSS in September 2001.

During the next three and a half years approximately, the construction of 23 other SSSs and VI Form State Colleges started over the island. I am tabling a list of all these new schools which are operational as at today and issuing either from the conversion works or from the construction works proper.

The following schools which are presently being constructed will become operational very soon:

- (i) Camp de Masque State College (Boys)
- (ii) Port Louis Colline Moneron SS (Girls)
- (iii) Vacoas SSS (Girls).

However, I should like to point that there are six new schools where the construction works proper have not started yet, but they are either at the design stage or at the land acquisition stage. The works are scheduled for implementation during the next financial year. These are: Pamplémousses SSS, Floréal SSS, Beau Bassin SSS, Goodlands SSS, Quatre Bornes SSS and Nouvelle France MGSS.

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**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CONSTRUCTION –
JAN 1995- SEP 2000**

(No. B/278) Mr F. Abdoola (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state the number of new State Secondary Schools constructed for each of the periods January 1995 to September 2000 and September 2000 to date.

Reply: Construction of six State Secondary Schools began before 1995 but were completed after 1995. These are to be found at Beau Bassin, Grand Baie, Lallmatic, Phoenix and Plaine Magnien. Between 1995 and 2000, three State Secondary Schools were started at Surinam, Bel Air and La Tour Koenig, but in the last two cases extension works were carried out after September 2000. In addition, three Middle Schools, i.e, schools offering Form I – III only were built but had to be converted after September 2000 into State Secondary Schools for Form I – V classes entailing the construction of Science Laboratories and other Specialist Rooms.

As regards the period September 2000 to date, as the House is aware, a major infrastructural development programme in the secondary schooling sector was launched and has so far translated into extension works at four schools, conversion of seven existing buildings into State Secondary Schools, upgrading works in three Middle Schools and new construction works for 22 State Secondary Schools or Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School as well as Sixth Form Colleges.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CONSTRUCTION (16/08/05)

(No. I B/79) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the list of 38 secondary schools tabled in the National Assembly on 09 August 2005, he will give the number of schools where the following phases have been completed –

- (a) Phase 1;
- (b) Phase II, and
- (c) Phase III

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, further to my reply given to PQ I B/28 of last week, I wish to state that the outgoing Government has claimed on numerous occasions that it has, over the past 4 ½ years, doubled the number of colleges.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a college will normally consist of the following amenities: classrooms, art room, one laboratory, demonstration room for each science subject, i.e, Chemistry, Physics and Biology, computer room, library, workshops for Home Economics or Design Technology, administrative rooms for the Rector, the staff and so on; sick bay, canteen, toilets and playground facilities.

The information I have already provided clearly indicates that except for RTI (boys and girls and Bon Accueil State College) which have been completed, the remaining colleges are still incomplete. As a result, in many cases students, who were registered at a particular college which appeared on the admissions' list of colleges, have had to be accommodated elsewhere under very difficult conditions, over a period of more than 2 years. In January 2006, this situation is very likely to continue. Students proceeding to Form IV will be facing difficulties with regard to the non-availability of Science laboratories and workshops in many cases.

Due to severe bottlenecks and delays in the overall construction programme engaged by the previous Government, phased construction of colleges has had to be resorted to.

Phase I, normally, comprises one block of 12 classrooms and one toilet block and this phase has been completed in only 30 colleges.

Phase II comprises either another block of 12 classrooms or an administrative block or a science block, depending upon the lay-out of the site. It may also refer to all the works left to be done after a first phase has been completed. Only 20 schools have gone through Phase II.

Phase III involves the full and final completion, i.e, the availability of all amenities mentioned at 2 above.

If we take into consideration the information provided at para 2 above, it is clear that out of the 38 colleges, 36 have not yet reached the full and final completion stage.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be factually incorrect to claim that the number of colleges between 2000 and 2005 has been doubled.

**MAURITIUS, RODRIGUES AND AGALEGA –
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS – CONSTRUCTION –
DEC 1995 TO JUNE 2005 (30/08/05)**

(No. I B/141) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state –

(a) the number of primary and secondary schools constructed in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega during the periods -

- (i) December 1995 to September 2000, and
- (ii) September 2000 to June 2005.

(b) the number of secondary schools under construction, indicating when works started and the expected date of completion, and

(c) if it is proposed to construct additional primary and secondary schools and, if so –

- (i) in which regions;
- (ii) when works are likely to start and the expected date of completion, and
- (iii) the estimated cost.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not clear whether the hon. Member is referring to schools in the private or the public sector. It is assumed that he is referring to the public sector schools.

Regarding part (a), the number of primary and secondary schools constructed in Mauritius during the period December 1995 to September 2000 is 6 and 11 respectively. For Rodrigues, one primary school and no secondary school was constructed during the same period. For Agalega, no school was constructed, as two primary schools already existed.

During the period September 2000 till June 2005, 4 primary schools and 2 secondary schools were constructed and completed in Mauritius. In Rodrigues, no primary school was constructed, but two secondary schools were built for the same period. As for Agalega, one primary school was built.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the hon. Member may refer to the reply I made to PQ No. I B/79 of last week. Two secondary schools have been constructed and completed. Construction works have not started in 5 schools. Furthermore, 31 schools are under construction. I am tabling the

information regarding the secondary schools under construction.

As for their expected dates of completion, I should like to invite the hon. Member to again refer to PQ Nos. I B/28 and B/79 replied to in the previous weeks, where I indicated that the schools are being constructed on a phase-wise basis, so that it would not be possible, at this juncture, to state when exactly the last phases would be completed.

As for part (c), a school mapping and space audit exercise will be carried out as a matter of urgency. A contingency plan with regard to the provision of science laboratories to students of Form IV in 2006 has already been drawn. A policy decision as to whether new schools should be constructed will be taken thereafter.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the construction of primary and secondary schools for the period September 2000 to June 2005, can the hon. Minister state to the House how many such schools were fully constructed, fully equipped and fully operational?

Mr Gokhool: The figures are as follows -
For period 1995/2000 -
Primary Schools: 6
Secondary Schools: 11
For period 2000/2005 -
Primary Schools: 4
Secondary Schools: 2

Mr Guinness: May we know from the hon. Minister how many schools were under construction?

Mr Gokhool: I have already answered the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that there are other schools under construction. May we know from the hon. Minister whether students are attending the schools, or are they only construction sites?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is right to ask this precision. But, I have already stated in my previous reply that students who were admitted to schools on the admission list have had to be accommodated to other schools; I am not happy with the situation.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that the

Phases I and II of the schools have been constructed. So, may we know whether students are attending these schools?

Mr Gokhool: In certain schools this is the case, but in many schools this is not the case.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when this project was initiated for schools that were constructed between December 1995 and September 2000?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact of the matter is that between 1995 and 2000, the schools were completed.

**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.

BEL AIR STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL –

FLOODING PROBLEM (15/11/05)

(No. I B/499) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the flooding problem at the Bel Air State Secondary School during the rainy season and, if so, will he state what immediate remedial measures are envisaged.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that the Water Resources Unit of the Ministry of Public Utilities has advised that the school building is constructed on a marshy area bordering Rivière Sèche where the water table is near the ground surface. During heavy rains, there is a high surface runoff and water from the springs converges to the school.

The Water Resources Unit has further advised to take contingency measures during periods of heavy rainfalls and to ensure that the nearby river is cleaned of all obstructions to allow a free and smooth flow of water. The Living Environment Unit of my Ministry will be carrying these works. As a long-term solution, I am proposing to carry a detailed survey of the site to identify alternative solutions to the problem. This might entail dredging and realignment of the existing river.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when he proposes to start the survey?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, tomorrow at 1.00 p.m. I am giving a *rendez-vous* to my hon. colleague and other Members for a site visit and thereafter we are going to decide.

YEAR 2006

BEL AIR SSS - REMEDIAL WORKS (21/03/06)

(No. B/23) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to Bel Air SSS, he will state if, subsequent to the site visit of 16 November 2005 in connection with flooding, any remedial works have been initiated.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I am informed that there is a flooding problem at Bel Air SSS, which is due to the accumulation of water from both the surface run-off within school premises as well as overflow from the nearby

Rivière Sèche.

This problem exists for several years now and we have put in place a system whereby the rainwater is immediately pumped out by the Government Fire Services whenever flooding occurs.

Further to the site visit held on 16 November 2005, I am informed that the Environment Unit of the Ministry of Environment has carried out dredging works along Rivière Sèche in February 2006.

The issue of flooding has been raised at the coordination meetings on school infrastructure held under my chairmanship and attended, *inter alia*, by the representative of the National Development Unit. The latter has been requested by my Ministry to carry out a survey and propose a permanent solution to the problem.

The NDU has informed my Ministry on 10 February 2006 that a preliminary survey has been carried out by its consultant. On 17 March 2006, the consultant has come up with a proposed solution to be implemented in two phases, which is being examined by my Ministry in consultation with all parties concerned, subject to availability of funds.

My Ministry is closely monitoring the situation and will endeavour to take whatever necessary action is required at the earliest.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this problem has been recurrent since many years. Each time it rains, the same thing happens. May I ask the hon. Minister to liaise with my good friend, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, to make sure that funds are available and the remedial work is carried out as soon as possible?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a serious problem. It dates back to many many years. What I found when I was looking at this file is that between 2000 and 2005 - the problem dates back even further in the past - no action has been taken. When I took over as Minister, I immediately put in a system whereby at any point when there is a flooding the water is removed, but meanwhile we are also looking at a longer term solution.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, in a monologue TV debate the Minister stated that this college was constructed under the previous Government. Can he now confirm whether the college was constructed in 1997?

Mr Gokhool: All I know from the file is that the construction of this college was completed in 2001.

**PLAINE MAGNIEN VILLAGE COUNCIL - STATE LAND -
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND (04/04/06)**

(No. B/309) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware that a request has been forwarded to the Ministry of Housing and Lands by the Grand Port–Savanne District Council for the allotment of a portion of State land found near the France Boyer de la Giroday State Secondary School for the construction of a children's playground and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, records indicate that there is an application dated 21 February 2006 which has been received from Grand Port/Savanne District Council on behalf of the Plaine Magnien Village Council requesting my Ministry to put at the disposal of the Council a portion of State land of the extent of 96m² for the creation of a children playground. The site applied for forms part of a larger plot of land of an extent of 5A50 acquired for the construction of the France Boyer de la Giroday State Secondary School and vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources has been requested to indicate whether it is agreeable to the release of the land.

In view of the fact that the land applied for, needs first be retrieved from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and subsequently be vested in the Ministry of Local Government, the District Council has been advised to channel its request through its parent Ministry, that is, the Ministry of Local Government and to further indicate when the project would be implemented and whether funds are available.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House when was the liaison established between his Ministry and the Ministry of Education for this purpose?

Mr Dulull: It was on 17 April 2006.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister inform the House when was the district council made aware that it has to apply through its parent Ministry?

Mr Dulull: It was on 31 March 2006.

~~CAMPBELL~~

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 - STATE-OWNED SCHOOLS -
INFRASTRUCTURE**

(No. B/126) **Mr S. Mohamed (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if a survey has recently been carried out to assess the state of the infrastructure of the state-owned schools in Constituency No. 13 (Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) and, if so, will he state the outcome thereof, indicating what is being done to address the present state of affairs.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that surveys have been carried out to determine the state of infrastructure of state-owned schools in Constituency No. 13. I am tabling a list of the works identified, as well as their status.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, to previous questions in Parliament, the hon. Minister of Education had replied that necessary repairs would be carried out to Rivière des Anguilles Government School during school holidays of December 2005-January 2006. Therefore, why have those works not been carried out as yet?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, I have on the list submitted to me by the Ministry 15 items concerning the schools situated in Constituency No. 13. Reference has been made to the Rivière des Anguilles Government School. Let me just read the status report. For the construction of new toilet blocks, a preliminary design has been completed by MPI. A Building Plans Committee is to be convened by the MPI round about the middle of April 2006 for the approval of the project. At the same school, there will be re-roofing works of two school blocks. Evaluation of tenders has been completed on 31 March 2006. The letter of award is expected to be issued by next week. Works will be completed by the end of June 2006. Upgrading works in toilet block are being carried out now. As regards upgrading of the yard, the NDU will be requested to carry out the works during the August 2006 holidays.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I, therefore, humbly request the hon. Minister to table a progress report at latest end June 2006, in order that we may find out that, in fact, those works that have been promised are indeed being done?

Dr. David: I will pass on the request to the substantive Minister.

**PLAINE MAGNIEN VILLAGE COUNCIL - STATE LAND -
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND (18/04/06)**

(No. B/309) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware that a request has been forwarded to the Ministry of Housing and Lands by the Grand Port–Savanne District Council for the allotment of a portion of State land found near the France Boyer de la Giroday State Secondary School for the construction of a children's playground and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, records indicate that there is an application dated 21 February 2006 which has been received from Grand Port/Savanne District Council on behalf of the Plaine Magnien Village Council requesting my Ministry to put at the disposal of the Council a portion of State land of the extent of 96m² for the creation of a children playground. The site applied for forms part of a larger plot of land of an extent of 5A50 acquired for the construction of the France Boyer de la Giroday State Secondary School and vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources has been requested to indicate whether it is agreeable to the release of the land.

In view of the fact that the land applied for, needs first be retrieved from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and subsequently be vested in the Ministry of Local Government, the District Council has been advised to channel its request through its parent Ministry, that is, the Ministry of Local Government and to further indicate when the project would be implemented and whether funds are available.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House when was the liaison established between his Ministry and the Ministry of Education for this purpose?

Mr Dulull: It was on 17 April 2006.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister inform the House when was the district council made aware that it has to apply through its parent Ministry?

Mr Dulull: It was on 31 March 2006.

QUATRE BORNES STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL PROJECT (09/05/06)

(No. B/472) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the construction of the Quatre Bornes State Secondary School, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In September 2004, the previous Government decided to set up a new State Secondary School for girls in the region of Quatre Bornes. It then began to look for appropriate land in the Quatre Bornes area.

In January 2005, Form I students were registered for admission to Quatre Bornes SSS on the understanding that the school was under construction. I am tabling a copy of a letter addressed to parents dated 11 December 2004 to that effect by the Ministry. However, the reality is that there was no school under construction and, in my view, parents were misled.

In the meantime, procedures for the acquisition of a suitable plot of land at Avenue des Tulipes in Quatre Bornes continued at the Ministry of Housing & Lands. However, at the end of March 2006, that Ministry informed my Ministry that all the owners of the plot of land had challenged the acquisition of the land before the Supreme Court. It may now take years before the matter is resolved.

Under these circumstances, the Ministry is exploring the possibility of putting up the school on another site, subject to the availability of funds. The Parent-Teacher Association was informed accordingly at a meeting I chaired on 24 April 2006.

I need to state and to emphasise to this House that this is one of the numerous teething problems left behind by my predecessor. A fact which seems to be conveniently ignored in some quarters.

We are working towards finding an appropriate solution to this problem and I would invite the PTA to work together with my Ministry in finding the solution.

COLLINE MONNERON SSS/RESERVOIR – PLOT OF LAND (23/05/06)

(No. B/599) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if the plot of land situated between the Colline Monneron State Secondary

School and the reservoir has been earmarked for any particular project and, if so, will he give details thereof.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a plot of land being part of State land at Monneron Hill of an extent of 21,165 m² lying between the land vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the plot of land leased to the CWA has been earmarked for the construction of a fire station, to replace the existing Municipal fire station.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping is actually carrying out a geotechnical investigation at the proposed site.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether this plot of land was not first earmarked for sports infrastructure of Colline Monneron SSS?

Mr Dulull: The land is still uncommitted.

HOLYROOD STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL - FOOTBALL GROUND (13/06/06)

(No. B/736) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the football ground at the Holyrood State Secondary School, he will state if -

- (a) it is of standard size, and
- (b) he will consider putting it at the disposal of the inhabitants of the region.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the football ground at Holyrood State Secondary School 90 metres long and 45 metres wide, which according to the Ministry of Youth and Sports is of standard size. The football ground is situated within a total landsurface of 5A08 for the whole school.

As for part (b) of the question, I am advised that when land was being sought for the construction of the new State Secondary School around the year 2000, a minimum of 5A was targeted. This was done, *inter alia*, to make way for sports facilities of sufficient scope to allow use by local community.

Moreover, it is the policy of this Government to open up, as far as it is practicable, the facilities available in our schools such as football grounds to the inhabitants of particular localities.

My Ministry will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Youth and Sports for sports facilities in ten schools to be put at the disposal of sports associations and organised groups of members of the public after school hours on a pilot basis. I am advised that the Ministry of Youth and Sports is finalising the Memorandum of Understanding for it to be signed soon. The football ground at Holyrood SSS had not yet been completed when the list of ten schools was drawn up and is thus not within that list, but should the scheme prove conclusive, it will be extended to the school too.

In the meantime, I would advise the inhabitants of the region to make formal requests to the Rector of the Holyrood SSS for use of the football ground.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – GYMNASIUM – AVAILABILITY TO PUBLIC (11/07/06)

(No. B/911) Mr R. Issack (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if he will consider placing at the disposal of the public the gymnasium of the State Secondary Schools during the afternoon with a view to enabling them practice sports activities.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the affirmative. As I said in reply to PQ B/736 at our sitting of 13 June 2006, it is the policy of the Government to open up, as far as possible, the sports facilities available in our schools to the public. In this respect, my Ministry will soon sign up a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Youth and Sports for sports infrastructure in ten secondary schools to be put at the disposal of sports associations as well as the members of the public on a pilot basis. As we go along, more and more secondary schools will be included in the project.

Independently of this joint initiative of my Ministry and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, sports facilities in some State secondary schools are already being put at the disposal of the public on an *ad-hoc* basis either through the Mauritius Sports Council or in an informal manner through the school administration.

As soon as the pilot project takes off and gathers momentum, consideration will be given to the possibility of placing sports facilities in all schools at the disposal of the public, on a demand basis.

Mr Issack: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister of Education see to it that in future a gymnasium is constructed in some State Secondary Schools, which do not have one?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is certainly a matter to be considered, but I'll have to turn to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who can help address that issue.

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.

**MAHATMA GANDHI SSS – MOKA, SOLFERINO, FLACQ and
NOUVELLE FRANCE – CONSTRUCTION (31/10/06)**

(No. B/1266) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the Mahatma Gandhi State Secondary Schools of Moka, Solferino, Flacq and Nouvelle France, he will state –

- (a) the number of blocks;
 - (i) to be constructed
 - (ii) already constructed
 - (iii) under construction, and
- (b) the date on which all the blocks are expected to be handed over to the respective schools, and
- (c) the number of students who have enrolled at each school.

Reply: With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that according to the infrastructural programme of my Ministry, nine blocks each are to be constructed at MGSS Moka/MGSS Solferino and MGSS Central Flacq as per the details that I am tabling.

For Moka MGSS, two classrooms blocks and one toilet block have already been constructed and handed over to my Ministry. As regards MGSS Solferino, one classroom block, one toilet block and one Administration block have been completed. For Central Flacq MGSS, two classroom blocks and two toilet blocks have been completed.

One Science block each, is under construction at MGSS Moka/MGSS Solferino and MGSS Central Flacq.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been given to understand that the Science block at MGSS Moka and MGSS Solferino respectively will be ready by end December 2007 whereas that for Flacq MGSS will be ready by end February 2007. Concerning the remaining blocks, they are presently being designed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) and they have been included in the list of priority infrastructural projects for 2007/2008 prepared by my Ministry.

Concerning the number of students enrolled at each of the MGSS the figures are as follows –

MGSS Moka - 468

MGSS Solferino - 470

MGSS Central Flacq - 526

MGSS Nouvelle France - 249

I would like to inform the hon. Member that with regard to the Nouvelle France MGSS, the 131 students of Form I and the 118 students of Form II are presently accommodated at Nouvelle France State College due to the fact that –

- (i) sufficient space is available in that school, and
- (ii) the school buildings of the MGSS have not yet been constructed.

My Ministry is therefore making optimum utilisation of space to accommodate the students of Nouvelle France MGSS. In view of the present Government's policy to transform all State Secondary Schools/Colleges and MGSS into Form I – VI schools, my Ministry is presently studying all the implications for the construction of Nouvelle France MGSS.

My Ministry is working closely with the MPI to speeding up the completion for the remaining blocks of all the three MGSSs.

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EBENE SSS – SCIENCE LABORATORY/PLAYGROUNDS

(No. B/1478) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Ebène State Secondary School, he will state if, for the January 2007 resumption of studies –

- (a) provisions have been made for rooms, equipped for the teaching of physics, chemistry, biology, computer, domestic science, design & technology, and
- (b) when the playgrounds will be ready, indicating the area thereof.

Reply: It is not clear from the wording of the question whether the hon. Member is referring to Ebène SSS (Boys) or (Girls).

On the assumption that he is referring to Ebène SSS (Boys), I am advised that the contractual completion date for the science laboratory block being built there is 11 January 2007. However, during a meeting I had with contractors of major works in our schools on 9 November 2006, they all stated that, owing to the shortage of iron bars on the local market, there might be a delay in their works. Arrangements have already been made by my Ministry to put up temporary laboratory facilities for the teaching of the science subjects at Ebène SSS (Boys).

With regard to the teaching of computer and design & technology, the respective school blocks will be built within a comprehensive project comprising all the remaining works at the school to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) as work will start during this financial year. I am advised that the buildings for those two subjects would be ready in October 2007. In the meantime, an existing computer room as well as an existing temporary design & technology workshop will be operational at the school at the resumption of studies in January 2007.

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One classroom block is also included in the comprehensive project I have just mentioned. Since there will be a lack of accommodation at the school, the Form V Sections will be housed in John Kennedy College as from the resumption of studies in January 2007 till the completion of the classroom block. They will benefit from the laboratory and workshop facilities available at the latter school.

The playgrounds also form part of the comprehensive project for all the remaining works at the school and are expected to be ready by October 2007. Those playgrounds consist of a standard football ground of dimensions 96 metres by 51 metres and two standard volleyball/basketball pitches, each of dimensions 37 metres by 32 metres.

YEAR**2007**

**SOLFERINO, MOKA AND FLACQ MAHATMA GANDHI SCHOOLS –
CLASSROOMS (27/03/07)**

(No. B/58) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to each of the Mahatma Gandhi Schools at Solferino, Moka and Flacq, he will state –
(a) the number of available classrooms;

(b) which specialist rooms are available including playfields, computer room, Design and Communications, Library, Gymnasium, Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics, and

(c) for January 2008

(i) the number of classrooms that will be required, and

(ii) if Lower VI classes would be accommodated thereat,

and, if not, the contingencies plans, if any, that will be resorted to.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that at MGSS Solferino, there are 16 classrooms available. For MGSS Moka, there are classrooms, whereas at MGSS Flacq, 24 classrooms are available.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been given to understand that a Science block is available at both MGSS Moka and MGSS Solferino. For MGSS Flacq, the Science block is presently under construction and is expected to be completed by end May 2007.

Moreover, makeshift arrangements have been made in all the three schools for the provision of facilities regarding I.T, Design and Communications, Library, Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics as well as a Gymnasium. They would all be put up within a period of 3 years and a programme has already been prepared, but the implementation will depend upon the availability of funds. It is to be noted that land has already been earmarked at those schools, and the global designs of works there have already made provisions, for all those facilities.

I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the number of classrooms required for January 2008 is 24 at each of MGSS Solferino and MGSS Flacq and at MGSS Moka. Thus with 28 classrooms at present, Moka MGSS already has a sufficient number of classrooms. As regards MGSS Solferino, the construction of an additional block of 12 classrooms has been projected for financial year 2007/2008 to enable that school to obtain the required number of classrooms. As for MGSS Flacq, it will obtain 4 additional classrooms when its Science block is completed in May 2007 making a total of 28 classrooms at that school.

With the policy of Government to transform all State Secondary Schools into Forms I – VI schools, the three MGSSs will also accommodate Lower VI classes within the classrooms available at the schools as from January 2008.

The Hon. Member may rest assured that, should a delay in the completion of the classroom block at MGSS Solferino occur, my Ministry will make proper contingency arrangements, as has been the practice in the previous years, so as to cause minimum disruption to the students.

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MAHATMA GANDHI SECONDARY SCHOOL, MOKA – BUS STOP

(No. B/59) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that most buses plying on their way to Moka, St. Pierre, Nouvelle Découverte and Dagotière do not stop at the lay-bye at the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, Moka, to pick up students in the afternoon and, if so, will he state the remedial steps that have been or will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the National Transport Authority that buses do not stop near the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School in the direction of St. Pierre as there is no bus stop or lay-by in front of the school, but further down near the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

I have requested the National Transport Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to examine the advisability of constructing a bus stop and a bus lay-by near the school.

MGI –

SOLFERINO – ROADS (10/04/07)

(No. B/98) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School of Solferino, he will state if it is proposed to construct a public road/access within its compound

and, if so –

(a) when and by whom its location was decided;

(b) if an evaluation of its potential dangers to students was carried out

and, if so

(i) by whom;

(ii) if any report has been submitted, indicating if a copy thereof will be tabled;

(c) the estimated cost in terms of additional walls, flyover or underpass and maintenance thereof, and

(d) if he will consider diverting that road/access.

The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question. It is not proposed to construct any public road within the compound of Mahatma Gandhi SSS of Solferino. I wish to inform the House that roads existed on three sides of the plot of land identified for the school. I would like to draw the attention of the House that for the construction of a fullfledged State Secondary School, five acres of land are required. However, in this case, only four acres of land were made available in three lots.

All buildings components of the school complex are designed on these four acres. In order to accommodate play areas, parking facilities and a future swimming pool, another plot of about four acres has been acquired on the other side of one of the existing roads.

To address the issue of security and safety, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit advised the construction of an overhead bridge to provide safe access to students from one side to the other without exposing themselves to crossing the road.

Other mitigating measures recommended by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit include the construction of humps, posting of speed limit signs and appropriate marking of the road.

In view of the fact that the detailed design of additional walls and footbridge has not been completed, the estimate cannot be provided at this stage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am laying a copy of the approved Master Plan of the school dated December 2004 on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Minister to make sure that all necessary precautionary measures be taken to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders – the Rector, the parents and the Student Council?

Mr Bachoo: I have mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that all these measures have already been included in the plan.

**HOLLYROOD STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – FOOTBALL
GROUND (22/05/07)**

(No. B/434) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, he will state if he has received a letter dated 07 April 2006 from the Municipality of Vacoas Phoenix requesting that the football ground at the Hollyrood State Secondary School be vested into the Municipality for it to be maintained and put at the disposal of the inhabitants of the locality after school hours.

(Withdrawn)

**HOLLYROOD STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – FOOTBALL
GROUND**

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(No. B/583) **Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, he will state if he has received a letter dated 07 April 2006 from the Municipality Council of Vacoas Phoenix requesting that the football ground at the Hollyrood State Secondary School be vested into the Council for it to be maintained and put at the disposal of the inhabitants of the locality after school hours.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that my Ministry indeed received a letter dated 07 April 2006 from the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix regarding a request for the vesting of the football ground at the Vacoas (Hollyrood) State Secondary School (Boys) in the Council for maintenance and use by the inhabitants of the locality.

However, at that date, the football ground was still under construction. In fact, a practical handing over was effected by the MPI only at the end of May 2006.

I would like to refer the hon. Member to a reply which I made to a previous PQ in June 2006 where I suggested that the inhabitants of the region make formal requests to the Rector of the school for use of the football ground.

I am now informed that the Rector has in fact received requests from several football clubs in the area for permission to use the football ground after school hours. A meeting was held in August 2006 between the Rector and the representatives of these clubs together with officers of my Ministry. A timetable was subsequently established for the use of the playground by those clubs as from September 2006.

I am advised that the Rector has established a good working relationship with those clubs, whereby their requests for the use of the football ground are promptly met. Thus, the concern of the Municipality to put the ground at the disposal of the public is already being attended to.

Moreover, it has not been the practice of my Ministry to vest school playgrounds in other bodies. However, in general, schools do work in close collaboration with Municipalities for the accessing of facilities and optimal use of resources.

I should also like to inform the hon. Member that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between my Ministry and the Ministry of Youth and Sports on 06 September 2006 whereby the sports facilities in 10 schools are being put at the disposal of sports associations and organised groups of members of the public after school hours. This scheme is still being studied and assessed by my Ministry. Should it prove conclusive, it may be extended to this school as well.

D13P10CO3

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, but I doubt the answer which is being given to me by the hon. Minister and I am sure it is not his fault. According to the information that we have at the Municipality of Phoenix, arrangement has just been done with one club in Hollyrood which is called 'Young Stars' where there is *une école de foot* and they are carrying out a tournament right now. But no arrangement has been made with different football clubs of the region. I should not insist, because it is like begging. I am not insisting that the football ground should be given to the Municipality of Vacoas Phoenix, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am requesting that a working arrangement be made with the Municipality or the CDA of the region of Hollyrood where those different football groups can make a request and a proper timetable is done. Can the hon. Minister just check whether a timetable has been set to allow those different groups of players to use the football ground?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have informed the House, the policy of Government is to make the facilities accessible to the community, but bearing in mind that the priority is for the students. This policy is being implemented in connection with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It is already being implemented.

As regards the point made by the hon. Member, the information I have is that a meeting was held between the Rector and some of the clubs in the region. I have the list of the clubs which were present at the meeting, I have to check and update the information. There are six clubs: Juventus, Hollyrood Youth Club, Bestel Boys, Hollyrood Youngsters Sports Club, Hollyrood Sporting Clubs and Highlanders. I have to check whether in practice these clubs are accessing the playground now.

As regards the request for collaboration, of course, this can be arranged between the Municipality and the school. I think it will work in the mutual interest of the school and the community.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just mentioned sports facilities which are being offered in ten schools with the collaboration of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. May I ask him what are the ten schools, where they are located, on what criteria they were selected and how many are located in both urban and rural areas?

Mr Gokhool: This is a multiple barrel questions.

D13P10CO4

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister himself opened the questions.

Mr Gokhool: It was limited to Hollyrood. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister referred to ten other sites.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have answered a question with regard to the issue of the MOU, between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. There are ten colleges and facilities and location are taken into consideration.

Mr Bundhoo: Where are they located?

Mr Gokhool: I will table the list, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he would consider setting up a monitoring committee between the Rector school and the clubs which are registered at the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix, in order to monitor and avoid any problem?

Mr Gokhool: All arrangements should be made so that it runs smoothly.

The Deputy Speaker: A last question, hon. Dr. Hawoldar!

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I make a request to the hon. Minister if he could see to it, through his officers, that the school grounds are maintained? The report that we have is that many a time the inhabitants of the regions have had to mow the grass before they can use it for playing football and if the Ministry of Education does not have the facilities for regular mowing of the ground, perhaps the Municipality could do the maintenance at least for the Ministry.

Mr Gokhool: It follows, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that if more clubs are using the football ground there will be need for maintenance and I'll certainly take into account the proposal made by the hon. Member.

At 1.10 p.m the sitting was suspended.

ROYAL

COLLEGE, PORT LOUIS – INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS (10/07/07)

(No. B/734) Mrs L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that some of the infrastructure of the Royal College, Port Louis, are in a bad condition and, if so, will he state the

remedial measures that will be taken for the upgrading thereof.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir I am aware that several items of infrastructure at Royal College, Port Louis are not in a good state. The policy of my Ministry is to carry out a regular monitoring of the infrastructure in our schools and, in line with this policy, works are effected on a priority basis, taking into account the demand from all our schools.

The four staircase blocks are in a bad condition. According to the MPI, the repair works would be carried out during this financial year after the appointment of another District Contractor for the region of Port Louis, which is done on an annual basis. Tentatively the works would start in mid-August 2007, last eight weeks and be completed in mid-October 2007. The school also needs waterproofing works on all its buildings.

Accordingly, a request has been made to the MPI and that Ministry will start the works during the coming July/August 2007 school vacation as those works would generate a lot of dust and noise throughout the school and may seriously hamper school activities. It is expected that the works may start at the end of July 2007, last about 10 weeks and end around mid October 2007.

Moreover, during a meeting which I chaired with the PTA on 20 June 2007, the latter made a request for a general upgrading of the perimeter wall of the school. The Environment Division of the Ministry of Environment & NDU is attending to the necessary works on the wall as well as general upgrading works in the school yard. Those works started at the beginning of July 2007 and will continue till the end of August 2007.

The toilets of the school also need to be attended to and arrangements are being made for the necessary upgrading works to be carried out by the Education Zone 1 of my Ministry. Those works are scheduled to start by mid July 2007 and be terminated by the end of August 2007. My Ministry will also consider the construction of new toilets at the school during this financial year.

The construction of these new toilets will be an integral part of major infrastructural works which my Ministry is targeting at the school during this financial year. Apart from the toilets, an IT Laboratory as well as a 12-classroom block will be put up at the school to relieve existing space constraints.

The school also needs a fresh coat of paint both externally and inside the classrooms. My Ministry will request the MPI to carry out those works

during the November/December 2007 school vacation to minimise disturbance with regard to school activities.

To enhance the security measures in force in all schools, the burglarproofing system in the administrative block and computer room at the Royal College of Port Louis, will be reinforced by the Education Zone 1, in around one month's time.

Over and above these relatively big infrastructural works, several minor works will be carried out by my Ministry within the next month.

These relate, for instance, to the conversion of an ex-caretaker's quarters into a cloakroom; the replacement of faulty water taps in the science laboratories; the repair of doors in the staff room.

Finally, I would like to assure the hon. Member that my Ministry is fully conscious of the need to create a conducive environment for our students and it will spare no effort to ensure that this aim is met.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad the Minister has given a very nice plan of how upgrading works will be carried at the RCPL, I would ask the Minister whether he is aware that there is a problem of infestation of pigeons as well as stray dogs and cats in the college. Will this also be taken care of?

Mr Gokhool: Action has been taken with respect to the problems being mentioned by the hon. Member.

PHOENIX SSS (BOYS) – FOOTBALL PITCH - CONSTRUCTION
(24/07/07)

(No. B/834) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a football pitch next to the Phoenix State Secondary School (Boys), he will state –

- (a) when works
- (i) started, and
- (ii) are likely to be completed, and
- (b) the cost thereof.

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

The contract for the construction of the football pitch was awarded to the DWC on 24 May 2005. The construction works started on 20 June 2005 and the contractual period was for six months. However, progress was slow and the site was taken over from the contractor 17 months later, on 24 November 2006, after the closure of the DWC.

As regards the completion of the outstanding works, tender documents have been sent to the CTB and the tender will be launched on receipt of CTB's approval expected by this week and works are expected to be completed within a period of three months after the award of the contract.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the actual cost of the project can only be determined on completion of the outstanding works, but the initial contract value was Rs12.6 m.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – ÉCOLE DE FOOT (24/07/07)

(No. B/835) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will consider the advisability of setting up in each of the secondary schools in Mauritius, *une école de foot*, to be operational, especially after school hours or during weekends.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, Physical Education is an integral part of the school curriculum and sports have always had a place of pride in the school curriculum, at both primary and secondary levels. The new primary curriculum has linked Health Education with Physical Education and primary schools are being encouraged to organize co-curricular and extracurricular activities related to sports.

The need for engagement in sports is dealt with across the curriculum wherein opportunities are provided to the learner into reflecting over the importance of sports for “wellness”.

As regards the specific issue of having an *école de foot* in each secondary school, I understand that the Ministry of Youth & Sports already has a National Program and is funding the operation of some 60 *écoles de foot* across the island under the aegis of the Mauritius Football Association.

The *écoles de foot* are run thrice weekly at football grounds available in the region. They are open to children aged between 12 and 15 years, including students. The main objective of these *écoles de foot* is the development and

promotion of football island-wide in order to identify talented and gifted players to be channelled to the Regional Football Training Centre and, consequently, to the National Football teams . Students form part of this project.

It is not proposed to set up and run an *école de foot* in all our secondary schools in order not to duplicate the National Program of the Ministry of Youth & Sports. In a spirit of co-operation, my Ministry may recommend the opening of additional *écoles de foot* on existing terms and conditions regarding the use of school sports infrastructure.

However, my Ministry would have no objection to set up football clubs involving both pupils and staff after school hours, to promote football in our secondary schools. A MoU already exists between my Ministry and the Ministry of Youth & Sports for the development of a sports culture among our citizens and this proposal will be addressed.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are physical instructors in primary schools throughout the island?

Mr Gokhool: Yes, there are! They are not adequate and the hon. Lady knows that we have to improve on that.

QUATRE BORNES STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – CONSTRUCTION (31/07/07)

(No. B/917) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of the new Quatre Bornes, State Secondary School, he will state if any time frame has been set for its completion.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has requested renovation works to be carried out at the ex-Stratford College Building, Quatre Bornes with a view to accommodating secondary school students in January 2008.

In that respect, my Ministry is presently carrying out an extensive survey for the preparation of a detailed scope of works and estimated costs. The expected date of completion of the works at ex-Stratford College Building is scheduled for December 2007.

Once those temporary renovation works are completed, new buildings will be put up in the premises to complete the school. Construction will start after the necessary procedures and designs will have been completed.

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SSS TRIOLET - EXTENSION

(No. B/1008) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the land acquired for the proposed extension of the State Secondary School, Triolet, he will state -

- (a) the extent thereof, indicating if the land is agricultural or otherwise;
- (b) the cost of its acquisition, and
- (c) if the services of a Government Valuer were retained to assess the value of the land and, if so, indicate the assessed value.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, a total extent of 20,105.61 m² was acquired in September 2002 for the extension of the SSS Triolet. Out of this, an extent of 2,450 m² was residential.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the total cost of land acquired is Rs22,494,495.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as opposed to previous practice, this Government, as a matter of policy, has always had recourse to the services of the Chief Government Valuer whenever land has to be assessed for acquisition. The latter gave an initial assessment of Rs5 m. per *arpent* for the residential land and Rs450,000 per *arpent* for the agricultural land.

The owner, whose plot was partly residential, accepted the offer and payment was made to him on 20 June 2003. The other owners did not accept the offer of the Chief Government Valuer. They made counter proposals and made further representations. The matter was referred to the Board of Assessment set up under the Land Acquisition Act 1973. The Board of Assessment, in its own deliberate and independent judgment, gave an award of Rs5 m. per *arpent* for the land belonging to the three aggrieved owners.

STATE

SECONDARY SCHOOL – TRIOLET –EXTENSION WORKS (06/11/07)

(No. B/1053) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the compulsory acquisition of land for the

extension works of the State Secondary School at Triolet, he will, for each portion of land, state

—

- (a) the name of the former owners;
- (b) the extent, and
- (c) the composition of the Board of Assessment in relation thereto.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/1008 on 07 August 2007.

In regard to part (c) of the question, a Board of Assessment was set up on 09 May 2006 under the chairmanship of Intermediate Court Magistrate Mrs V. Kwok Yin Siong assisted by Messrs. Tegally and Tarsoo as members.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give us the names of the former owners of those plots of land?

Mr Dulull: The former owners are Mrs Ww. Jasso Tulsi, Mrs Ww. Talayboodeen Noormamode, Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar and Mrs Ww. Dhunraz Ram.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we confirm whether one of those former owners is acting as an Adviser at the PMO?

Mr Speaker: This question is not relevant.

Mr Guimbeau: Alright, I withdraw this supplementary question!
Can the hon. Minister confirm whether these three plots of land were used for agricultural purposes only?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know to which three plots of land the hon. Member is referring?

Mr Guimbeau: The one which has been compulsorily acquired.

Mr Dulull: We have four plots of land which have been compulsorily acquired and they were used both for residential and agricultural purposes.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform us about the assessment from the Government Valuer on agricultural land?

Mr Dulull: The assessment for Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar was Rs3,033,033; for Mrs Ram: Rs680,923.00; for Mrs Tulsi: Rs691,964.00 and for Ww. Talayboodeen Noormamode: Rs378,648.00. Of course, this depends on the size of the plot.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give reasons why Rs5 m.per *arpent* has been paid for these plots of land and signed by the former PS?

Mr Dulull: The amount of Rs5 m. per *arpent* was assessed by the Government Valuer and given to Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have got a report from the Ministry of Housing where it is said that Mrs Ram has paid Rs7,500,000; Mrs Tulsi: Rs7,000,688.,and Mr Noormamode: Rs4 m. This is a paper signed by the former PS, Mr Oozeer.

Mr Dulull: As I mentioned, valuations were carried out by the Government Valuer and there was an independent Board of Assessment. In its own deliberate judgment and valuation, it awarded the amounts. It was chaired by a sitting Magistrate.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to make things clear. These lands, as per the valuation report, have been classified as agriculture and evaluated at Rs450,000. The Ministry of Housing made no objection at this end to compensation being paid to former owners of the three portions of land as detailed below at the rate of Rs5 m. per *arpent*. I want to know from the hon. Minister how come taxpayers money is being used to pay Rs5 m. per *arpent* of agricultural land?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was an independent Board of Assessment with a sitting Magistrate. That was the value given by the Board.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister give us the names of the Members on the Board?

Mr Dulull: I mentioned in my reply, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Board consisted of an Intermediate Court Magistrate, Mrs Kwok Yin Siong, Mr Tegally and Mr Tarsoo.

Mr Guimbeau: Est-ce que le ministre, dans un esprit de transparence, va referrer ce cas à l'ICAC, M. le président ?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has answered that a Board of Assessment was set up under the chairmanship of an Intermediate Court Magistrate assisted by two Members.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just said that the Board of Assessment has evaluated it at Rs691,964. I want to make it clear - How come that the agricultural land has been paid on the basis of Rs5 m. an *arpent* when it has been evaluated at Rs450,000?

Mr Speaker: How can the Minister answer on the part of the Board of Assessment?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister how he can explain the fact that there is one particular land that has been mentioned by hon. Guimbeau which was proposed by the Board and the payment made by the Ministry is manifold higher than the amount suggested by the Board?

Mr Dulull: Like I mentioned before, based on information I have been provided, all the plots are side by side and I gave the amounts. An independent Board of Assessment was set up to evaluate the plots and in its own deliberate judgment and assessment, these amounts were awarded.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he could confirm the amount paid to these people on each plot and to tell us how come there is a discrepancy between the amount recommended by the Board and the payment made by the Ministry?

Mr Dulull: I cannot answer for the Board, but what I can inform the House is that the land of Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar was evaluated at Rs5 m. for an *arpent* and that has been calculated well before; the compensation was paid in August 2002. Mr Hossen Jaoffar got the compensation of Rs5 m. per *arpent* in June 2003.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, this was agricultural land used for sugarcane plantation with drip irrigation and no development was supposed to be made on it. This is from the Chief Government Valuer.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, the hon. Minister has already answered.

Mr Guimbeau: But, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not fair. How come that taxpayers money is being used to pay Rs5 m. instead of Rs450,000?

Mr Speaker: The Board of Assessment has given this amount.

Mr Guimbeau: I will refer this matter to ICAC, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At 4.15 the sitting was suspended.

CA/D32/P01/2

Debate No. 32 of 13.11.07

STATEMENT BY MINISTER
SSS TRIOLET – EXTENSION WORKS - COMPULSORY.
ACQUISITION OF LAND

The Minister of Housing & Lands (Mr A. Dulull): Mr Speaker, Sir, following my reply to PQ No. B/1053 and to supplementary questions from the hon. First Member for Curepipe & Midlands and the hon. Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix regarding compulsory acquisition of four plots of land in Triolet for the extension work of SSS Triolet, may I, with your permission, make the following statement.

May I, right at the start, emphasize that the four plots of land were compulsorily acquired in the national interest for the one and same purpose, that is, the extension of the State Secondary School of Triolet. Furthermore, the four plots of land have the same features and characteristics, with irrigation pipes thereon, with houses and a school on their side. Despite this fact, only one owner, namely Mr Cadamhosen Jaoffar, was awarded a compensation based on the sum of Rs5 m. per *arpent*, even though the manhole comprising the irrigation pipe is on his land. The offer of compensation made by the Government Valuer to Mr Cadamhosen Jaoffar to the tune of Rs5 m. per *arpent*, was agreed in 2002, and the compensation of more than Rs3 m. was paid to him in 2003.

May I also point out that the area where the four plots of land are situated has a tremendous potential for non agricultural development.

With your permission, Sir, may I table a copy of the location plan which clearly shows this, as well as the aggregate land which was acquired on 23 September 2002 and vested in the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research on 24 October 2002.

Mr Speaker, Sir, quite justifiably, the three owners, who were offered Rs450,000 per *arpent* for their plot of land, objected against the said evaluation as far back as 30 August 2002. The three owners are namely Mrs Widow Dhunraz Ram, Mrs Jasso Tulsi, and Mrs Widow Talayboodeen Noormamode in usufruct (and Mr Saleem Noormamode in bare ownership).

/...

CA/D32/P01/3

The matter remained unresolved from September 2002 to June 2005, as the Ministry did not refer the case to the Board of Assessment. Mr Speaker, Sir, when the matter was brought to my attention as the new Minister of Housing & Lands, I asked that the matter be referred to a Board of Assessment. There is a letter dated back 17 May 2006, from my Ministry to Her Honour Mrs V. Kwok Yin Siong, the Solicitor-General, the Chief Government Valuer and the two assessors annexing thereto all papers relevant to this case. In fact, the Land Acquisition Act 1973 provides for the setting up of the Board in the event that no agreement is reached with owners. A Board of Assessment was thus set up under the chairmanship of Mrs V. Kwok Yin Siong Magistrate, Intermediate Court, with Mr Keman Uddin Tegally and Mr Shah Ibne Ali Tarsoo as members. Mr Appadoo, Deputy Chief Surveyor of the Ministry, acted as Adviser to the Board of Assessment.

The case was called on *pro forma* on 20 June 2006 before the Intermediate Court and was heard on 12 September 2006, 14 November 2006, 20 December 2006, and 06 February 2007.

On 06 February 2007, the then Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, following consultations with the State Law Office, and advising on the stand of my Ministry, informed the Solicitor-General that there would be no objection to compensation being paid to the three owners at the rate of Rs5 m. per *arpent* based on the initial assessment of the Chief Government Valuer. The Board of Assessment made its award accordingly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have at no time misled the House on this matter. I invite the hon. Members to refer to the reply to PQ B/1053 and to its supplementary questions. I can reassure the House that this matter has been decided on its merit.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

SSS,

TRIOLET — LAND ACQUISITION(27/11/07)

(No. B/1195) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the compulsory acquisition of the four plots of land in Triolet for the construction of a State Secondary School, he will consider laying on the

Table copy of –

- (a) the minutes of proceedings of the meetings held in relation hereto;
- (b) the award of the Board of Assessment, and
- (c) the report of the Government Valuer.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both PQ B/1195 and PQ B/1203 which relate to the same subject of compulsory acquisition of four plots of land for the extension of the State Secondary School Triolet.

I refer the two hon. Members to my replies to PQ B/1008 on 07 August 2007 and to PQ B/1053 on 06 November 2007, as well as to the Statement I made on Tuesday 13 November 2007, when I tabled two location plans of the four plots of land compulsorily acquired. I am now tabling copy of a letter dated 06 November 2002 from the Chief Government Valuer wherein he himself advised that the three plots of land in question may be referred to a Board of Assessment for determination.

I have nothing to add to my referred two replies and statement. However, in regard to the specifics of PQ B/1195, I am advised that it would not be proper for me to table the papers referred to in parts (a), (b) and (c) thereof as they concern the Board of Assessment which is independent and which makes its award in its own deliberate judgment after taking into accounts all the facts of the case, including the documents submitted to it and which thus became its property, for example minutes of proceedings of the Board of Assessment itself.

In regard to the specifics of Parliamentary Question B/1203, I also refer the hon. Member to the two location plans I have already tabled.

Finally, Sir, all the four plots of land in question fall within the boundaries of irrigation area classified as primary agricultural land in accordance with the M.S.I.R.I classification map 2002, and, despite this fact, the Outline Scheme North 1995 failed to take this geographical and topographical reality into consideration, by discriminating between one specific plot and three other plots of land that all fall within the boundaries of the same irrigation area and on this specific plot of land described as “residential” can still be seen, and visibly so, irrigation pipes and manhole.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the price originally requested by the four former land owners through their Attorney-at-law?

Mr Dulull: This question has already been canvassed both in parliamentary questions and only statement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information, they agreed for a sum of Rs4 m. and Government paid Rs5m. I would like to know from the Minister if he considers this to be proper?

Mr Dulull: As I stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, award was made by the Board of Assessment in its own deliberate judgement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that a settlement was reached between parties at the level of the Board of Assessment? Is that correct?

Mr Dulull: The award was decided by the Board of Assessment.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Can I ask the Minister whether, when the settlement was made, it was the Chief Government Valuer who went to the Board of Assessment to say that he has no objection that the award be at the rate of Rs5 m. per arpent?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said so many times that the final decision was from the Board of Assessment because the matter was referred to it.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I know from the Minister, when the settlement was reached, who was the officer who told the Board of Assessment that there was no objection that Rs5 m. per arpent be granted to the land owners?

Mr Dulull: I need to refer to the file, but as far as I am concerned, it was the Board of Assessment that gave the award.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guinness: Can I refer the Minister to his own statement —

“On 06 February 2007, the then Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, following consultation with the State Law Office and advising on the stand of my Ministry, informed the SLO that there would be no objection to compensation being paid to the three owners at the rate of Rs5 m .”

So, this is a settlement.

Mr Dulull: Like I said, we sent a letter of “no objection” to the SLO to mention the stand of the Ministry, but we never interfered with the award at the level of the Board of Assessment.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Minister whether he gave his approval to the Permanent Secretary to make that statement at the Board of Assessment?

Mr Dulull: At the level of the Board of Assessment, we are represented by the State Law Counsel.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Minister whether it was the Government Valuer or the Chief Government Valuer who advised the Minister or the Permanent Secretary that a sum of Rs5 m be granted to the land owners per arpent?

Mr Dulull: The hon. Member seems to suggest that the Chief Government Valuer is now substituting himself to the Chairman of the Board of Assessment.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Lesjongard: When we refer to the Land Acquisition Act with regard to part III - Compensation, Apportionment of Rent and Rescission of Leases, at section 16 – an authorised officer, in the case of an assessment, has to submit a report and the reasons for his opinion on the nature of the land, the value of the land, the amount of any compensation to be paid, the description of the land and any apportionment of the compensation. Can the Minister inform the House who was the authorised officer who submitted that report?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let the Minister answer!

Mr Dulull: I have already explained the mechanism behind the award.

(Interruptions)

It is not the Ministry which awarded the sum; it is the Board of Assessment which acts independently.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker Sir, the Minister said, in his statement, that there was no objection to compensation being paid to the three owners at the rate of Rs5 m. per *arpent* based on the initial assessment of the Chief Government Valuer, when he himself in his reply said that the Chief Government Valuer gave the value of Rs450, 000 per *arpent*.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker Sir, the hon. Member got my statement wrong.

(Interruptions)

The initial assessment on the plot belonging to Mr Cadamhossen Jaoffar was Rs5 m. per *arpent*. I am going to table the letter which is from the Chief Government Valuer.

As regards the three other plots, they may be referred to the Board of Assessment for determination. That letter dates back to November 2002. For three years nothing was done; and when I took office, I wanted to do justice to the aggrieved owners. That was what we did, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker Sir, I come back to the question again. I made reference to the Land Acquisition Act with regard to compensation.

My question is very clear. I refer to section 16; I want to know who was the authorised officer who submitted the report to the Board of Assessment.

Mr Dulull: Like I mentioned, we don't interfere. I have explained how the award was given. We only issue a letter to our counsel but the Board of Assessment, in its own deliberate judgment, gave the award.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Guimbeau, last question!

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, tout ceci est un scandale. Un scandale énorme ! Au nom de la transparence, M. le président, en tant qu'un citoyen Mauricien, si le Ministre n'a rien à cacher, ce que la Chambre lui demande, c'est de déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée tous les documents dont j'ai fait mention dans ma question.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker Sir, I cannot table documents which are outside my control. I can table documents that are within my ambit; and I am going to table what has been written by the Chief Government Valuer.

SSS – TRIOLET – COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND (27/11/07)

(No. B/1203) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the plots of land compulsorily acquired for the construction of the State Secondary School at Triolet, he will state if all the plots were found within the

(a) boundaries of the irrigation area and classified as primary agricultural land, and

(b) boundary of permitted development under the Northern Outline Scheme.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1195)

MGSS, MOKA – PLAYFIELDS (25/03/08)

(N0.B/48) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Physical Education classes conducted at the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School, Moka, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the facilities existing thereat, including the extent of the playfields and other areas available, and

(b) if the playfields of other school/s is used to carry out these activities and, if so, indicate

(i) the time taken to go thereat and return therefrom, and

(ii) if any transport facilities is made available.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that the

MGSS Moka is not yet fully operational. The project for the construction of the college started in June 2002 in a phased manner. Out of a total area of 24,356 m², 8,978 m² have been earmarked as playfields.

However, in the implementation plan which is in four phases, playfields have been planned to be constructed in the fourth phase scheduled for financial year 2009/2010. Presently the project is at the third phase which consists mainly in the construction of an Administrative Block.

With regards to Part (b) of the question, arrangements have been made for playfields of MGI Secondary School to be made accessible. In addition, a total space of 2,641 m² is currently available at MGSS Moka for use as play area for the students. This will be increased to 4,641 m² within the current third phase, by May 2009.

Being given that the MGI Secondary School is located 300 metres away, it takes 15 minutes, the children can walk a little bit to go there and come back and thus no transport facility is required.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, when human beings are deprived of space, they become claustrophobic and prone to violence.

In the light of the answer given by the hon. Minister, around 9000m² of space allotted to 625 students, amounting to some 1.5m² per student.

Does the hon. Minister find it pedagogically correct and acceptable? This has been going on for five years. All work and no play!

Mr Gokhool: I share the genuine concern of the hon. Member, but the project started in 2002 and this is one example of bad planning. When the school was planned at that time, the predominant concern was to get pupils into buildings. This was mentioned by a representative of the Opposition on radio. When access was being given, the buildings were constructed, not schools. What happened is that the playfields were not provided.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Gokhool: The other thing is that even the science labs were not provided.

Mr Speaker: We are talking of playgrounds, please! Order! Order!

Mr Gokhool: When the number of pupils increased, we had to address the priority of providing them with the space for teaching and learning.

(Interruptions)

Playfields have not been considered at that stage. If we address the issue of playfields, then the children will be deprived of classrooms and laboratories. We have to make a choice.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, it takes 15 minutes to go to MGI central and 15 minutes to come back, 10 minutes preparation in a period of 70 minutes. More than half of the time is gone for preparation and only 30 minutes are left for physical education. As the Budget is coming, I should like to impress upon the hon. Minister to make things happen sooner than planned?

Mr Speaker: It is simple answer.

Mr Gokhool: The point is noted.

**LA GAULETTE SSS – KNOWLEDGE BASED TRAINING CENTRE
– CONVERSION (01/07/08)**

(No. B/779) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the La Gaulette State Secondary School, he will state if he will consider reviewing the decision taken to have it converted into a polytechnic, as announced in the Budget Speech 2008-2009.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the decision of converting the La Gaulette SSS into a modern Knowledge Based Training Centre has been a well thought one at the level of both my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development, as announced by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance & Economic Development in his Budget Speech and we are not considering reviewing this.

In the same line as measures are being taken to increase access to post secondary and tertiary education, the policy of my Ministry as regards technical and vocational education is for the expansion of opportunities for the benefit of students who do not wish to pursue studies in the mainstream academic system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the La Gaulette institution will not be a mere technical or prevocational school as stated by some. It will be an opportunity to work towards a new model of knowledge-based training centre with new programmes and contents with an enhanced use of technology. Courses offered will be in wide range, with a flexible approach through apprenticeship and distance strategies. My Ministry is working with all stakeholders, including the Industrial & Vocational Training Board (IVTB), the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) and the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) on these strategies.

As was announced in the Budget Speech 2008/2009, my Ministry will come up with a national examination system at the end of Form IV so that students are provided with alternate pathways to choose from either academic or technical/vocational streams. Thus students who would wish to opt for technical and vocational education would be given the chance to stream into their respective sectors in line with their aptitudes. It is a pedagogical fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that students must be given as many possible learning methodologies and channels to ensure that every learner has his or her place in the system.

The objective of the Knowledge Based Training Centre to be set up at

La Gaulette SSS would be to offer such alternate pathways to students as from Form IV onwards. It would, in the first instance, be proposing new programmes at lower levels to expand the provision of training in technical education, an area of need which has been highlighted in the HRDC Plan of 2007. It is also our strategy to make optimal utilisation of all facilities available in the Education and Training sectors.

The initiative, in the longer term, will be to also expand access to Tertiary Education in the region as the programmes to be offered at the school will later progress to higher levels in areas where there is both a demand and an economic imperative.

Moreover, my Ministry is open to discussions with all stakeholders regarding the modalities for the setting up of the Knowledge Based Training Centre, and all options will be analysed for the benefit of both students of

the region and of Mauritius.

Finally, I wish to state that there is no change of policy as far as running of prevocational classes is concerned.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do agree with the Minister that a modern polytechnic will be another opportunity for the children of other regions. But is he aware that when the school opened in La Gaulette, it was a step forward in combating poverty in the region? And the feeling of the people was that, for once, a Government cares for them and, more importantly, they had trust in their capacity to succeed if they got the opportunity. This is why I make a plea to the hon. Minister to look into the possibility of having another building in the vicinity, if necessary, to accommodate a modern polytechnic in the region, but not closing the State Secondary School.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I appreciate the fact that the hon. Member is not against the concept of a Knowledge Based Training Centre which will link up with higher education and cater from Form IV and beyond.

As regards the secondary school, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have given careful attention to this project and we have carried out a thorough school mapping which means that we have to take into account the number of students in the region who want to go to secondary schools and the number of seats which are available.

I can give the figures as regards La Gaulette SSS. The number of seats for Form I is 160 and in 2005, out of 160 seats which were on offer, only 85 students registered. In 2008, only 45 registered. It means that such a facility is not being optimally utilised.

Secondly, as regards the concern as to where will the students in that region be accommodated in secondary schools, we already have a new school which is operational, that is, the St. Esprit Case Noyale. We also have St. Mary's in Bambous, Swami Sivananda SSS and Bambous SSS. All these schools are under subscribed. There is the possibility of accommodating the students in that region. And let me also make it clear that there are only 12 students in Form I who come from the region of Le Morne, La Preneuse, Case Noyale and La Gaulette. We have to optimise the facilities. In fact, this project will be to the benefit of that region and we are taking into account the needs of the students who go to secondary schools.

I can assure the hon. Member and other Members of the House that this is a project which will benefit that region and Mauritius as a whole.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know exactly what the Minister is talking about. It is about the small number of pupils being registered in this school. But instead of closing the school, can the hon. Minister try to find out the reason as to why the registration at the school is very low. I just mentioned recently that in Le Morne Primary School, for example, you had at the last CPE...

The Deputy Speaker: This is yet another matter which...

Mrs Perrier: No, it is not. It is related, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has talked about the low intake of students in that school, which I allowed, but this question is not related to the other question and can perfectly be the matter of another parliamentary question.

Mrs Perrier: My point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the primary school feeds the secondary school.

The Deputy Speaker: I understand what the point of the hon. Member is. She must not worry. We were given the figures for Le Morne. I think, it was 8% or whatever, she herself had raised the matter, but that question is not applicable to the present subject.

Mrs Perrier: The hon. Minister said that the school is not utilised at its maximum. As I suggested before, is it possible not to close the school but open a part of it, if necessary, into a modern polytechnic? I don't think it is a good idea to close the school totally.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it is not a closure that is taking place; it is a conversion. It has happened. We have Nouvelle France SSS and MG SSS which we had to combine into one school. Here, we have analysed the situation and we feel that the facilities are not being optimally utilised. We have also taken into account the needs of the students in that locality. We have considered all aspects of the decision.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *gouverner c'est prévoir*. The Black River area is an area which is fast developing in terms of population. We knew, at the time we built the school, that in the first year it will be underutilised. But doesn't the hon. Minister think that in taking this present

decision - without disputing the need for a Knowledge Based Training Centre, as my friend just said – Government is sending a wrong signal to the whole region of Black River and to the thousands of families and schoolchildren in the western region that this area is unfit to have a State Secondary School?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Member should understand that we are looking at the future. I can give many examples. For instance, the school at Bel Air should not have been built where it is actually.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have given the figures. Right from 2005, the number of students has been declining. Furthermore, let me give another piece of information. We provided seats for Lower VI, but there were not enough students and we had to transfer them to other colleges. It means that there is a problem with regard to having optimal capacity at that school. There is another secondary school which has just been built. We have taken all these aspects into consideration. In fact, we are looking at the future of the region.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that the needs of the students have been looked into. He also mentioned that only 12 children from this region came to this school. We all know that we don't have enough children having the required level to have access to this secondary school. But, when we close the only State Secondary School...

The Deputy Speaker: This is a statement, hon. Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by closing this State Secondary School, is it not telling the parents of this region that the need of their children is not to have access to a State Secondary School?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a difficulty in understanding the hon. lady and other Members on the other side of the House. What we are trying to do is address the needs of the children for the future, and we are providing the facilities. Do they want two secondary schools to coexist and to be undersubscribed?

The Deputy Speaker: Before moving to the next item, I would like

to inform you that, following a supplementary question that had been put by hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, about the rank of a candidate, the hon. Minister has asked for permission to give the information, which he has been granted.

Mr Gokhool: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have checked, and the student was ranked 25th on the Science side (Girls) for the State of Mauritius scholarships.

LA GAULETTE SSS – KNOWLEDGE BASED TRAINING CENTRE (22/07/08)

(No. B/944) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the State Secondary School of La Gaulette, he will state if his Ministry is reviewing its decision to have it converted into a Knowledge Based Training Centre.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

LA GAULETTE SSS (22/07/08)

(No. B/948) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the La Gaulette State Secondary School, he will state if his Ministry will review its decision to have it converted into a vocational institution.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

PNQ

mri/d25p01.01

(48)

Debate No. 25 of 22 July 2008

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

- (a) **LA GAULETTE SSS – HSC CLASSES**
- (b) **ZONE D'EDUCATION PRIORITAIRE PLUS CONCEPT**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Black River area, he will state –

- (a) if the decision to convert the La Gaulette SSS into a Training Centre has already been reviewed and if so, if the school will run classes up to the Higher School Certificate level;
- (b) the measures that are being taken to improve the pass rates at the Certificate of Primary Education examinations in the schools thereat, in particular, the Le Morne Government School; and
- (c) how the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire Plus* concept will apply to the schools thereat.

Mr Gokhool Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I propose to reply to PQ Nos. B/944 and B/948 along with this PNQ.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the main objectives of the Government is to broaden the economic base so that the impact of the triple shocks can be absorbed more easily and the nation becomes more resilient to global changes.

The Budget 2008/09 clearly lays emphasis on the need to build a new economy which will be based on a multi pillar economic approach whereby the economy is called upon to shift from the traditional 4 pillars to one which will be supported by 8 to 10 pillars.

mr1/d25p01.03
(PNQ ctd/...)

Mr Speaker: I understand. The Minister can have a few words in introducing the answer, but he cannot make a statement of his policy decision.

(Interruptions)

Order! There is no need for any provocative remark!

Mr Gokhool: I bow to your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now! There is no need for any provocative remark!

Mr Gokhool: In my reply to PQ No. B/779 on 01 July 2008, I already gave an indication of the concept of the Knowledge Based Training Centre which is a new concept. I also informed the House that the La Gaulette Institution will not be a mere technical or prevocational school as stated by some. The emphasis is on new programme and contents making use of an enhanced use of technology with courses offered in a wide range with a flexible approach through apprenticeship and distance education and preparing knowledge workers for a knowledge based economy.

SC/D25/P02/02
(PNQ Contd.)

- (iii) the offering of TVET programmes in parallel both on an award and non award basis.

A Committee is currently examining the project in the light of public comments and observations made to the original project announced in the 2008/2009 Budget Speech. Consultation with all stakeholders are under way. A final decision will be announced in due course.

I also understand that no later than last Monday, this week an MOU was signed between IVTB and *Le Bocage* International School, where the IVTB/*Ecole Hoteliere Sir Gaetan Duval* and *Le Bocage* International School are starting an EDEXCEL National Certificate in Hospitality for secondary students holding the School Certificate. This opens the door to students who have vocational ambition and aspire to learn and develop the relevant ...

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order now! I have drawn the attention of the hon. Minister. This is a very straightforward question. I have allowed him some space to explain his policy and then to come to the question. The answer must be pertinent to the question, although some latitude has to be given to him. I have already given him the latitude and I will ask the hon. Minister to answer the question.

Order now! I can't hear what the hon. Minister is saying.

Mr Gokhool: The question asked is about the Training Centre. I am explaining the new concept and I have also explained that the La Gaulette SSS will continue with some additional facilities which will be provided.

Mr Speaker: I would just like to know from the hon. Minister why he was stating that there has been a Memorandum of Understanding between different schools. What this has to do with the question?

Order now! Let me listen to the hon. Minister.

Mr Gokhool: This was the question and I have answered. I am giving some more information that apart from the HSC programmes which are run and HSC professional programme is being examined, this is in line with the MoU which has been signed because students will also be ...

(Interruptions)

SC/D25/P02/04
(PNQ Contd.)

- The setting up of Pedagogical Committees in all schools with a view to identifying weaknesses and offering remedial teaching.
- Remedial education to those pupils encountering learning difficulties.
- Reinforcement of teaching & learning through better monitoring, supervision and evaluation.
- Active participation of pupils in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities with a view to enhancing their holistic development.

The School Feeding Project is yet another innovative good practice of the ZEP Project. Its contribution in improving performance since its inception from 30% to 36%.

The signature of an MoU between my Ministry and the Human Resources and FAO Madagascar/UNDP is to upgrade the School Feeding Project in primary schools and to increase the efficiency of the ZEP School Feeding Project starting with a national strategy framework, standards and operational procedures, supervision and evaluation guidelines, a Programme Management Unit and a mechanism for appraisal.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, the ZEP Plus Concept seeks to extend good practices in the ZEP schools to non-ZEP primary schools in the vicinity.

The existing good practices in the ZEP schools to date are, among others –

- (i) diagnostic teaching providing teaching support and a child-centered pedagogy to all pupils with learning difficulties;
- (ii) setting up a learning Support Team within the ZEP Unit for effective action at classroom level to all schools;
- (iii) ongoing training of teachers for adapted pedagogy;
- (iv) introduction of Technology in the classroom to improve teaching/learning process;

SC/D25/P02/06
(PNQ Contd.)

In fact, this is the normal procedure. We have done it when the Private Secondary schools were closed. Three schools closed and we re-diverted the students. Even for Nouvelle France and MGSS, one school was phased out and the students were re-diverted. It is not something new. I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition should be very careful when he is attributing things to me because I never said that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool: I never said that, Mr Speaker, Sir. I never said that all students will be diverted to St Esprit college, *Rivière Noire*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now!

D25P03CO2
PNQ (contd)

Mr Bérenger: On 01 July and again to day, the hon. Minister said that the idea is to come forward with the new model training centre and this new model training is, from what I understood last week, and this week, is going to come into operation after a national Form IV examination comes into practice. Can I ask the hon. Minister when is it expected that this National Form IV examination is going to start operating and how many such new model training centres are envisaged?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this measure was announced but its implementation will have to be prepared and it cannot happen overnight. We cannot start it next year. In fact, in 2009, we have to prepare the assessment, pilot test it and then we can run the assessment. It will take some time. In any case, measures in the education sector have a gestation period. It is not like any other sector where we can do things overnight. We have to prepare it carefully, pilot test it and then we will run the assessment for the Form IV, measure which has been announced in the Budget.

As regards the new version of the training centres, there is a very good justification, Mr Speaker, Sir. The traditional training centres provide technical and vocational education and then there is difficulty in finding pathways for these students to migrate to the university. What we are trying to do is to come with this new model which is being practised in many countries, that is, not giving purely the technical and vocational and but also the life skills, for example, some bit of management, some bit of life skills, communication and other academic aspects which are not included in the present programme. We are developing such programmes. It is a transitional phase. We are moving from the conventional training centres to the new model which allows the student, once they have got a certificate in technical and vocational education, to progress even up to the university. There are cases of students with a foundation course in technical and vocational education who have obtained their Phd. This is the kind of perspective that we want to give, even to Black River, because all children are our children. There is no sinister motive. If the Opposition continues to believe that the Minister of Education has got sinister motive, that is their opinion. I do not share it.

D25P03CO4
PNQ (contd)

Mr Gokhool: In fact, the system exists, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, any Head Teacher or teacher working in the ZEP schools is provided with the appropriate incentives. But what is lacking is a Performance Management System and we are putting it in place. So far there is no Performance Management System and it is not possible to track the performance of the teachers and the school management. We are putting this in place and this has been announced in the PRB. I have to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that when we talk about the Performance Management System, there is a big hue and cry among the unions and that is recuperated by certain quarters and then they argue as to why the Minister should go for it. I think we should go for it, and we are putting in place a Performance Management System.

Mr Bérenger: Concerning the last part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire Plus* concept, the Minister has told us that this new concept has been approved by the ZEP Council. Can I know the composition of the ZEP Council and when was that new concept endorsed?

Mr Gokhool: The ZEP Council is normally constituted of officers of my Ministry, the ZEP Coordinator, the cluster Coordinators, the *Parents Mediateurs*, the Liaison Officers and also representatives of UNDP. This is more or less the composition. The term of reference is to monitor and right now there is a mid-term report which is being examined and this report was funded by UNDP. The ZEP Plus concept is that when you have a ZEP school in the vicinity, alongside there are also non-ZEP schools which have experience certain difficulties. What we are trying to do, with the efforts we are making with the ZEP schools, there will be certain good practices which will emerge and these should be shared with other schools in the vicinity. This is the concept of ZEP Plus and it has been agreed upon by the ZEP Council.

D25/P04/mt/2

(PNQ) Contd.

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Minister has spoken about ZEP Plus concept. May I ask him whether that concept is taking the pre-primary facilities offered in that particular region on board?

Mr Gokhool: Yes, certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Perrier: The hon. Minister said in his answer that not later than yesterday he met someone who is agreeable for the conversion of the school. Can we know when he is going to meet the people concerned, that is, the representatives of the PTA of La Gaulette?

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Minister answered Friday next, if I am not mistaken.

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister talked about remedial education. Can the hon. Minister give us some details as to how this remedial education is being carried out or will be carried out, particularly in the schools of this region?

Mr Gokhool: We have put in place a number of measures. We have the Base Line Profiling for Standard I pupils to establish at what stage they are, and then we have the Pupils' Progress Sheet which is for Standard II. The third measure which we are implementing is the Diagnostic Assessment which I have mentioned in my answer so that we can identify at an earlier phase what are the difficulties and to take the remedial actions. These projects are being worked out with the MIE.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is related to La Gaulette college within a zone, because people from Zone 4, ranging from Camp Fouquereau, Vacoas and Holyrood, are also sent to La Gaulette. I wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether this centre will be opened to all the students in this area going for pre-vocational training.

Mr Gokhool: I said, yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have already answered.

D25/P04/mt/4

(PNQ) contd.

Mr Gokhool: Je ne vois aucun embarras, M. le président, parce que normalement il y a des gens qui réagissent par rapport à certaines choses qu'ils lisent ou qu'ils écoutent. I have never said that all students - this I have already answered - will be diverted. I said that in a spirit of partnership, if the project goes ahead, we will consider that. But then also what the Director of *BEC* has said, is that, if at all, we have to divert, maybe, they would have accommodated certain students. I don't see any problems from that point of view.

Mr Ganoo: I must tell the hon. Minister, because I know what is happening in the area.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Ganoo: Doesn't the hon. Minister think that instead of using La Gaulette SSS as a *cobaye*, that is, as a guinea pig, this school should...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now! Order!

Mr Ganoo: be preserved for the students of the whole region of Black River as an HSC college, because besides Swami Sivananda in Bambous, which is after all exclusively for girls, there is no other HSC SSS college in the whole area so that all boys from Bambous up to Bel Ombre/Black River could start following HSC classes as from next year?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now!

D25/P04/mt/6

(PNQ) contd.

Mr Gokhool: M. le président, je suis en politique pas pour la démagogie. I have been in politics for serious business and I don't believe in demagogy. I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we have to give careful thought so that at least we can do something good for the inhabitants of La Gaulette.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that PQ. No. B/889 and B/892 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister have been withdrawn. PQ. No. B/918 addressed to the hon. Attorney-General will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting, at the end of Question Time.

“KEEP

PACE” COMPANY – COMPLAINTS (19/08/08)

(No. B/1168) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if his Ministry has registered complaints from the employees of the Keep Pace company in relation to their contract of employment with the company.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, complaints have been registered at the level of my Ministry from employees of the “Keep Pace” company. For details of the complaints registered, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to part (d) of PQ B/1061 on 05 August last by my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resources.

I wish to inform the House that the company has undertaken to pay all remunerations due to the workers as soon as it receives payment in respect of its contract. The company has further requested that the individual claims

of non-payment of wages in respect of the 239 complainants be worked out by officers of my Ministry and submitted to it by the end of August 2008.

Thereafter, the company will have a meeting with officers of my Ministry on 12 September 2008.

The matter is being closely monitored by my Ministry. If the need arises, the matter will certainly be referred to the Industrial Court.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for this reply. I just want to inform him that even up to now employees have not been paid their salary for the past month.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has said it.

Dr. Bunwaree: This is what I have mentioned.

Miss Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that this is the same company for which there have been complaints about the level of service at Dr. Regis Chaperon SSS for the employees themselves are not equipped with the necessary tools to do the job properly?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this. It might have been reported to my Ministry. If a proper question is put, I can give a reply.