

SECONDARY

SCHOOL TEACHERS/OTHERS

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS – MIE COURSES

17-10-05

1


(No. B/64) Mrs D. Perrier (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain from the PSSA (a) the criteria usually observed in the selection of private secondary schools to follow various MIE courses, namely the Teachers' Certificate, the Teachers' Diploma and the PGCE (b) whether following the completion of the abovementioned courses, (i) there is an automatic upgrading of the teachers' qualifications and (ii) whether the travel grant is available outright to such teachers.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question I am informed by the PSSA that it is the responsibility of Managers of Private Secondary Schools to release teachers to follow MIE courses. Teachers so released must, of course, fulfil the entry requirements set down by the MIE for its courses. I am further informed by the MIE that the minimum admission requirements are as follows:

- (i) For the Teachers' Certificate they are five GCE "O" level including English Language or acceptable alternative qualifications. However, I am informed that the course leading to the Teachers' Certificate has now been phased out.
- (ii) For the Teachers' Diploma, the minimum admission requirements are five GCE passes including English Language, two of these passes should be at advanced level with at least one being relevant to the course applied for or acceptable alternate qualifications.
- (iii) As for the PGCE, the minimum admission requirements are a degree relevant to the main field of study offered.


Should there be an excessive number of applications having regard, of course, to the number of places the criteria followed is that of seniority. In the past there has not been an automatic upgrading exercise because the staffing of secondary schools is determined by the grants formula as laid down by the Management Audit Bureau. On the basis of the foregoing each school has what is called a teaching entitlement. However, the Ministry of Education has now accepted the Federation of the Union of Managers proposal for automatic upgrading upon the improvement of qualifications and that commitment is spelt out in the agreement which was signed earlier this year by the Ministry of Education with the Federation of Managers of Private Secondary Schools.

With regard to the question of travel grant I am informed that any teacher drawing a monthly salary above Rs14,470 and using his car to attend duty is



indeed being paid a travel grant.

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, le ministre est-il au courant que certains directeurs demandent aux professeurs une certaine somme d'argent variant entre R 15,000 et R 20,000 afin de pouvoir suivre ces cours et une fois qu'ils aient eu le cours et qu'ils aient été qualifiés pour une augmentation de salaires relatifs aux nouvelles qualifications, ils doivent aussi payer les directeurs? J'ai une lettre - que je vais remettre au ministre - qui avait été adressée au précédent ministre de l'éducation par des professeurs d'une école privée de Quatre Bornes. Le ministre peut-il faire une enquête à ce sujet?



Mr Obeegadoo: No, this is, of course, news to me, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have not received any direct information or representations to that effect nor have I received the letter referred to by the hon. lady. I have not seen it and it has not been copied to me. So, I would be very interested to have any information the hon. lady might hold and wish to assure her that any information imparted will be treated in total confidentiality.

31.10.00

2 (2)

RODRIGUES- SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS-ALLOWANCES

(No. B/140) **Mr S. Clair (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state if secondary school teachers from mainland Mauritius who own a house on State land or on private land in Rodrigues and posted there, will continue receiving a disturbance allowance and a rent allowance.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, teaching staff domiciled on the island of Mauritius and employed either on a contractual basis or on the permanent establishment to serve in secondary schools in Rodrigues are entitled to disturbance and rent allowances.

“Staff domiciled in Mauritius” implies those who are normally resident in and recruited from the island of Mauritius. At the time of their appointment, these teachers were still residents of the island of Mauritius, hence the payment of disturbance and rent allowances.

So far, the allowances have been paid as they served as incentive, encouraging teachers to move to Rodrigues and constitute a form of compensation for the fact that these teachers have to leave behind their home and relatives.

However, with regard to those secondary school teachers from Mauritius posted in Rodrigues and who now possess a house on State land or on private land in Rodrigues, I propose to take up the matter with the Ministry for Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms and with the State Law Office, to determine whether the teachers are still or should still be entitled to those allowances.

Mr Clair: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister look also into cases of teachers who are permanently employed in Rodrigues?

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I understood the point made by the hon. Member through his question to be that those who are in Rodrigues and who now own land or have built on State land in Rodrigues should not be entitled. We shall certainly be looking into that matter.

Mr Clair: Last year, I put a question on 14 December 1999 - It's the second time I put that question - and the reply was that the matter would be referred to the Ministry for Civil Service Affairs. I hope that the hon. Minister will speed up the matter.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the hon.

Member twice put the question during the tenure of office of the last Government: once in 1997, question addressed to the then Prime Minister, and once in December 1999, to my predecessor at the Ministry of Education. I am informed that no follow-up action whatsoever was undertaken. I can assure the hon. Member that things will change, and we will now actively look into the matter.

YEAR

2001

**RODRIGUES, MARECHAL LE CHOUX COLLEGE - NANCY, MR JEAN
ALEX - ALLEGED FORGERY (10/04/01)**

(No. B/156) Mr G. Paya (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he is aware that last year it was reported to the PSSA that a secondary school teacher of Marechal Le Choux College had made use of forged documents and certificates and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to - the person/s involved; the remedial measures taken to forestall a recurrence of same, and whether a full inquiry has been carried out into the case and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I am informed that in or about September 2000, the PSSA learnt from the press and by hearsay of allegations that Mr Jean Alex Nancy, then employed at Maréchal College, Rodrigues had falsely represented that he was the holder of a "*Licence de Biochimie*" from the *Université Henri Poincaré* of Nancy, France.

I am further advised that Marechal College Management subsequently sought clarifications from the said University and was informed in a letter dated 06 September 2000 that Mr Jean Alex Nancy had never, in actual fact, been awarded such a degree whereas in or about December 1992 he had allegedly stated to the Manager of Maréchal College and the PSSA that he did indeed hold that qualification.

I am further advised that on 13 September 2000, Mr Jean Alex Nancy resigned from his post at Maréchal College and that the alleged forgery has been reported to the Police by the Manager, Maréchal College, for investigation. I am, however, not aware of the status of the Police inquiry.

As regards remedial measures to forestall recurrence of situations whereby registration of teachers who have not yet been issued with their final degree leads to errors through confusion or misrepresentation, I am informed that the PSSA is exercising

stricter control. However, I am grateful to the hon. Member for drawing my attention to the matter and shall now personally look into the relevant procedures and take all appropriate measures.

**PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS - PENSION SCHEME/PRB
REPORT 1998 (24/04/01)**

(No. B/272) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he will state if the pension scheme of secondary school teachers has been reviewed with a view to adjusting the pension of retired teachers to bring it in line with the PRB recommendations.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, staff of private secondary schools are covered by three pension funds managed by the State Insurance Company of Mauritius Ltd.

PSSA and SICOM are jointly working on the review of pension schemes regarding, *inter alia*, the purchase of past services as recommended in the PRB Report 1998.

I am informed that the review exercise involves the amendment of several of the pension provisions, and is in the process of being finalised by the PSSA and SICOM Ltd.

Mr Chumroo: I am referring to those teachers who have already retired and who are not having the adjustment that they should have had.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my understanding was that the question referred to the prescription of the PRB report 1998 which states –

"We recommend that the pension provisions be amended to allow officers who would possibly not qualify for full pension at the normal time of retirement, to purchase some additional years of service at the start of their career, to enable them to qualify for full pension. Officers already in post should be given this option as from date of implementation".

I understood the question to refer to this part of the PRB report which is actively being looked into right now by the PSSA and SICOM, and the relevant provisions will be amended. If the hon. Member has suggestions or representations concerning teachers who have already retired, I'll welcome any suggestion in that sense.

Mr Chumroo: I'll just make an additional remark to the effect that those teachers who have already retired have not got any kind of benefit after the PRB report. It has to be worked out.

Mr Obeegadoo: If details are communicated, I'll look into the matter, Sir.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ABSENTEEISM

(No. B/540) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will say if the rate of absenteeism amongst the teaching staff in State secondary schools is high and, if so, will he state what remedial measures are being envisaged.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I am informed that the rate of absenteeism fluctuates from school to school within a range of 3% to 10%. Bearing in mind the leave entitlement of the teachers which is similar to that of other grades of public officers we cannot really talk of absenteeism as such in the sense of unauthorised absences.

Some teachers ask for their vacation leave during school term and if no replacement is available that unavoidably affects the smooth running of the school. The Ministry either turns down such requests or resorts to supply teachers in exceptional cases which warrant the grant of such leave.

My Ministry, in line with the stated objective of reviewing the status and conditions of employment of teachers, has initiated a global exercise which will address the vexed issue of absenteeism. In addition the ratio of so-called "floating teachers" to teachers with a permanent posting is being reviewed to allow for immediate replacement of teachers going on extended leave. As usual, all stakeholders including teachers' unions will be consulted.

D21p07cl/1

UNREVISED

P.Q. No. B/540 (cont'd)

Mr Chumroo: Will the hon. Minister confirm the fact that there is a great rate of absenteeism among students in State secondary schools, especially during the third term?

Mr Obeegadoo: Once again the question relates to the teaching staff. I have been informed that in Upper VI, for instance, invariably, students tend to absent themselves during the third term. But if the hon. Member wants precise information concerning different age groups, I shall provide whatever information is available when a question is put to that effect.

D29P12CO6

SCHOOLS (SECONDARY) – ADDITIONAL TEACHERS 2003

(No. B/787) Mrs F. Labelle (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will give the number of additional teachers who will be needed for the staffing of new secondary schools in January 2003.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/782)

30 OCT. 2001

31

(5)

PGCE COURSES – RECRUITMENT, EXPENDITURE, ETC

(No. B/736) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to Post Graduate Certificate in Education courses, he will state –

- (a) the date of the last but one recruitment for same;
- (b) the budget allocated therefor, indicating if the whole sum has been used;
- (c) the criteria for selection;
- (d) the number of candidates –
 - (i) who applied;
 - (ii) who were selected, and

P.T.O
→

D28P06CO4
PQ No. B/736 (contd)

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the answer is as follows:

- (a) The last but one recruitment for PGCE courses took place in January 1998;
- (b) Expenditure connected with the PGCE programme is not identified separately as a vote item in the MIE annual budget;
- (c) Applications for a PGCE programme are invited from secondary school teachers holding a degree relevant to the proposed main field of study.

Seniority and the relevant field of studies are the determining criteria. Only one teacher per subject area is normally selected from a given secondary school, according to seniority depending on the demand and the number of seats available for a particular field of study.

- (d) the number of candidates who applied following open advertisement in 1997 for the PGCE course was 293 of which a 120 were selected and of those selected 49 was selected by the Ministry of Education.

The number of candidates who have completed the course were 120.

Mr Dowakarsing: Mr Speaker, can the hon. Minister state to the House whether there were candidates who were on the verge of retirement and who were selected for the course?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am afraid I do not have that information, Mr Speaker. But I am informed that subsequent to the selection there were representations made to the Ministry to the effect that the seniority criterion had not been everywhere respected as a result of which the first list of 41 names selected by the Ministry was revised to 49 names, in that seven names were removed and 15 names were added.

11 DEC. 2001

55

7

**RODRIGUES - MARECHAL COLLEGE - OVERPAYMENT TO
TEACHER - REFUND**

Sean O'Sullivan
✓ (No. B/924) Mr J.Von-Mally (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the teacher who made use of a document/diploma over the recent years at Maréchal College Rodrigues, in order to be employed as Education Officer and to receive a higher pay, he will now state-

- (a) what steps the PSSA or his Ministry has taken in order
 - (i) to recover the money overpaid and
 - (ii) to forestall recurrence of similar situations;
- (b) the outcome of the Police inquiry into the matter, and

(Contd)

KV/34/P9/3

NO B/924 (CONTD)

(c) the date of appointment of that teacher, indicating if he has since been dismissed in the public interest and judicial proceedings taken against him?

Mr Obegadoo: Sir, it is assumed that the question refers to the alleged use of faked documents by a former teacher of Maréchal College and which was addressed to in reply to PQ B/156 at our sitting on 10 April 2001.

With regard to part (a) (I) of the question, I am now advised that the PSSA is still awaiting the outcome of the Police inquiry in the case reported by the Manager of Maréchal College before taking necessary action to recover the money overpaid or otherwise. In this respect I am further advised that the case has been referred to the DPP for a decision.

As regards part (ii), I am informed that, in order to forestall recurrence of similar situations, the PSSA is exercising stricter control and has for that purpose reorganised its Registration Section which is responsible, *inter-alia*, for verifying the genuineness of documents submitted, including educational certificates. According to the PSSA, all such documents are checked against the originals wherever available and in case of doubt the matter is taken up with the issuing institution. This revised procedure has, it is reported, enabled the PSSA to detect at least one case of forged certificate from an applicant which occurred at the end of April 2000 and the matter was accordingly reported to the Police.

As regards the last part of the question, the teacher under reference took up employment as teacher at Maréchal College on 07 January 1993 and he resigned his post on 13 September 2000. Judicial proceedings against him, if any, would depend on the outcome of the Police inquiry.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all for the rule of law. Is it normal for the PSSA to sit down and just wait? The PSSA has waited for more than a year. Is this normal?

UNREVISED

KV/34/P9/4
NO B/924 (CONTD)

Mr Obeegadoo: I can understand the hon. Member's concern that matters seem to be taking very long. But then, again, in this case, the person concerned has resigned. The matter has been reported to the Police. The Police have inquired. I am given to understand that the case has now been referred to the DPP, and I presume action will be taken depending on the recommendations of the DPP.

Mr Von-Mally: In cases where public money has been paid as travelling allowance in excess, people have been asked to refund almost immediately after. In this case, people have been paid a lot of money in excess and up to now nothing has been done? This is not normal!

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Member should understand that there is an allegation that a fake or a forged document was used. It is only a Court of law that can pronounce in a definitive manner whether that is so and, therefore, request for reimbursement and whatever criminal or civil proceedings that may be envisaged can only follow from a decision of the competent authority.

At 1.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

YEAR**2002**

PRIVATE/STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS EMPLOYEES - CONDITIONS OF SERVICE (09/04/02)

(No. B/110) Mr S. Sakaram (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in keeping with the policy of aligning the conditions of service of employees of private secondary schools with those prevailing in the public sector, he will state if Government intends -

- (a) to readjust pensions in payment to retired employees on the basis of the salary scale recommended by the PRB and applicable to Government employees whenever such recommendations are implemented; and
- (b) to pay annual compensation to them.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, it is the policy of Government that the teaching and non-teaching staff of the private secondary schools should eventually enjoy conditions of service comparable to that of their counterparts in the Civil Service. It is important to note that the PRB indicated, in its 1998 report, that all conditions of service recommended for the State sector should be applicable to all approved teaching and non-teaching staff except for the question of pension in respect of which the PRB recommended that the prevailing arrangements for teaching and non-teaching staff of private secondary schools should be maintained. That isolated departure from the stated policy was due to the fact that the pension scheme of the staff of the private secondary schools was *ab initio* contributory and, therefore, different from the pension scheme applicable to public officers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is committed to the above policy and will ensure that parity of treatment is meted out to the teaching and non-teaching staff, irrespective of whether they are from the State or the private secondary sectors. But, Government also acknowledges the specificity of the pension scheme of the staff of the private secondary schools. In this respect, I wish to reassure the hon. Member that the request for readjustment of pension on the basis of the salary scale recommended by the PRB for public officers, will be duly considered by Government in consultation with all parties concerned.

As regards part (b) of the question, I can confirm that, like employees of the State sector, employees of the private secondary sector paid by the PSSA do get the yearly cost of living compensation. However, should the hon. Member be referring to annual compensation with regard to pensions, if that is so, I would like to inform the House that the PSSA has already initiated action to reintroduce the annual compensation which was stopped in 1997 because of the insolvency of the pension fund.

21 May, 2002

23

8

RODRIGUES – MARECHAL COLLEGE – TEACHER – ALLEGED FORGED CERTIFICATE

(No. B/313) Mr J. Von-Mally (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs and Minister of External Communications whether, in regard to the case involving a teacher who used a forged document/certificate to secure employment at Maréchal College for about 10 years, he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain –

- (a) whether any declaration/statement has been made/given to the Police since the matter was discovered and, if so –
 - (i) the Police Officer/s who recorded same;
 - (ii) the deponent's name; and
 - (iii) the Occurrence Book (OB) number
 - (b) whether the Police holds evidence from the University of Henri Poincaré of Nancy, France, confirming that the teacher has not obtained any *Licence de Biochimie* from it; and
 - (c) where matters now stand and the reasons for the case to drag on.
-

21 May, 2002

24

D11/IF/P05/3

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police as follows -

- (a) a complaint was filed against the teacher in question by the father of one of his pupils on 30 September 2000.
 - (i) The police officer who recorded the complaint was Police Sergeant Callychurn.
 - (ii) The complainant was one Mr Desiré Laval Perrine.
 - (iii) The Occurrence Book Number is 862/2000 Port Mathurin.
- (b) Police inquiry has revealed that the teacher in question did not hold a *Licence de Biochimie* from the University Henri Poincaré of Nancy, France. He was awarded only a *certificat provisoire* from the said university.
- (c) I am informed that the inquiry has been completed and the matter has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Mr Von-Mally: Sir, will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister state whether the Manager of the REDCO has ever informed the Police of this case?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The insinuation seems to be that that teacher claimed to have a given diploma and, therefore, got employment whereas, in fact, he did not hold that diploma. I am given to understand - I want to be fair in that case - that the gentleman concerned had a final exercise to do to get his *licence*, but he did not do so and came back to Mauritius and Rodrigues. My information is that when he applied for employment in Rodrigues, he informed the person in charge in the college that this is the certificate that he has. According to my information he did not pretend to have a certificate to get employment. He came forward with the certificate that he had obtained and got employment on that basis. But again I leave it to the DPP. The Police has done its inquiry and the DPP might come to a different conclusion.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that there is some cover-up on this matter and maybe the Ag. Prime Minister has not been given the right information. Therefore, will he make an inquiry in order to know whether there has been some cover-up on the part of those in charge of that school in Rodrigues? My information is that even the certificate was a forged one; and I have in my possession a letter which I would like to lay on the Table of the Assembly whereby the *Faculté des Sciences* of the

21 May, 2002

25

D11/IF/P05/4

University of Henri Poincaré stated that "the teacher in question *n'a pas obtenu de licence de biochimie de son établissement*".

The Ag. Prime Minister: He has not obtained his *licence de biochimie*, and this is exactly what I said. Let me add that during the end of 1992 the gentleman concerned applied for a post of teacher Grade A at Maréchal College, Rodrigues. My notes tell me that he produced all his academic certificates including his *certificat provisoire* to late Mr Jacques Cunden who was at that time the Island Secretary and Manager of Rodrigues Education Development Co. Ltd. His application was accepted.

Mr Von-Mally: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he will have the inquiry conducted in order to know whether the Manager of that school has dealt into some covering in this matter?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I said before, the DPP will take a decision. I must say that there is one disturbing aspect. Mr P. Jawaheer, Police Document Examiner and Mr T. Purmanand, Scientific Officer examined the copy of the *certificat provisoire* of the gentleman concerned and both found discrepancies between typescripts and the remaining ones. I am no expert, but it seems that discrepancies were found and all this has been inquired into and sent to the DPP. I leave it to the DPP to determine whether there is cause for action.

Mr Von-Mally: One last question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether the actual Manager had informed the Police about this case? He has talked about the parent who has been to the Police, but has the Manager himself deponed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Well, I am sure the Police must have taken statements from everybody concerned. I hope so otherwise they would have been taken to task. But I am sure they have taken statements from everybody concerned and all this has now been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

28 May, 2002

9)

61

**RODRIGUES - MARECHAL COLLEGE - ALLEGED CASE OF
FORGED CERTIFICATE**

(No. B/369) Mr C. Leopold (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the case involving a teacher who used a forged document/certificate to secure employment at Marechal College for about 10 years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the PSSA as to whether a teacher holding a *certificat provisoire* entitled its holder to be employed as a Grade A teacher and, if so, whether there is a time-limit for such teacher to produce his/her full certificate.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, there was a Police inquiry concerning a former teacher of Marechal College who is alleged to have in or about December 1992 made use of a forged document and unless and until the case is tried and judgment delivered, we cannot pronounce on the veracity of such allegations.

As regards the second part of the question, it is a fact that certain tertiary institutions, particularly in France and in India, normally issue provisional certificates in order to facilitate the *démarches* of students pending such time as they are awarded their final certificates. It has been

28 May, 2002

62

UNREVISED

KV/12/P10/6
NO B/369 (COTND)

the practice for the PSSA, since 1976, to recognise provisional certificates from France for the purpose of registering teachers in private secondary schools.

As from 1995, the PSSA started recognising provisional certificates from India and holders thereof were requested to submit their originals within a period of one year. Unfortunately, the PSSA did not deem it necessary to impose a similar condition on holders of provisional certificates from France and, therefore, the case of the teacher under reference went unnoticed until it came out in the press in September 2000.

I am informed that the PSSA is now exercising stricter control on provisional certificates and where appropriate prospective teachers are required to swear affidavits before the Supreme Court. In addition, the PSSA also checks with the issuing institution in case of doubt.

Mr Léopold: Since a long time has elapsed, can I know from the hon. Minister what are the procedures that the PSSA has already initiated to have the sum of money paid in excess to that teacher refunded?

Mr Obegadoo: As I stated earlier, there has been a Police case and, as was answered by the Ag. Prime Minister last week, the conclusions of the Police inquiry have been remitted to the DPP. We shall await the outcome of this Police inquiry before taking any action that is appropriate.

UNREVISED

DR/D23/P09/1

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS - EDUCATION OFFICERS - HSC
CLASSES**

(No. B/ 428) Mr J. C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether in regard to the forthcoming reform in education and the introduction of Form VI schools, he will state the measures he envisages to take to maximize the human resourcefulness of the long experience of Education Officers in the teaching of HSC classes in both private and State schools.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I would like to remind the House that the national Budget has provided, *inter alia* for the creation of the following additional posts in the secondary sector of education -

282 Education Officers
5 Rectors
21 Deputy Rectors

Now that the national Budget has been voted, my Ministry is in a position to proceed with detailed planning of postings for the new schools in January 2003. For the Form VI State colleges, it is envisaged, as far as possible, to make optimal use of experienced Education Officers, Rectors and Deputy Rectors. A team of officials is considering this issue including the management aspect. I understand that the private secondary schools are working along the same lines.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, as there is actually a certain fear among teachers, I would like to ask the hon. Minister to seek the advisability of having ongoing dialogue with teachers concerned both in private and State secondary schools.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is already a fact that there is ongoing dialogue. As the hon. Member is aware, within the State sector there are two main unions of teachers and in the private sector there is UPSEE and SPSTU. I meet all these unions regularly. They are fully involved in the process of planning for 2003. For instance, within the State sector we have been discussing with the unions as to how teachers can

UNREVISED

DR/D23/P09/2
(No. B/428 CONT'D)

volunteer to go into the Form VI colleges to be rather than to have arbitrary postings. So, there is ongoing dialogue and I want to reassure the hon. Member that everything within our abilities is being done to ensure that everybody is taken on board and given a chance to participate in the shaping of things to come.

16/7/02
11

38

D24P07CO5

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL (NEW) -
REDUNDANCY/REDEPLOYMENT OF TEACHING STAFF**

(No. B/454) Mr J. C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and scientific Research whether, in regard to the opening of new State secondary schools, he will state if it will affect the normal running of the existing secondary schools and, if so, will there be redundancy and, if so, will he state what measures he envisages to take to re-deploy the members of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of the implementation of the education reforms plan, 18 additional Forms I to V secondary schools and 5 additional Form VI colleges will be in operation in 2003 on the island of Mauritius. However, the objective of opening new State secondary schools is certainly not to close down private secondary schools but rather to increase intake capacity, for the introduction of 11-year compulsory schooling.

The hon. Member will recall that plans for opening of new SSS were announced in a document of my Ministry published in May 2001. That document, in fact, explained that the infrastructural developments would generate an additional capacity of some 5,200 seats by 2006. Yet such a development is not anticipated to lead directly to any closure of private secondary schools in as much as the additional places are meant for the new prevocational stream requiring some 3,500 additional places yearly as well as for the compulsory schooling up to age 16.

It is worth noting that since 2001, two private secondary schools have closed in each case as a result of industrial relations and internal management problems, such closures having absolutely nothing to do with Government reforms plans.

D24P07CO7
PQ No. B/454 (contd)

Nonetheless my Ministry is involved in an ongoing process of consultations with the federation of managers of private secondary schools and the union of private secondary schools employees concerning all possible implications and consequences of the implementation of reforms in secondary education.

Allow me to reassure the hon. gentleman, that if, and when a secondary school closure for whatever reasons should occur, all employees and students will be re-deployed as was the case for Northern and Stratford colleges.

At 12.45 p.m the sitting was suspended.

29 Oct. 2002

D31p04cl/6

**UNREVISED
HSC EXAMINATIONS – REPEATERS**

(No. B/613) **Mr J. C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will give the present number of HSC students who have passed their HSC examinations with flying colours and are still attending star schools like the Curepipe Royal College, the Port Louis Royal College, the Queen Elizabeth College and the Dr. Maurice Curé State secondary school.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I take it that the hon. Member is referring to those students who have obtained 3As at the HSC examinations and are repeating Upper VI at the schools mentioned in the question with a view to improving their results and thereby obtaining a scholarship.

The figures I am providing therefore relate to the number of HSC students who this year are at their second sitting and who had obtained a minimum of 3As at their first sitting in 2001. They are as follows –

College	Total
Royal College Port Louis	5
Royal College Curepipe	1
Queen Elizabeth College	3
Dr. Maurice Curé College	2

29/4/03

13

69

CA/D07/P12/4

SC & HSC SCHOOL LEAVERS - IT COURSES

(No. B/273) **Dr. N. Issimdar (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Training, Skills Development, Employment and Productivity whether he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain whether the IVTB is launching free courses on IT for HSC school leavers and, if so, will he further ascertain –

- (a) the number of seats available; and
- (b) the eligibility criteria for enrolment.

Mr Fowdar: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Task Force on e-Education and Training has given an indication in its report that around 20,000 persons trained in IT would be needed within the next five years in Mauritius. It is on this basis that the Government is giving a big push to training in IT, and this explains why my Ministry and the IVTB are investing massively in IT training to produce the critical mass required.

I wish to inform the House that the IVTB will run the following training programmes as from 05 May 2003 –

- (i) Basic course in information technology (e-Business) of 300 hours duration for 1,160 unemployed HSC holders.
- (ii) Basic course in call centre operations of 200 hours duration for 240 unemployed SC holders.

The eligibility criteria for enrolment are as follows –

- (i) Basic course in IT - Minimum of 2 subjects at A level or an alternative qualification
- (ii) Basic course in call centre operations - SC, with at least 5 credits, including English, French and Maths

The courses will be provided free of charge to the trainees. Trainees will also benefit from an allowance of Rs3,000 for the course in IT and Rs2,000 for the course in call centre operations, to meet travelling and other related expenses. The total estimated cost for the two courses for 1,400 trainees is Rs24 m. The cost will be borne by the IVTB. The training programme will be dispensed by 12 MQA registered training institutions.

CA/D07/P12/5
(No. B/273) (contd)

Mr Speaker, Sir, these two courses in e-business and call centres mark the second phase of IT training provided by IVTB to enhance employability of young students.

During the first phase, a basic course in IT for 1,440 unemployed HSC holders was conducted by the Ministry, in collaboration with the IVTB. A tracer study conducted by the IVTB six months after completion of the training programme indicated that 47% of the successful trainees have been able to find a relevant job in the IT field.

Mr Leopold: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the same facilities are granted in Rodrigues?

Mr Fowdar: I don't have the precise information, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we have already launched a training programme at the IVTB in Rodrigues.

**GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL - MONTHLY
COST PER STUDENT FOR YEARS 2000-2002**

(No. B/408) Mr X. L. Duval (Fourth Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will table a list of the monthly cost per student attending each Government secondary school for each of the financial years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002.

Mr Obegadoo: Sir, the information requested is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the information is not available? As a matter of course at the Ministry, it has to be compiled.

Mr Obegadoo: Yes, Sir. Because the question relates to each Government secondary school, including presumably both recurrent and capital expenditure, therefore this is a constantly evolving picture and the information is being compiled and will be made available.

**PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS/CONFESSIONAL
SCHOOLS - SUBSIDY PER STUDENT**

(No. B/409) Mr X. L. Duval (Fourth Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will table a list of the monthly subsidy per student met from public funds for each private secondary school including confessional schools for each of the financial years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002.

Mr Obegadoo: Sir, the information requested for is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to be rude to the hon. Minister, but this information has already been submitted and is a subject matter of the last Report of the PAC. Therefore, I find it very hard for the Minister to say that it is being compiled. I was as polite as I could, but it was not apparently helpful. This is why I am saying I find it very hard to believe that this information is not available as it is already the subject of Section V of the last PAC Report.

Mr Obegadoo: Let me try and make it easier for the hon. Member to comprehend. The hon. Member is perfectly right. This issue was raised at the level of the Public Accounts Committee in respect of one of the fiscal years mentioned in the question. Even for that year, Members of the Public Accounts Committee made some quite pertinent remarks as to the method of calculating those figures. We are so attentive to those remarks that we are looking again at the computation of those figures and for the other year, of course, we have to compute anew.

27/4/04
15

UNREVISED

DR/D07/P08/3

**VACOAS HOLYROOD SSS, NOUVELLE FRANCE FORM VI
STATE COLLEGE AND PORT LOUIS COLLINE MONNERON
STATE COLLEGE - INTAKE OF STUDENTS, CONSTRUCTION,
ETC.**

(No. B/288) **Dr. R. Beebejaun** (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether in regard to -

- (a) Vacoas Holyrood SSS Girls State College Forms I-V;
- (b) Nouvelle France Form VI Girls State College;
- (c) Port Louis Colline Monneron Girls State College

he will, in respect of each college, state when -

- (i) the first intake of students was made, indicating the institutions where the students are currently accommodated, and
- (ii) the construction of the buildings to accommodate these colleges started and the expected dates of completion and occupation thereof.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the question refers to three cases where construction of secondary educational institutions have been delayed and before considering the specifics of these cases, it is crucial...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are used in this Government to take a fast track approach. In this case, for the Opposition we shall take a slow track approach.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the question refers to three cases where construction...

(Interruptions)

UNREVISED

DR/D07/P08/4
(No. B/288 Cont'd)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...of secondary educational institutions have been delayed and before considering the specifics of these cases, it is crucial to set the general context.

History will recall...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please! Does the hon. Member have any complaint against the hon. Minister for the speed or for the language?

Dr. Beebeejaun: For wasting the time of the House in matters we already know. We want specific information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: History will recall that whereas at Independence in 1968, the State operated four secondary educational institutions, that number increased on average by one school a year to reach 34 in the year 2000. And then, in the next three years, the figure jumped to 67 by January 2004, almost equivalent to one new school per month. The sheer magnitude of our achievement makes it inevitable that here and there problems and delays do occur.

The problems relate more often than not to a...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, do I have your permission to proceed?

Mr Speaker: Unfortunately, we are bound to listen to what the hon. Minister is saying because I cannot stop him from replying to the question.

UNREVISED

DR/D07/P08/5
(No. B/288 Cont'd)

Mr Obeegadoo: Thank you, Sir. At the initial stage, acquisition of land for construction may prove to be a long drawn-up process in itself.

Further, the problems relate more often than not to a bottleneck situation at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping where a limited number of technical staff have had to respond to an unprecedented volume of work since the year 2000 and which relate mainly to educational projects, but also to infrastructural developments initiated by other Ministries. I am given to understand that there is a scarcity of professionals in the relevant areas within the MPI so much so that the MPI has recruited and still recruiting from abroad in response to ever increasing needs. In addition, tendering procedures are a time-consuming exercise where at times difficulties of a technical or legal nature do unexpectedly arise involving further loss of time. Also, for a host of reasons ranging from adverse climatic conditions to scarcity of construction materials, unforeseeable delays do sometimes occur in the construction process itself...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: ... as all reasonable persons would acknowledge. Thus, in the three cases under consideration, delays have indeed occurred.

In the case of Vacoas SSS Girls, resort was had to time consuming compulsory acquisition procedures for obtention of the relevant portion of land at Holyrood in 2002. Construction began in November 2002 and the first phase was completed and handed over in July 2003. However, in the course of 2003, following representations from parents to the effect that the Holyrood site was too far off the main road for a girls' school, searches for an alternative and more central location were launched and a site next to Dr. Maurice Curé college was identified towards the end of last year. Building works there will start in the second half of 2004 with a first phase to be completed early next year. Since 2003, students are accommodated at Floreal SSS and these students will move to Vacoas SSS next year.

Turning to Nouvelle France Sixth Form State College (Girls), again construction was initially delayed by time consuming acquisition of land procedures and by the scarcity of professional manpower at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping. Construction works started earlier this year and a first phase of the college will be completed in

UNREVISED

DR/D07/P08/6
(No. B/288 Cont'd)

the latter part of 2004. Students have since 2003 been accommodated at Forest Side SSS (Girls) and the date at which they will move to Nouvelle France will be finalised after consultation with the Parent Teachers' Association.

Turning to Port Louis State College (Girls), this is a case where although land was obtained as far back as 2001, initial surveys suggested serious problems linked to the subsoil. The absence of an alternative site in Port Louis dictated that detailed geomorphological investigations be commissioned and finally construction works only started after lengthy tendering procedures were completed earlier this year. Construction works are now ongoing and the first phase of the building will be ready before the end of the present academic year. The first intake of students in 2003 as well as the second intake in 2004 have been accommodated at the Rabindranath Tagore Institute at Ilot.

All necessary steps to alleviate any hardship caused to students have been taken, including provision of transport facilities. My Ministry is in constant communication with all interested parties, including Parent Teachers' Associations to explain difficulties encountered and provide whatever information may be called for. We shall leave no stone unturned to ensure that students of these three institutions mentioned earlier are physically located in Vacoas, Nouvelle France and Port Louis as soon as possible.

D07/P09/mt/1

UNREVISED

(No. B/288) contd.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Bravo! Schools, which don't exist have a name and exist by name only! May I remind the hon. Minister that when he initiated these projects, he promised to have these schools by the second-term of last year, especially in Port Louis. He assured the parents that by the second-term of last year there would be a school at Colline Monneron. Could he make a statement on that?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would have thought that out of mere self-respect, the new Deputy Leader of the Labour Party would have remained quiet on this issue. We are in the present situation, because the former Government did not build schools....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I became Minister of Education...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: When I became Minister of Education, the dropout rate at the end of primary schooling was nearly 10%! Nearly 10% of the children of this country dropped out of schooling at the end of primary! Today, that percentage has dropped to about 3%. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has nothing to be ashamed of; on the contrary, we are very proud of what we have achieved in terms of education in this country.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Beebeejaun: Where ignorance is bliss! Would the hon. Minister tell the House how many of these sites, where he has built schools, were already identified by the previous Government?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Very few, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order!

UNREVISED

(No. B/288) contd.

Mr Obeegadoo: Very few, Sir, and we invariably have had problems with such sites as Quartier Militaire, identified by the previous Government next to a river.

Dr. Beebeejaun: A last question. Of the three schools mentioned, were boys and girls mixed?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, Sir!

Dr. Beebeejaun: I'll appeal to the hon. Minister to inquire again.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am categorical. The schools mentioned are Vacoas SSS, Nouvelle France VIth Form College and Port Louis State College are not mixed schools. Now, in the case of Vacoas, where students have been temporarily accommodated at Floreal, there are indeed...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: There are indeed boys of that school, Floreal SSS, located there. But, I am categorical that, for the three schools mentioned in the question, these are not mixed schools.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that these schools don't exist, the students are going elsewhere. So, wherever they are going, it is a school where there are mixed students - wherever they are going, I don't know by what name.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

UNREVISED

(No. B/288) contd.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member clearly has a problem in expressing himself clearly. I have explained about the three schools in question.

Dr. Beebeejaun: I would now make an appeal to the Minister. Insofar as admission to Form I is concerned, there have been lots of confusions in the student population where these schools are. They applied for Nouvelle France and they found that they are in Floreal or Forest Side. I make an appeal to the hon. Minister that, at least, he informs the public. Some students have turned down the offer of a school in Nouvelle France, thinking it is in Nouvelle France when it isn't so.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, what can I do? The hon. gentleman deliberately chooses to misunderstand. I said that Nouvelle France has been accommodated at Forest Side. I read it fast, I read it slowly and the gentleman still doesn't understand!

Dr. Beebeejaun: What I am saying to the hon. Minister is that when students filled in their admission forms they were offered a school in Nouvelle France and they turned it down, thinking that it is too far. Students from Port Louis are given admission to Nouvelle France; they think it is too far, but if they knew it was nearer, they would have accepted.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I really no longer understand. This is the Opposition which argued against regionalisation, which is now finding that Nouvelle France is too far from Port Louis.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Beebeejaun: The hon. Minister mentioned regionalisation, but the students from Port Louis are going to Nouvelle France. This is a matter that is on record. What regionalisation is the hon. Minister talking about?

Mr Obeegadoo: If the Opposition was in power, these schools would not even have existed!

(Interruptions)

D07/P09/m/4

UNREVISED

(No. B/288) contd.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, did I hear the hon. Minister say that construction has started at Nouvelle France?

Mr Obeegadoo: I stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, that construction works have started at Nouvelle France.

Dr. Boolell: And I would ask the hon. Minister to go on site and visit the place. They have only started to clear the land! Can I know....

(Interruptions)

No! No, this is no construction! That's clearing of site!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I inform the hon. Minister that the clearing of the site started way back and there is nobody on the site to start construction, and this has been there for some time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am thankful to the hon. gentleman for his assistance in the close monitoring of these construction sites and I shall transmit the information to my friend, the Minister in charge of construction of schools.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

15 June 2004

49

16

D15P09CO1

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

**ROYAL COLLEGE PORT LOUIS - RECTOR, LABORATORIES,
ETC**

(No. B/534) **Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, with a view to providing quality education to students of the Royal College, Port Louis (RCPL), he will state -

- (a) if the RCPL is operating without a Rector and, if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the services of a Higher Executive Officer, Ushers and Caretakers are readily available for the good running of the RCPL;
- (c) whether the college yard is conducive towards quality time and education, and
- (d) whether the laboratories are operating as per set standards and regulations;

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Rector of Royal College Port Louis proceeded on pre-retirement leave on 06 May 2004 and as from that date, the Deputy Rector assumed headship of the college in line with normal practice. In the course of the annual transfer and posting exercise for Rectors, one of the seniormost Deputy Rectors at national level has recently been assigned duties of Rector at Royal College Port Louis pending appointment of Rectors in a substantive capacity by the Public Service Commission.

Turning to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Higher Executive Officer posted at Royal College Port Louis has also proceeded on pre-retirement leave on 22 May 2004 and the Clerical Officer at that college has been assigned the duties of Higher Executive Officer pending the appointment of a Senior School Clerk. The hon. gentleman may be interested to note that the officers in the grade of Senior School Clerk will henceforth service secondary schools in place of Higher Executive Officers. I am further informed that two Ushers are presently posted at that college whereas regarding Caretakers, there are three in post and one General Worker has been assigned duties of Caretaker.

Sir, however much I consider it my duty to provide as much information as possible to the House, I must confess that I am at a loss to understand part (c) of the question and would invite the hon. Member for

D15P09CO2
PQ No. B/534 (contd)

Piton-Rivière du Rempart to rephrase that part of the question so that an appropriate answer may be provided.

Finally, the House may note that there have never been standards and regulations prescribed for the operation of school laboratories in State secondary schools and colleges. However, it is the declared intention of my Ministry to define relevant norms and standards for secondary institutions applicable to both State and private sectors. I am advised that in the meantime Science laboratories at Royal College Port Louis are operating normally.

Dr. Jeetah: Let me thank the Minister, because the students here asked me to convey their thanks. They got their Rector yesterday. They told me that they now know what to do to get things done. Mr Speaker, Sir, would the Minister confirm that on the 31 January of last year the hon. Minister informed the students of Form VI in the school hall that he would renovate the schoolyard of the college?

Mr Obeegadoo: I firstly resent the comments made by the hon. gentleman. The parents and students of Royal College Port Louis have a direct line of communication with my office, which they use very frequently. For instance, the drainage system of Royal College Port Louis called for repairs since long and further to representations from the school community and with the assistance of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure the drainage system has now been rehabilitated.

As regards the appointment of Rectors, every year during the course of the second term, there is a general exercise for posting and transfer of Rectors. The exercise was prepared over the last few weeks and was implemented last week. It therefore has nothing to do with the question put by the hon. gentleman although the Member's initiatives are most welcome if he has any representations to make. The posting exercise of last week concerns not only the Royal College Port Louis, but some eight or nine institutions in the State secondary sector.

As regards the hall of Royal College Port Louis, certainly, Sir, that is on the list of our priorities. In fact, thanks to the Ministry of Finance, budgetary provision has been made for such works to be undertaken and I do earnestly hope that we shall be able to accomplish what needs to be done there in the course of the next fiscal year.

D15P09CO3
PQ No. B/534 (contd)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister had some difficulty in understanding part (c) of the question. My question is: has he had any chance to visit the schoolyard recently?

Mr Obegadoo: I have indeed visited the schoolyard of Royal College Port Louis.

Dr. Jeetah: And is the Minister aware that it does have a bearing on health and safety of the students by nature of the state of the yard?

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not see what the point is. Maybe if the hon. gentleman could be straightforward and put a meaningful question I could then provide a proper answer.

(Interruptions)

The question reads: "whether the college yard is conducive towards quality time", My limited knowledge of the English language does not permit me to understand how a "college yard can be conducive towards quality time".

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, has he seen the state of the schoolyard? Would you expect the students to have any kind of recreation in that kind of state of yard?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Royal College of Port Louis is now a VI Form College and the intake has doubled in terms of students doing HSC - Lower VI and Upper VI. Could I ask the hon. Minister of the steps he has taken to provide facilities in the labs given the doubling of the number of students?

Mr Obegadoo: I do not see what the point is, Sir. Everything is being done to ensure the smooth transition of certain of our secondary schools to VI Form colleges.

Dr. Jeetah: My question, Mr Speaker, Sir, was: now that we have an increase in the number of students, has the hon. Minister ensured that the existing facilities have been increased?

Mr Obegadoo: That is our permanent concern.

13 27/3/04

45

CA/D25/P09/2

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

(No. B/613) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the teaching of physical education in primary and secondary schools, he will state if his Ministry has worked out a new programme thereon and, if so, will he table a copy of same.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the document 'Reform in Education – Curriculum Renewal in the Primary Sector' of March 2001 announced that in line with the need to make the child motivated, alert and successful in school, the education system should ensure his physical well-being.

With this in view, new curriculum guidelines have been prepared for Standards I to VI. May I recall that up until the year 2000, Physical Education was taught for Standards IV to VI and Movement Education in Standards I to III. The reforms have brought about a new programme of instructional materials, including both the physical education and the health component.

The Physical Education programme is activity-based and is geared towards development of skills through participation in minor games, whereas the health component comprises themes such as learning about -

- Sources of food
- Safety of parts of the body
- Lifestyles
- The body system
- Growth and development
- Physical changes and puberty
- Measures to avoid accidental poisoning in and around the home
- First-aid measures in cases of choking, bleeding, fainting, blisters etc
- Prevention of non-communicable diseases and transmissible diseases, like HIV-AIDS.

It is to be noted that the MIE also imparts training to the trainee teachers during their Teacher's Primary Course, to enable them to teach the subject.

/...

CA/D25/P09/3 (No. B/613) (Contd)

At secondary level, since 2001, Physical Education at lower secondary level has been given a new boost. The sports/PE activities have been divided into four major core activities – team activities, individual activities, opposition activities and aquatics.

In order to promote the importance of sports and PE, an evaluation scheme has been devised and is implemented at lower secondary level. The areas assessed are acquisition and improvement of skills, acquisition of knowledge, attitude and performance. Marks obtained in sports/PE are computed within the overall performance assessment of the learner.

Workshops have been carried out with teachers of the lower secondary level to make them familiar with the instructional materials distributed to schools. Teachers have also been inducted into the techniques of evaluation.

The new programme for Health and Physical Education is available in all schools.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state whether all primary schools have a physical education instructor?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the budget allocation, which is nearly around Rs300,000 in the specific zones, can the hon. Minister state to the House whether he will be able to enforce the physical education programme in the different zones?

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the issue of physical education instructors is a very old story, which has been debated here in the House on several occasions. Let me remind the hon. gentleman that the previous Government instituted a training course for teachers to become P.E. instructors. However, there was no planning in advance as to what use would be made of the P.E. instructors. So, we ended up with some 40 or 50 P.E. instructors for 280 primary schools. How would they be posted, what would be their precise role, what would happen in schools without P.E. instructors, was not thought through. P.E. instructors were given the same status as Deputy Head Teachers, which was resented by teachers in general. Our policy now is not to have P.E. instructors per se, inasmuch as all teachers are trained by the MIE to conduct physical education classes as well. That is the policy for the time being and for the foreseeable future. As regards equipment, we are, of course, doing our utmost to ensure that funds available are optimally utilised for all schools to be properly equipped.

26/10/04

62

(18)

D33P11CO3

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - RECTORS
- QUALIFICATIONS**

(No. B/785) Mr J. C. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, in respect to the recruitment recently carried out for the posts of Rectors in the State Secondary Schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain -

- (a) the names and qualifications of all applicants;
- (b) the names of successful applicants, and
- (c) the colleges to which each new Rector has been posted.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar) Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to reply to this PQ.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, to the extent that the selection exercise for the appointment of Rectors has been carried out by the Public Service Commission (PSC), it will not be proper to disclose the names of the applicants and their respective qualifications.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am tabling a list of newly appointed Rectors with their respective postings. I wish to point out that nine out of the 14 new Rectors were already assigned the duties of Rector and most of them have been maintained in their schools. For the rest, a reshufflement has been necessary, but the Ministry of education has adopted a minimalist approach in order to ensure the least disturbance.

YEAR 2005

SSS - TEACHERS - RECRUITMENT 2004/05

(22/02/05)

(No. B/118) **Dr. R. Jeetah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state the number of teachers recruited for State Secondary Schools in 2004 and 2005, indicating the percentage of the recruits who come from private secondary schools.

The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications (Mr S. Fowdar): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to that question. It should be recalled that prior to the year 2000 there was an establishment of 1,430 Education Officers (all subjects combined), and the yearly intake was around 75. In view of the expansion of services in the context of educational reforms the yearly intake of Educational Officers started increasing as from 2001 at the rate of around 50 yearly to reach a peak figure of 244 in 2004. For 2005, 170 Educational Officers have been recruited. To date the number of posts on establishment is 2,442 with 2,289 Education Officers in post.

As regards the last part of the question, out of 244 and 170 Education Officers recruited for 2004 and 2005 respectively, 60 and 79 have past experience of work in private secondary schools, that is a percentage of 24.5 and 46.4 respectively - but I am not in a position to say whether all of them were in employment in the private secondary schools just prior to their enlistment by the Public Service Commission.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether this Government views students attending private secondary schools as second class citizens?

Mr Fowdar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the question relates to the recruitment of teachers. It has nothing to do with students.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, nearly 50% of the teachers are poached from the private secondary schools. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether any provision for training was made?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Can the hon. Member tell me whether the recruitment is done by the PSC or the Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: My point, Mr Speaker, Sir, relates to the number of teachers.

Mr Speaker: I want you to tell me whether the recruitment is done by the PSC or the Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, I understand it is my turn to ask questions and it is the Minister that answers.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jeetah, please take your seat! If you are putting a question, I want to have some clarification regarding the question. Can you tell me whether these teachers are recruited by the PSC or the Ministry? If you do not know, keep quiet, please!

(Interruptions)

Next question, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: I still have questions to ask.

Mr Speaker: Order! Please take your seat! I am entitled to ask clarification from a Member who is putting the question for my own understanding. Can you answer the question?

Dr. Jeetah: I wish to ask specific questions relating to the question I gave notice. I want to ask the Minister what provision did he make ...

Mr Speaker: I am not allowing you any question until you give me this clarification.

(Interruptions)

Next question, please!

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order, Sir. If an hon. Member cannot supply the reply immediately, he can come at a later stage.

Mr Speaker: First of all, this is not a point of order. For me, to decide whether this question is admissible, I need the clarification.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, you must know yourself.

Mr Speaker: As far as I know, it is the Public Service Commission which makes recruitment and the Minister is not responsible for the PSC.

(Interruptions)

I do not want you to argue. Please resume your seat!

Next question, please!

(Interruptions)

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

EBENE GIRLS SSS - PTA - REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/227) **Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether he has received complaints and/or representations, verbal or written, from the President and/or members of the Parent Teachers Association of Form I - V Ebène College for girls and, if so, the nature thereof and the remedial action taken.

Reply: I have indeed received representations, both verbal and written, over the past year from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of Ebène Girls SSS just as I regularly receive representations from PTAs of schools across Mauritius and in actual fact I do welcome such representations.

In the particular case of Ebène Girls SSS, the representations related to infrastructural issues essentially. I have given personal attention to the points raised to the extent of meeting with PTA representatives on several occasions and visiting the school premises at least twice over the last year. I am happy to say that the preoccupations of the PTA are being addressed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and other relevant bodies under the close supervision of my Ministry and we remain attentive to the views and suggestions of the PTA as always.

EBENE BOYS SSS - CLASSES - LOCATION

22/3/05
21

(No. B/228) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Ebène State Secondary School Boys he will -

- (a) state where the classes, including pre-vocational students are now located;
- (b) inquire from the Rector whether problems of aggressive behaviour and assaults have been reported, especially on Friday 25 February and, if so, the measures taken to ensure security of the pupils and the staff.

Reply: As is well known to the House, this Government embarked in 2002 on a major educational reform programme resting upon an unprecedented programme of construction of schools. Should I recall that quite apart from the shameful inaction of the previous Government in the educational sphere, the urgency of expanding admissions to secondary schooling was dictated by the target date of 2005 for extension of compulsory education up to the age of 16. Accordingly, Ebène Boys State Secondary School became operational in 2003, the first intake being accommodated at Phoenix State Secondary School with free transport facilities whereas construction works got under way in that same year. As at present Form III students are schooled on site at Ebène but for lack of space Forms I and II are still located at Phoenix State Secondary School. According to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the second phase of construction works will be ready by end April 2005 so that Forms I and II may move to Ebène in the second term.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that there have been no reported cases of aggressive behaviour and assaults save for a scuffle involving four students on February 25. Such incidents are not infrequent in boys' schools especially and are addressed internally and routinely.

MAHATMA GANDHI AND RABINDRANATH SECONDARY
SCHOOLS - RECTORS & DEPUTY RECTORS

(22) 7/8/05

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister when the Deputy Rector will be promoted to the post of Rector and the subsequent filling of the post of Deputy Rector. Could the Minister consider the advisability of backdating the appointment of these posts since the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School conduct classes of Form IV as from January 2005?

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

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – TEACHERS - RECRUITMENT (30/08/05)

(No. I B/142) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to primary and secondary school teachers, he will state –

- (a) the number of teachers recruited during the periods –
 - (i) December 1995 to September 2000, and
 - (ii) September 2000 to June 2005, and
- (b) if it is proposed to carry out further recruitment exercises and, if so, when and the number to be recruited in each category.

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

- (a) (i) during the period December 1995 to September 2000, 710 primary school teachers and 540 education officers were recruited, and
- (ii) for period September 2000 to June 2005, 405 primary school teachers and 927 education officers were recruited.

As for part (b) of the question, the reply is in the affirmative. There are presently 543 trainee teachers for the primary sector following courses at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

On successful completion of the course, these trainees will be appointed as primary school teachers. Additionally, it is proposed to enrol 600 primary trainee teachers for the primary schools and 248 education officers upon resumption of studies in January 2006.

The recruitment exercise will be carried out by the Public Service Commission. In this respect, I wish to point out that for education officers the vacancies have already been reported to the Public Service Commission and the latter has been requested to proceed with the filling thereof. As in the past years, it is expected that the Public Service Commission will start the exercise in October and that it will be completed by early December.

As regards the trainee teachers for the primary schools, my Ministry is currently finalising the scheme of service for the post, and as soon as it is prescribed, procedures will be initiated for recruitment as provided for in the estimates 2005/2006.

Mrs Labelle: If I have heard the hon. Minister correctly, he mentioned that there are 543 trainee teachers right now. May I know from him when these students started their courses?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. The question was when they will be recruited. Once they complete the programme, they will be recruited.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question was: when were they recruited? Is it not the policy of the Government that when teachers in the primary sector are recruited, they start by the training courses and then go on as primary teachers? Have we changed this policy or is it the same?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not arguing on that. All I am saying is that they are following the training programme and they will be offered substantive position once they finish their training.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has answered that actually there are 543 teachers on training and that there are around 600 vacancies. How does he intend to fill up the other vacancies?

Mr Gokhool: Well, once the 543 teachers have followed the training

programmes. I must point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are many drop-outs as well. Once we embark the trainees, there are drop-outs and these have to be filled up in the course of time.

**ADOLPHE DE PLEVITZ S.S.S - C.H. MR – HANDYMAN -
EMPLOYMENT (06/09/05)**

(No. I B/205) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state the reasons for the termination of the contract of Mr C. H., a handyman on full time employment at the Adolphe de Plevitz State Secondary School.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the employee concerned is a part-time redundant handyman of ex-New Secondary School, now redeployed at the Mauritius Educational Development Company Ltd (MEDCO) and posted to Adolph de Plevitz State Secondary School. This posting is on the basis of an arrangement, which exists between my Ministry and MEDCO, for the gainful employment of redundant employees of ex-private secondary schools on similar terms and conditions.

The hon. Member may wish to note that the policy of the Ministry regarding redundant employees of private secondary schools is premised on an agreement dated May 2000 between Government and trade unions. This agreement safeguards the employment of redundant employees of ex-private secondary schools and allow for them to be absorbed in MEDCO on 'no less favourable terms' and to be redeployed in other institutions in the education sector.

I am informed that, on 17 June 2005, following a request from the zone Director of Education Zone 1, the management of MEDCO, after consultation with the then Chairman, decided, without the approval of the Board of Directors of the company, to offer employment as full time handyman to the employee concerned with effect from 21 June 2005, before the general elections.

It was not in order for the management of MEDCO to convert the part-time employment of the employee concerned into a full-time one, the more so as MEDCO is already overstaffed and is not authorised to employ additional persons without the approval of my Ministry. Further, the decision would have been unfair to the other part-time employees of

MEDCO who would have asked that the same treatment be extended to them.

In the circumstance, there was no alternative, but to terminate the illegal full-time employment of the employee concerned and to revert him to his part-time employment. An enquiry has been initiated to situate responsibilities in the matter.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - DEAN – POST (08/11/05)

(No. I B/445) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if, in the wake of reforms in the education sector and following recommendation No. 17 of the last Pay Research Bureau Report, he will consider the advisability of creating a grade of Dean to inculcate a new work culture in secondary schools and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, in June 2003, the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) recommended the creation, in State Secondary Schools, of a new grade of Dean "who would be responsible for the introduction of pedagogical programmes for quality enhancement in student and teachers performance". In pursuance of that recommendation, one post of Dean, with token provision, was created in the 2004/2005 Estimates in July 2004 and the scheme of service for the post was prescribed on 20 April 2005. In the meantime, the detailed requirements of the Ministry in terms of the number of posts of Dean to be created was worked out and it was found that, on the basis of the clustering of subjects recommended by the PRB, 248 posts of Dean would be required for the different clusters which are as follows –

- (i) Arts;
- (ii) Science and Mathematics;
- (iii) Economics, Social Studies and Accounts, and
- (iv) Technical Subjects.

My Ministry has already obtained establishment clearance from the Ministry of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms for the creation and filling of the 248 posts of Dean and is closely following up with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development regarding financial implications and the related clearance. Once financial clearance is obtained, the vacancies will be reported to the Public Service Commission for filling.

As regards the private secondary schools, the PRB has, in its report on

“Errors, Omission and Clarifications” published in May 2004, recommended that “the Ministry, in conjunction with the Private Secondary Schools Authority, may consider the advisability of extending the recommendation concerning the creation of a grade of Dean wherever the need is felt”. In this respect, my Ministry has, since 09 August 2005, requested the Private Secondary Schools Authority to examine the proposals for the State sector and see to what extent same could be implemented in the private secondary schools in consultation with the Federation of Union of Managers and the unions of the private secondary schools. I have been informed that, at this stage, there is no consensus among the stakeholders concerned. The PSSA, the Federation of Unions of Managers and the trade unions of the private secondary schools have, however, been requested to pursue discussions with a view to reaching an agreed formula for the private secondary schools. My Ministry is following up the matter closely and if the need arises, my Ministry will refer the matter to the PRB for advice as to the way forward.

YEAR 2006

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT – VISITS & SPEECHES (21/03/06)

(No. B/30) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if regular visits and speeches are made by Members of Parliament at different secondary schools since the beginning of the year and, if so, will he state the policy of his Ministry regarding same.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the negative. My Ministry does not have any established policy of inviting Members of Parliament to schools.

However, any member of the community including a Member of Parliament may be invited by the school administration or the PTA as was recently the case when hon. Jugroo and myself attended a function at Montagne Longue Government School.

However, it is to be noted that such activity will have to be in line with Government policy to provide quality education for all.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - REGIONAL/NATIONAL SCHOOLS (21/03/06)

(No. B/31) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if public secondary schools are classified as Regional Schools and National Schools and, if so, will he state the difference between the two categories and state the criteria for admission in Form I in a National School.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/19)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES (04/04/06)

(No. B/104) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, with a view to empowering principals of Government and Aided Primary Schools and Government Secondary Schools to maintain discipline, he will consider the advisability of amending the relevant regulations to provide for the setting up of disciplinary committees at the level of each of these educational institutions to deal with cases of serious misconduct and with power to suspend and expel students, and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to this question. The Rectors of the State Secondary Schools are already empowered to maintain discipline at school and, for that purpose, disciplinary committees do exist in all the State Secondary Schools. In the Government Primary Schools, there is no disciplinary committee *per se* but cases of indiscipline which are few and far apart, are dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis in consultation with parents and if required with the support of an education psychologist.

The disciplinary committee of the State Secondary Schools acts as an effective tool in the hands of the Rector to control indiscipline among students. The Rector ensures that the decisions of disciplinary committees are fair and commensurate with the offence committed. Punishment inflicted may be a warning, a Saturday detention or even a suspension which normally ranges between 3 days to a week depending on the gravity of the offence

As regards prolonged suspension and expulsion of students, it is already provided in the Education Regulations 1957, as subsequently amended, that in case of serious misconduct, same may be resorted to, with

the approval of the Minister. As such it constitutes a measure of last resort when all attempts to improve the conduct and behaviour of a student have failed. However, with the introduction of compulsory education up to the age of 16 the question of expulsion has been considered in consultation with the Attorney-General's office.

Mr Dayal: The hon. Minister has mentioned "with the approval of the Minister". Will the Minister agree that since the promulgation of the present Regulation in 1953, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Government Secondary Schools and that it is practically impossible for Rectors of such institutions to enforce discipline in case of serious misconduct because this requires ministerial power? Even to suspend a student the approval of the Minister is needed, let alone the expulsion of a student.

Dr. David: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that there are some problems at school level, but expulsion is a very serious disciplinary measure taken against students. In all fairness, the Minister's signature and approval should not be taken away. Probably, the hon. Member is referring to delay difficulties. Well, this can be looked into. He may probably be thinking as well that the hands of the Rectors are tied up because no quick action can be taken, but again I believe that there should be ultimately some sort of last resort from the Minister.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring to Regulation 1953 section 13, for minor offences the Rector can suspend, but for serious offences the Rector must have recourse to the Minister; and this causes a lot of delay. In the 1940s or 1950s there were only three or four Government Secondary Schools. Today with the number of Government Secondary Schools, this is practically impossible.

Mr Speaker: What is the question of the hon. Member?

Mr Dayal: Will the hon. Minister agree that in order to make the enforcement of discipline more timely and effective, he should give full powers to the Disciplinary Committee reserving to himself a right of appeal by the students?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer first.

Dr. David: The Disciplinary Committee is constituted as follows: the

Rector or the Deputy Rector, the President of the PTA, a representative of the staff, the form teacher of the student, any co-opted member. If a decision is taken, an extreme decision, that is, expulsion, there should be a higher authority, the Minister must at least give his approval. I am not saying that there could be abuse from the school authority, but I am of the view that minor offences can be dealt with at school level, but in more serious cases where extreme punishment is concerned, the approval of the Minister should be sought. As regards administrative hurdles, it can be taken care of, but I believe that the Minister must be given the power of approval.

Mr Dayal: The hon. Minister has himself been head of a Secondary School. Will he agree that in case of Private Secondary Schools, disciplines are more effectively enforced because the powers are with the management? Therefore, I should like to ask the Minister whether he will consider reinforcing sections 152, 153 and 154 of the 1945 Regulations in order to reinforce disciplines in Government Secondary Schools?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not correct to say that the power rests with the management at private secondary school level. The PSSA has to be informed and just as in the State Secondary Schools, the expulsion of a student needs the approval of the Minister.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister consider the inclusion of a member of the Student Council on the Disciplinary Committee which is usually held in extreme cases?

Dr. David: This is a good suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I'll pass it on to the Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Ramloll: Is the hon. Minister aware whether Rectors of many secondary schools did make reports regarding indiscipline and misconduct on the part of students and where there has been no response from the Ministry and that has been ongoing and today we see so much of indiscipline in the schools?

Dr. David: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, causes of indiscipline are varied. It is not only because, as the hon. Member is saying, cases are not dealt with at Ministry's level. There are so many reasons why indiscipline prevails.

Following question raised, I'll see to it if there are cases which have not been dealt with at the level of the Ministry. I personally doubt that there are cases which are blocked at that level.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking about disciplinary measures. I am not talking about the extreme, that is, expelling students. Will the hon. Minister state how many Government Secondary Schools have made regulations with the approval of the Minister to enforce discipline in Government Secondary Schools as provided for under section 34 of the regulation of 1953?

Dr. David: I have answered, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a Disciplinary Committee exists at the level of all State Secondary Schools.

Mr Dayal: My question is: how many secondary schools have made regulations with the approval of the Minister to enforce discipline in Government Secondary Schools as provided for under section 34 of Regulation 1953?

Dr. David: I will look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can't answer offhand.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister confirm whether the detaining of students as a disciplinary measure after school hours is still being practised?

Dr. David: Yes, Sir, and I even mentioned Saturday detention.

(Interruptions)

I think that parents should be informed one or two days before the detention of their wards.

**DEPUTY RECTORS – APPOINTMENT – SELECTED
CANDIDATES & QUALIFICATIONS (04/04/06)**

(No. B/112) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the last appointment exercise of Deputy Rectors, he will table a list of the selected candidates, indicating their respective qualifications.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following the last selection exercise carried out by the Public Service Commission, 41 candidates were appointed Deputy Rectors in December 2005/January 2006.

I am also informed that a few candidates who were not appointed felt aggrieved by the decision of the Public Service Commission and have entered a case for redress before the Supreme Court. As the matter is *sub judice*, it would not be proper for me, at this stage, to disclose the information asked for.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister what were the minimum requirements for eligibility for that post?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the papers I have, the qualifications in the Grade of EO are as follows -

(i) (a) Cambridge School Certificate with credit in at least five subjects, including English, obtained at not more than 2 sittings or

(b) passes not below Grade C in at least five subjects, including English language obtained at not more than 2 sittings at the General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary level' provided that at one of the sittings, passes have been obtained either (i) in five subjects including English language with at least Grade C in any two subjects or (ii) in six subjects including English language with at least Grade C in any one subject.

(ii) a Cambridge Higher School Certificate or passes in at least two subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education 'Advanced level', and

(iii) a degree or joint degree from a recognised university.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the Minister whether there was any minimum period of experience needed for that post?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, yes. The candidate should have at least five years teaching experience, after graduation, in a State Post Primary institution for candidates having successfully completed a one-year post graduate course in education or possessing an equivalent qualification acceptable to the PSC or at least eight years teaching experience after graduation in a State Post Primary institution.

Mr Guinness: I understand that the Minister says that the case is *sub*

judice. But even though, can I know from the record of the Minister, whether all the 41 selected candidates met the minimum requirements or experience at least?

Dr. David: Well, it was for the PSC to assess.

SSS - TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS – APPOINTMENT (23/05/06)

(No. B/616) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state when qualified teachers and instructors working in State Secondary Schools will be appointed or absorbed as full fledged Education Officers as per the recommendations of the PRB Report 2003.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, in November 2003, Government decided that employees of the Technical School Management Trust Fund, involved in the pre-vocational education should be absorbed on the establishment of my Ministry. Procedures for the prescription of the scheme of service for the post of Education Officer (Pre-Vocational) were completed only on 14 June 2005 following which 57 posts were created on the establishment of my Ministry as follows –

- 15 vacancies to absorb Instructors/Teachers BSS/Teachers on contract from TSMTF who possess SC + degree or 2 “A” levels + degree
- 42 vacancies to appoint 42 primary school teachers (SC with degree) who were called upon to service the pre-vocational sector.

Vacancies in both grades have already been reported to Public Service Commission on 22 June 2005. Following a *Mise en Demeure* served by the TSMTF Employees on my Ministry, the Commission was requested to stay action on the filling of the vacancies. However, the State Law Office advised this Ministry that it would not be unreasonable to proceed with the recruitment exercise as per existing scheme of service.

The Commission was apprised of the advice from SLO on 24 August 2005 and was requested to proceed with the recruitment exercise. However, following Government decision not to proceed with the filling of vacancies, the matter was kept in abeyance. In September 2005, a case was made to the Secretary to Cabinet & Head of the Civil Service for the post to be filled.

On receipt of his green light, the PSC was informed, in a letter dated 06 October 2005, that it could proceed with the recruitment exercise. The matter now rests with the Commission.

Oral Answers
Debate no 09 of 23/05/06

RECTORS - PROMOTION

(No. B/581) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will table a list of Rectors who have been promoted following the last promotion exercise.


30(a)

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the list of the persons appointed rectors so far.

QUATRE BORNES SSS – STUDENTS (27/06/06)

(No. B/843) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students of the State Secondary School, Quatre Bornes who have been temporarily placed in various other secondary institutions, he will consider the advisability of integrating these students in the schools they are presently attending.

(Withdrawn)

NOUVELLE FRANCE SSS – STUDENTS (27/06/06)

(No. B/844) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if it is proposed to close the Nouvelle France State Secondary School.

Mr Gokhool: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the negative. At present, Nouvelle France SSS which was previously a Sixth Form College, has students in Lower VI and Upper VI and also in Form I as from January 2006. In addition, Nouvelle France SSS also temporarily accommodates students of Forms I and II of Mahatma Gandhi State School, Nouvelle France, which has not yet been constructed. In regard to the latter, my Ministry is currently considering various options and will, in due course, take a decision.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the Minister whether the Ministry is envisaging merging the two colleges, that is, the Mahatma Gandhi State Secondary School and the Nouvelle France State Secondary School?

Mr Gokhool: As I indicated, various options are being envisaged and we will ensure that we make use of the space which is available as well as the optimum utilisation of resources.

**STATE/PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS - STUDENTS -
LATE ARRIVALS (27/06/06)**

(No. B/853) Mrs Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if his Ministry has received complaints from the Rectors of State or Private Secondary Schools to the effect that there is an increase in the number of late arrivals of students due to transport problems and, if so, will he state the remedial measures, if any, that have been initiated.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, except for Zone 3, a few Rectors of some State Secondary Schools in the remaining three Zones, have indeed reported that there has been an increase in the number of students attending school late on account of transport problems.

In regard to the private secondary schools, according to Private Secondary Schools Authority, there has not been any such complaint, recently. Two isolated cases in respect of Keats College and Cosmopolitan College were reported on one private radio channel in February and April, respectively.

I am, however, informed that the question of students attending school late on account of transport problems is still isolated and cannot be generalised at this stage.

As regards remedial measures, the Rectors of the State schools and the Directors of Zones on the one hand and the PSSA on the other, have brought to the attention of the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the bus operators of the need to ensure that they provide an efficient and timely service. There is also a joint committee on free transport chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, which is currently monitoring the free transport facility.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister

whether his Ministry has not received letters from Rectors informing the Ministry about this particular problem of late arrivals?

Mr Gokhool: This is the channel through which complaints are received either through Rectors or Directors. And when these complaints are received we channel them to the National Transport Authority for remedial action. The situation is being monitored closely.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that in one State School there are dozens of students who miss the first period regularly? The school has informed the Ministry of the situation.

Mr Gokhool: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, there may be isolated cases where Rectors and the Zone Directors do take corrective measures. They inform the NTA and the situation is remedied. But, if there is a specific case, to which the hon. Member is referring, I will look into it and see to it that the situation is rectified.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that this has become a regular feature now at SSS Bel Air and SSS Sebastopol because of transport problem. As the Minister knows, there is no regular transport in these regions and pupils miss the first period almost regularly in these two schools.

Mr Gokhool: As I just said, this may be the case, but these are isolated cases, but the mechanism exists where we can take remedial action. But if the situation persists, I will look into the matter and try to remedy the situation.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that this situation is prevailing since the beginning of the year and we are now in June. Therefore, can I know from the Minister, what action has been taken since the beginning of the year?

Mr Gokhool: I think coming late to school may not be tied to the issue of transport only, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But if the matter relates ..

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member has asked a question, let me give him the answer. If it relates

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the Minister answer, please.

Mr Gokhool: If it relates to transport problem, I will look into it. The hon. Member is a teacher and he knows that there are many other factors that lead to delay in coming to schools.

The Deputy Speaker: So, the matter will be addressed by the hon. Minister.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am insisting, because I have experienced this problem with these pupils. I had the opportunity to bring pupils to schools, because they were waiting for buses for more than half an hour. These pupils are really facing a problem because of transport.

May I impress upon the hon. Minister to look into this matter?

Mr Gokhool: I think the case of Bel Air SSS has been mentioned. If the hon. Member will give me the information, I'll look into it.

Mr Bundhoo: Will the hon. Minister kindly conduct a survey at the Bel Air SSS, and also at Sebastopol SSS, just to find out the cause of lateness? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I must say that we have already raised the matter with the Deputy Prime Minister and we even had a meeting with the inhabitants of Trou d'Eau Douce and GRSE. Maybe, the hon. Member could liaise with the hon. Minister and see to it that a survey be conducted to find out the real cause behind the transport problem, causing lateness.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can do that, but I have to inform the hon. Member that we do receive regular statistics now, because this situation is being monitored. If the hon. Member wants me to go into the causes, that is something we can look into.

QUATRE BORNES SSS – STUDENTS (04/07/06)

(No. B/881) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students of the State Secondary School, Quatre Bornes who have been temporarily placed in various other secondary institutions, he will consider the advisability of integrating these students in the schools they are presently attending.

Mr Gokhool : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of accommodating students of Quatre Bornes SSS dates back to January 2005 and this is indeed another very unfortunate situation that my Ministry has inherited from the previous Government. The facts are as follows -

In January 2005, the previous Government decided to admit students in Form I in a school which did not exist - referred to as *Ecole Fantome* or Virtual School - and in respect of which even land had not yet been identified and acquired. The other cases are Goodlands SSS and MGSS Nouvelle France.

The students admitted to Form I and pre-vocational in January 2005 were accommodated in Sodnac SSS. These students are now in Form II and are still at Sodnac SSS

In January 2006, as per legitimate expectations of parents, another batch of students were admitted to Form I. They are temporarily accommodated at Belle Rose SSS.

The situation, at present, is that students of Forms I and II of Quatre Bornes SSS are now located in two colleges, Sodnac SSS and Belle Rose SSS respectively.

Various attempts at identifying and acquiring land in the vicinity of Quatre Bornes for the construction of the Quatre Bornes SSS have not materialised so far because of unavailability of land and legal problems related to acquisition. An attempt to use the existing site of ex-Stratford College for the construction of the Quatre Bornes SSS has also not materialised so far because of legal impediments. Efforts are continuing to identify a suitable plot of land for the school.

My Ministry has been in constant contact with the PTA of Quatre Bornes SSS to find a satisfactory solution, in the circumstances. Indeed meetings with the PTA were held under my chairmanship on 21 October 2005, 24 April 2006 and 15 May 2006. Furthermore, hon. David as Minister in charge of Education, held meetings with the PTA on 01 and 02 June 2006.

As a result of the two latter meetings, site visits were effected on 06 June 2006 by the PTA and officers of my Ministry at Dr. Maurice Curé and Gaëtan Raynal State Colleges as well as Queen Elizabeth College with a view to identifying vacant classrooms. Unfortunately, a sufficient number of classrooms is not available in those schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully agree that, for the sake of stability and the convenience of the students, we cannot continue to accommodate them temporarily in other schools and that we should allow them to develop *un sens d'appartenance* to a single school. Further in the context of widening access, it is planned to admit another batch of students to Form I for Quatre Bornes SSS in January 2007.

The proposal for those students to be integrated in the schools where they are at present, that is, Sodnac SSS is not possible as the School will admit its own Form I students in January 2007 and there is no spare capacity for additional students. Further, another problem is likely to crop up with parents of students of Sodnac SSS who may resist the integration of students of Quatre Bornes while depriving the school from having another batch of Form I students and enable its process of natural growth and development.

The situation of the Quatre Bornes SSS Form I students housed at Belle Rose SSS and who will be in Form II in January 2007 should also be considered.

The situation is urgent; and my Ministry has explored all possibilities and considers that the best solution that will help to mitigate the problem, in the short term, would be that all the students of Forms I and II of Quatre Bornes SSS as well as the new Form I intake for 2007 be accommodated at Belle Rose SSS. In fact, space exists for accommodating all those students there as from January 2007. This proposal was communicated to the PTA by way of an official letter sent to the president of the PTA on 30 May 2006 and no official reply has been obtained yet.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to us, the proposal to accommodate all Quatre Bornes SSS students in Belle Rose SSS would be the best course of action in the immediate future.

Miss Deerpalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware that the parents are not at all satisfied with this temporary situation? Moreover the parents are not at all satisfied with the way they have been treated by the officials of the Ministry all through, given the hardship that they have been through and the fact that they have actually been – sorry to say – lied to with the so-called virtual SSS...

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Member, 'lying' is not parliamentary.

Miss Deerpalsing : Basically, they have not been honestly treated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and, in fact, all through the meetings that the officials of the Ministry had had with the parents, they have not been well treated either and they are not satisfied with the solution.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made her point.

Miss Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister to actually have better public relations with the Parents/Teachers Association.

The Deputy Speaker : They have been taken for a ride.

Mr Gokhool : I think the hon. Member may be mixing what happened previously with what is happening when I took over as Minister.

There is a difference. I have given all the details, how we are looking very carefully at the problem. I am, myself, very sympathetic with the PTA and the students. In fact, I have had meetings with them and we are trying to look for a solution in the immediate future. The proposal for building a school is not abandoned, but we are short of time. So, we have to deal with the problem for January 2007 and continue exploring the possibility of acquiring the land and building a school for the pupils. This is the idea that we are exploring.

Miss Deerpalsing : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all I am asking from the Minister is that, instead of just sending a letter coldly to the Parents/Teachers Association, call them for a meeting, talk to them in person. That is all I am asking from the Minister.

Mr Gokhool: I could not more agree with the hon. Member when hon. David was replacing me, he met the PTA. I have met the PTA on several occasions and I propose to meet them again. The problem is being taken care of.

PHOENIX STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – COMPLAINTS (07/11/06)

(No. B/1300) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he has been made aware of the complaints made by parents of students attending the State Secondary School at Phoenix to its Rector, in regard to the decision to cause students to move from one classroom to another after each period and, if so, will he state the remedial actions that will be taken, if any.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, generally speaking, students of Form I to Form III in State Secondary Schools stay in the same classroom for all their class subjects except for oriental language classes. As regards students of upper secondary classes, that is, from Form IV to Form VI, where there is the issue of subject options and students have to attend laboratories and other specialist rooms as well as libraries, they have inevitably to move from one classroom to another.

As regards Phoenix State Secondary School, I have not personally received any written complaints from parents of students. However, I am informed that the Rector has received three verbal complaints from responsible parties to this effect, after she decided, in consultation with the PTA of the school, to request students of all classes to move from one classroom to another after each period.

The decision to cause students to move from one classroom to another after each period was exceptionally taken following reports from students themselves that their books, track suits and other personal belongings were stolen when the classrooms were left unattended. This was also resorted to as a precautionary measure, for security reasons, against damaged electric switches and tables and desks, which the students, themselves, had broken. It was considered safer by both the school administration and the PTA at that time to place these classrooms under the supervision of teachers, pending repairs/replacement of the switches and furniture.

Parents have also been apprised of this decision on 30 August 2006 by way of a newsletter.

I understand that the situation will return to normal in January 2007, as action is being taken to have all the repairs/replacement completed before the resumption of studies in January 2007. Measures will also be taken at the level of the school and the PTA in January 2007, to enforce strict school discipline and monitoring of same next year, to prevent recurrence of thefts and loss of pupils' personal belongings and against cases of damages of the school furniture and premises by the pupils.

Year 2007

RECTORS & DEPUTY RECTORS – TRANSFERS (10/04/07)

(No. B/99) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources

whether, in regard to Rectors and Deputy Rectors, he will state the policy in regard to their transfers, indicating if he is aware that certain transfers are often cancelled at the last moment and, if so, will he give the reasons therefor?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the house that there is a well-defined policy regarding the transfer of Rectors/Deputy Rectors in my Ministry. That policy is a set of approved guidelines for informed decision making and for consistency. I am tabling a copy of the established set of criteria guiding this policy.

Procedures for transfer are normally initiated in March and effective during second week of Easter holidays. In exceptional cases, *ad hoc* transfers may be effected during the academic year. This has to be fully substantiated and approved by the Supervising Officer of my Ministry. Since I took office as Minister of Education & Human Resources, the transfer of Rectors/Deputy Rectors was cancelled only once due to the fact that 10 Rectors/Deputy Rectors were appointed as Administrators, 5 of whom were due to be transferred. Action was accordingly stayed on the transfer exercise and necessitated my Ministry carrying out a fresh exercise.

Mr Varma: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the transfer exercise is done by a panel or by any particular individual at the Ministry?

Mr Gokhool: We have a transfer committee at the Ministry which looks at all cases of transfer. These are normally sent from the zones and the transfer committee finalises the recommendations.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that since he assumed office, there has been only on one occasion cancellation of transfers. Could he inform the House on which date exactly the cancellation occurred?

Mr Gokhool: I would not have the exact date because this was a decision which was communicated to us by PSC - the nomination of administrators - and then we had to redo the exercise and take care of those who were appointed administrators. But I don't have the date, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will table letter which is entitled 'Change in Posting' whereby a Deputy Rector was transferred to Bell Village SSS and the transfer exercise was cancelled at the last minute. The letter is dated 08 May 2006. The hon. Minister stated earlier on that the

transfer exercise was done in March and after the Easter Holidays, but this letter is dated May 2006. Following that, will he accept that a transfer exercise that is cancelled at the last minute and another one made instead is perceived as victimisation in respect of one and favoritism in respect of another?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I anticipated this question from the hon. Member. In fact, the case that the hon. Member is referring to has nothing to do with the transfer of Rector or Deputy Rector. The case being referred to concerns a temporary Deputy Rector. So, the case is different.

Secondly, in my reply, I have just mentioned in paragraph 2 – ‘in exceptional cases, *ad hoc* transfers may be effected during the academic year’. Apart from the annual exercise, there may be a few cases for ill health, for various other reasons and we have to address that issue. The last thing I would like to say is that we should not generalise on the basis of one particular case. We deal with 69 colleges where Rectors, Deputy Rectors and temporary Rectors are posted. I’ll request my hon. friend not to generalise on the basis of one particular case, because these cases do occur, and we take them into account.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister seems to be aware of the case I am referring to. Can he explain to the House why this happened?

Mr Gokhool: As I have said, I am tabling the criteria. The criteria mention that the cases can be examined with respect to health problems, age factor, difficulty in managing the school itself and other administrative reasons. If the hon. Member wants a reason, I think the person concerned could have written to the Ministry and sought an explanation. My office would have given the explanation to that person.

Mr Varma: Can I inform the Minister that the person concerned does not fall under any of the criteria he mentioned and the person concerned contacted his Ministry and met his advisers on a number of occasions? Is he aware of that?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we can have a lot of contacts. A lot of people phone about making representations, but if the person concerned believes that there is a genuine grievance, the person should put in a formal letter which will be considered and a reply will be given with the explanations. Lastly, I think that if officers feel that they are aggrieved, a reply is given and they are not satisfied, they can also seek legal redress.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether the reasons for the cancellation of the transfer was given to the officer concerned?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, if people contact us, we can talk about the issues, but if a formal letter is written to the Ministry, I will make sure that the reason is given.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a cancellation of a transfer. Was the officer concerned informed about the reasons for the cancellation of the transfer?

Mr Gokhool: Well, as I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, the criteria are known and I believe any officer should take cognisance of the criteria. Once the person feels there is a point to enquire further, the person may ask for the explanation and the reason will be given.

Mr Varma: The hon. Minister has made a difference between Rectors and Deputy Rectors in a substantive capacity and temporary Rectors and Deputy Rectors. He has mentioned guidelines. Are there different guidelines for temporary Rectors and Deputy Rectors as well as for substantive Rectors and Deputy Rectors?

Mr Gokhool: The guidelines which are established are for Deputy Rectors and Rectors, but temporary Rectors are taken care of whenever there are requests made for transfers. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the system. A person who is appointed Deputy Rector is employed on a temporary basis for six months and, therefore, is assigned duty whenever there is a vacancy which arises and we have to make the transfer.

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Member has made out his case. Next question!

QUEEN ELIZABETH COLLEGE – PSYCHOLOGISTS (24/04/07)

(No. B/223) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if psychologists have been posted at the Queen Elizabeth College and, if so, the number thereof and since when.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to Educational Psychologists at my Ministry and their posting, I wish to inform the House

of the following –

(i) The School Psychological Service was set up in 1983 as a support service to pre-primary, primary, and secondary sectors to cater for children with special educational needs. Before June 2006, only five Educational Psychologists serviced this unit for the whole of Mauritius. As from June 2006, my Ministry has a pool of 1 Senior Educational Psychologist, 10 Educational Psychologists, and 17 Social Workers (Education). The policy of the Ministry is not to post these officers in schools on a full-time basis, but is to place them in the Zones.

(ii) The Educational Psychologist visits the schools, as and when requested either by the Rector/Head Teacher or Form/Class Teacher, or parents, to attend to behavioural/psychological and learning problems of any pupil through a referral form which is submitted to the Zone Director.

(iii) The Educational Psychologist usually holds counselling sessions with and assesses the pupil having the behavioural/psychological and learning problems, subject to the authorisation of the responsible party of the child. A record on the pupil is usually kept at the level of the Zone, in strict confidentiality. The frequency of monitoring made by the Educational Psychologist depends on the seriousness of the case. Counselling sessions are also held with parents in some cases. All cases are treated in strict confidentiality.

It is worth pointing out that since 2006, my Ministry has recruited 17 Social Workers (Education) to assist and support the Educational Psychologists. These Social Workers usually accompany the Educational Psychologists on their visits and establish the link between the school and the home environment. Whenever the Educational Psychologist feels that the problem originates from the home environment or the parents are either hiding information and are not giving the full/true picture of the problem, the social worker is requested to conduct home visits and to come up with a social enquiry on the case which helps in providing a more comprehensive understanding/solution to the case.

As regards the specific issue raised about the posting of Educational Psychologists to QEC, I wish to inform the House of the following: three Educational Psychologists are posted in Zone 2 (Beau Bassin, Rose Hill and the East) where QEC is located. One Educational Psychologist, in particular, services, *inter alia*, QEC. However, in exceptional cases, for instance, suicide cases, she is also accompanied by her other two colleagues and the social workers. Eight cases have been attended in 2006 at the school. The

Educational Psychologist has visited the school once during the first term in 2007 and there has been no cases requiring intervention so far, fortunately.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may the hon. Minister confirm that it is the educational psychologists who are taking care of behavioural problems?

Mr Gokhool: This is the answer I have given. If there is a behavioural psychological problem and if the case is referred to the psychological services, then the psychologist steps in.

STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL - PHOENIX – PROBLEMS(15/05/07)

(No. B/374) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if he has received letters in regard to the problems existing at the Phoenix State Secondary School from –

- (a) the former Rector, dated 20 March 2007, and
- (b) the President of the Parent Teachers Association, dated 06 April 2007 and if so, will he state the remedial measures that have been or will be taken, if any.

(Withdrawn)

TRAINEE TEACHERS AND DEPUTY RECTORS – RECRUITMENT (24/07/07)

(No. A/28) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the recruitment of trainee teachers and deputy rectors, respectively since July 2005 to date, he will give a list thereof, indicating their –

- (a) names;
- (b) addresses, and
- (c) postings

Reply: In the year 2005 and 2006, no Trainee Teacher (General Purpose) and (Oriental Languages) was recruited.

As from March 2007, 381 Trainee Teachers (General Purpose) and 164 Trainee Teachers (Oriental Languages) were recruited. Their names and addresses as listed at Annexes I to VII are being tabled. I wish to draw the attention of the House that

all the Trainee Teachers (General Purpose and Oriental Languages) who were enlisted in 2007 are presently following a training course of two years and 3 months at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE).

With respect to the recruitment of Deputy Rectors since July 2005, their names, addresses and postings are being tabled at Annex A.

SCHOOLS - SUPPLY TEACHERS

(No. B/46) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the posts of Supply Teachers, he will state –

- (a) the minimum entry requirements, and
- (b) the number thereof posted in the State Secondary Schools as at 29 February 2008, indicating their average length of service

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has recourse to the enlistment of Supply Teachers in the primary and secondary sectors for the following reasons -

- (i) to palliate for short absences in cases of leave without pay, maternity leave or vacation leave taken by Teachers or Education Officers;
- (ii) to ensure the smooth running of school activities at the beginning of the year when the list of new recruits have not been submitted by the Public Service Commission or new recruits have not yet assumed duty, and
- (iii) to address shortages in scarcity areas.

As regards the minimum entry requirements in State Secondary Schools, these are as follows -

- (a) In the mainstream –

66

- (i) for non-scarcity areas, the minimum requirement is the Cambridge School Certificate plus Cambridge Higher School Certificate/General Certificate of Education “A” Level together with a degree in the relevant subject, and
 - (ii) for scarcity areas such as Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Western Music, Classical Dance or Physical Education, the minimum requirement is Cambridge School Certificate plus Cambridge Higher School Certificate.
- (b) In the Pre-vocational stream, the minimum requirement is Cambridge School Certificate and Cambridge Higher School

Certificate.

Enlistment is also made from amongst retired officers outside the service with teaching experience below the age of 65 years.

Mr Speaker Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed of the following –

(i) there are as at 29 February 2008, 129 Supply Teachers in the mainstream;

(ii) there are as at 29 February 2008, 64 Supply Teachers in the prevocational stream. 58 have been serving on a year to year basis since January 2004, their contract has been renewed at the beginning of each year. To be appointed on a permanent basis, they will have to go through a selection exercise by PSC, and 6 have joined since January 2008, and

(iii) regarding the average length of service, those in non-scarcity areas are enlisted on a temporary basis as and when required for a maximum period of one academic year.

Enlistment of Supply Teachers in the mainstream and scarcity areas is made on a yearly basis after a selection exercise while in the pre-vocational stream, the one and only exercise was carried out in December 2003.

Due to a “*mise-en-demeure*” served by the Technical School Management Trust Fund Employees’ Union to the Public Service Commission and my Ministry, there has been considerable delay in the filling of vacancies in the pre-vocational sector and we had to have recourse to the service of Supply Teachers. Now that the case has been set aside, my Ministry will soon report vacancies in the post of Teacher (Secondary - Prevocational) to the Public Service Commission for selection.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will confirm that Supply Teachers with only HSC, without a degree, are not teaching, let’s say, English - but I don’t consider English as a scarcity area - at any State Secondary School?

Mr Gokhool: Frankly, I don’t think this is a situation that can happen because normally in the mainstream the person should have a degree whereas for the pre-vocational, it could be Higher School Certificate.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will check whether this is not the case, because I fear that Supply Teachers with only HSC have been or are teaching English in some State Secondary Schools?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, very often, there are such assertions which are made, but the hon. Member will help to sort out matters quickly if the case is brought to my attention.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS –WORKING HOURS – EXTENSION (19/08/08)

(No. B/1172) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the recommendation of the Pay Research Bureau for the educators to work up to 1500 hrs, he will state if it is being implemented and, if so, the measures that are being taken in relation thereto.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs B/1172, B/1177 and B/1180 together, as they pertain to the same issue.

I would like, first of all, to thank the hon. Members for giving me the opportunity to clarify matters regarding the issue of the extension of hours of work of secondary schools and also to place the whole issue in its proper perspective.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the House that the PRB Report 2008 has made detailed recommendations for secondary schools.

Some of these recommendations have been implemented *ipso facto* as from 01 July 2008 like, for example, salary, whereas the specific recommendations concerning hours of work is implementable as from 01 August 2008 according to the PRB itself.

In making these recommendations, PRB has taken into consideration the remuneration packages of educators (secondary). All employees, through the signing of the appropriate option forms, have agreed to the recommendations contained therein.

For the implementation of the detailed recommendations, my Ministry has set up a committee under the chairmanship of a PAS.

One of the recommendations to be implemented as from 01 August 2008 relate to the extension of hours of work to 1500 hrs. Accordingly, all schools have been informed that working hours of secondary schools as from 11 August (i.e. the beginning of the 3rd term) will be 1500 hours.

As for the increase of the number of teaching periods from 28 to 30

(i.e. 1120 minutes to 1200 minutes), this will be implemented as from 1st term of 2009. This has been decided in order to allow for timetable planning at the level of schools and also not to disrupt the existing timetable arrangements as far as students are concerned.

A proposal for a new timetable has been sent to schools. My Ministry has noted reactions and received representations, and the committee looking after the implementation will consider them and also meet the stakeholders.

In the spirit of the Programme Based Budgeting, where specific targets have been spelt out and which have to be met, schools have to be managed on the basis of clearly spelt out objectives, outputs and Key Performance Indicators. Opportunity has, therefore, been taken by the

committee to correct anomalous situation or situations that have given rise to a certain amount of abuses and inequity, which can adversely impact on the achievement of the set targets and KPIs.

The direct responsibilities of the Heads of schools as reporting and accounting officers have, therefore, been strengthened.

It is in the light of the foregoing that the Movement Book, which allowed educators to leave frequently their place of work when they were not teaching without the Head of school being aware of same, has been removed. Such situation has led to a lack of control on the movement of staff, and a consequential abuse thereof. However, educators will still be allowed to leave school on permission from the Rector who will record all such movements in a special permission book for transparency and accountability purposes, which will remain in his/her custody. This is part of the Ministry's strategy to empower the Rectors.

These are purely internal management issues and, therefore, are not specifically contained in the PRB Report.

As regards the specific issue raised in PQ B/1177, as to whether a pedagogical survey has been carried out, I need to say that, as amply articulated at paragraphs 3 and 4 in the Circular under reference, the recommendation of the PRB has been made precisely in a context of pedagogical improvement, and educators will be required to devote the additional time to a number of tasks which are ancillary to teaching and which have so far been neglected, such as marking of homework, preparation of lesson plans, sharing and communicating information about pedagogical practices, including remedial education, addressing problems of

discipline, lateness and absenteeism, and having meetings with parents.

My Ministry has already issued a press communiqué to clarify matters and to remind educators of the option they exercised, as well as the set mechanism for making representations and addressing grievances.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, in that context, he has received any letter from BEC and, if so, the contents thereof, and how he reacts to that letter?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have received a letter, and it has to do with the timetable. As I have indicated, the timetable arrangements will be relooked for January 2009, and the committee will look at the representations made by BEC.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the trend today is flexibility and not rigidity? It is also built on trust, partnership and psychological contract between administration, staff, students and other stakeholders. Is the hon. Minister aware or has he been made aware that what his Ministry has done so far is not only provoking the teaching community, but is also demotivating the whole *corps enseignant* with the tone, with the *esclavagiste* language conveyed to the teaching fraternity?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will like to briefly refer to what I have said in my reply. The measures we are implemented relate to PRB, but we cannot dissociate it from the PBB. National targets have been set, and the schools are also required to work out school based targets and KPIs.

When we work out the implementation of the recommendations, we have to take into account the interests of the students first and foremost, and also the interests of parents in education.

This is the third term and it is linked to the national target set in the PBB. We do take into account that the application of this measure may cause certain inconvenience to educators, but we have to weigh the interests of the students, the need to improve their performance and the minor inconvenience which inevitably happens when we have to implement the recommendations of the PRB.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is precisely what the hon. Minister has been doing, has been on the television rousing the parents against the teachers...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! The hon. Member is imputing motives on the hon. Minister.

Mr Dayal: I will put the question in a different way, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Dayal: The hon. Minister has just mentioned the interests of the students. We are for the interests of the students; we have no problem whatsoever with the 30 minutes extension. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I should like to know whether the hon. Minister has read the circular No. 14 of 04 August...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: We are losing time.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what I am going to come to. Teaching had never been and will never be, Mr Speaker, Sir, within the boundary of 8 a.m. to 2.30 or 3.00 p.m., because teachers do the work...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: I am referring to the circular letter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! The hon. Member is making a statement. I would like him to put questions. I will allow some leeway, but the hon. Member has to put the question and not make statements.

Mr Dayal: With regard to asking permission from the Rector, is the hon. Minister aware that in a college in the east, a lady, responsible for that school, slapped a lady teacher who was three months pregnant? In what way can the staff avail themselves of permission? This is creating dictatorship.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the incident referred to

by the hon. Member, if it is a private college, it has to be referred to the PSSA for appropriate action. But, coming to the substantive issue of permission, I think my hon. friend is an experienced teacher like other teachers in this House. We have what we call the attendance register where teachers have to sign in...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Listen to the answer first, then supplementary questions can be put!

Mr Gokhool: They don't listen and then they ask questions.

Mr Speaker: Carry on.

Mr Gokhool: The attendance register is there for staff to sign in and sign out. This issue of movement book has been there for some years. Mr Speaker, Sir, I went to visit a school. At 11 o'clock a teacher was taking her car and going home. I asked the teacher what is happening. She said: "I have finished my teaching at 11.30 and I am going home." The second question I asked: is the Rector of the school aware of it? When I checked with the Rector, he was not aware. Why? Because the movement book is kept in the staff room or is with the Usher. What we are trying to do is that, in line with the need to ensure the national performance indicators are achieved, we are making Rectors responsible for all resources.

We are not removing the permission, because if educators have to leave, the only change is that, instead of signing the movement book which is at the staff room or at the Usher's room, they have to sign it with the Rector. The Rector will have to know where the staff is, because at times we have emergencies, we have to replace staff or there are other matters to be addressed. We are making the Rector responsible for all resources and management of the school. It is very simple. I know it is going to cause inconvenience to certain people who were utilising the movement book to be away and managing the time by themselves. I think this is not on, we are changing this.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the reply of the hon. Minister. Will he agree that, with the implementation of such a simple measure, he has created so much frustration among the teaching community in the country, especially, at a time where we are during the last term in most of the colleges and schools in the country?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a simple principle. Privileges of position should be accompanied by the responsibilities of the position.

The teachers/educators have signed the option form. Do you know that the packages of teachers have been increased between Rs8,000 to Rs10,000 per month? I am just implementing what the PRB has recommended, that the hours of work should be extended to 15.00 hrs. Now, if the educators have problems with that, they have to make their representations according to the procedure with the PRB.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I know that this is a question of national importance, I will have to give some more time.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision has been taken to extend the hours of school from 14.30 to 15.00 hrs and the hon. Minister has stated that it is for marking purposes, meeting parents, etc. Will he inform the House whether any plan has been drawn up by his Ministry that on each specific day of the week what the teachers are expected to do, say, on Monday, to meet parents, on Tuesday, to do this or that, etc? Is there any plan of that sort?

Mr Gokhool: This is where hon. Dayal has been talking about flexibility. The overall policy is that school hours should be extended by 30 minutes. How this should be used productively, we are not prescribing it, we are just indicating a number of examples. Hon. Dayal and other teachers know that, in a class, we do have certain pupils who have certain difficulties of a personal nature, or maybe of a pedagogical nature. When will these pupils meet the teachers? There may be need for remedial education. This is the time allotted. Either they can meet the students to look at their personal problems...

(Interruptions)

Because they don't know the reality of the school, that's why they are speaking like that!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Gokhool: I know the reality of the school. If a pupil has a

problem to discuss with the teacher, the best time is after classes, to take permission with the parents and meet the teacher. We are promoting a strategy of remedial education. When will the remedial education activities take place? Thirdly, Mr Speaker, Sir, if a parent has to meet a teacher, he can do so after classes. Parents are very interested with the education of their children. Do you know that some schools were having PTA meetings at 8.30/9.00 o'clock?

(Interruptions)

I can't accept that because, at that time, parents are at work. They should be able to come at a time which is convenient to them and not convenient to certain people in the organisation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I will expect short questions and short answers, because there are so many Members who are interested with this issue and want to put questions.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to withdraw this circular letter, because this is a very bad tool in the hand of certain managers who act like butchers?

Mr Gokhool: The proposal to remove the circular is not on, because we are implementing the recommendation gradually. There are about 20 recommendations of PRB and we are implementing them gradually. The only measure we are implementing now is that school hours be extended to 3.00 p.m. and a number of activities can be undertaken. A valid point was made by hon. Guinness, Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards private colleges. We have the Manager and the Rector. The Rector is the pedagogical Head and, I think, the Managers should leave the Rectors to manage the pedagogy, the time-table and so on. I am going to make this clear, because we have to achieve the national targets and if Managers interfere with the work of Rectors, I don't think this is the right condition. We have to clarify this. Managers have their responsibilities and Rectors have their responsibilities as regards pedagogy and they should not mix it up. Because who speaks on behalf of the private colleges? It is the Managers. But, it should be the Rectors who should speak about educational matters relating to pedagogy, because they are daily concerned with the performance of the students. So, I agree with the hon. Member and I will clarify that.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister stated that

teachers had signed the option forms. Would he confirm to the House that teachers never refused to work for the additional 30 minutes, that this was not the issue, but the fact was that they were asked to stay in school when students were away from school?

Mr Gokhool: Sir, we have indicated that all students do not have to stay at school, but there are certain students who have personal problems and they need pastoral care or there are students who have certain difficulties with certain subjects where they will require remedial education. Who knows best than the teacher who are the students who have these difficulties? This is one part of activity.

(Interruptions)

Mr Léopold: Mr Speaker, Sir, presently there are certain schools which are starting at 8 o'clock, others at 8.05 a.m., 8.10 a.m., 8.15 a.m., 8.25 a.m. 8.30 a.m. and all are finishing at 15.00 hours. Does the Minister think that this is creating a certain frustration among teachers and it is a case of treatment of *deux poids, deux mesures*?

Mr Gokhool: This point has been made and we have taken it into account because the colleges start at different hours in the morning. We have allowed the colleges to start at the time that they use to start, but for the 30 minutes, we have already given an indication of the type of activities that can be conducted, but we have to start implementing the recommendation of the PRB. Let me also tell our hon. Members who are teachers that the biggest difficulty will arise not with this one, but with the implementation of the Performance Management System and the Unions are dead against it.

I'll have to handle that as well because I'll have to implement the Performance Management System. We measure the performance, we look at the performance of students. When it comes to the performance of teachers, they will say they do not want it, but we have to implement it.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister agree that this decision should have been implemented on a pilot scheme because it might happen, in the future, that teachers stay in schools from 14.30 p.m. to 15.00 p.m., doing nothing?

Mr Gokhool: I have to quote what some teachers say, that during those 30 mins, they will '*tourne pouce ou bien touye mouche*'. But this is a lack of imagination and a lack of creativity. Let me just state why we have changed the title of teacher to educator. It is because the role of educator is

broader now, it is not only teaching and learning. They have to get involved in the community life of the school and that's why we have given time and they have to be imaginative. They cannot come and say: what are we going to do? *Touye mouche ou tourne pouce?*

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened very attentively to the hon. Minister when he said that there is abuse made by certain teachers. In each department there are *brebis galeuses* and even in this House we have *brebis galeuses*...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! No, the hon. Member cannot! So far as the *brebis galeuses* are outside the House, it is alright. Referring to hon. Members as *brebis galeuses* is out of order, he should withdraw.

Mr Dayal: I withdraw it in this House.

(Interruptions)

Why does not the hon. Minister consider the advisability of dealing with those *brebis galeuses* instead of penalising the whole lot of teachers?

Mr Gokhool: It is not penalising. When you have to ask for explanation, the Rector is often in difficulty to provide same. We are giving the responsibility for accountability to the Rectors. We are not withdrawing the permission. In fact, the circular is clear. If they want to leave for 30 minutes, they go and see the Rector and the permission will be granted, but it will be properly recorded for accountability purposes. I cannot really understand the difficulty of the hon. Member.

Mrs Martin: M. le président, le ministre a mentionné les 30 minutes additionnelles comme étant une panacée pour régler tous les problèmes auxquels les étudiants et les professeurs font face. Je voudrais savoir si tous les problèmes, dont le ministre fait mention, ne sont pas déjà adressés dans la journée normale d'un professeur ? Y a-t-il eu un cas où un professeur a refusé de rencontrer un parent ou refuser d'aider un élève ?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, if a parent wants to meet a teacher and we do not have these 30 minutes, when will the parents meet the teachers?

(Interruptions)

Recess time is too short! It is not possible to attend to parents in ten minutes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister answer!

Mr Gokhool: What teachers would normally do is to leave their classes and attend to the parents. What about staff and heads of department meetings? When are they held? Aren't they held during working hours?

That's why we are saying that most meetings should be held later on during the 30 minutes time. You will not have to do everything during the 30 minutes time

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please keep quiet!

Mr Jhugroo: Est-ce que je peux demander au ministre si des études approfondies ont été faites parce que le pays a un problème très grave qu'est la circulation routière ? Si tous les collèges, toutes les écoles terminent à la même heure, qu'est-ce qui va se passer concernant la circulation routière dans le pays ?

Mr Gokhool : M. le président, il y a un petit changement...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Order, please!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, si ce petit changement....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said order. The House is becoming like a market place!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a minor change and it is generating so much heat. People will realise where the resistance is. We are

just changing the closing time of schools to 3 o'clock and that will concern only the teachers, the educators. It will not concern the students. The students will leave, as usual, at 2.25 p.m or 2.30 p.m. and they will come at the time that they are used to come. I do not think there is any problem of transport which the hon. Member is referring to.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just stated that it is only a matter of students and the teacher. May I ask the Minister if he is aware that a very sizeable percentage of teachers travel by school bus and that this, in itself, acts as a deterrent, for insecurity and indiscipline in all these school buses? Now that we are departing from this principle and also the very principle of installing discipline within and outside school hours, how will the present policy ensure discipline and security in school buses?

Mr Gokhool: Very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir. The problems of indiscipline which occur at the schools begin in the classrooms and have to be handled at the level of the school first. That is where the teacher has personal contacts with the students, that is where the problems of classroom discipline should be managed first, then we can look at problems of discipline in the buses...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Gokhool: The hon. Member has to listen to my answer though he does not agree.

(Interruptions)

Am I provoking? Today I have decided not to provoke anybody.

Mr Speaker: The issue itself is provocative. What can I do?

Mr Gokhool: What I am saying is that the hon. Member is raising the issue of indiscipline. Indiscipline has to be tackled at the level of the classroom, at the school. There is indiscipline in buses. But we have to know of our priorities. I am looking at the interest of the students first and this is the dertermining factor since I became Minister; I am not going to depart from this principle.

Mr Guinness: The hon. Minister is saying time and again PRB report and what not. The PRB report states 30 periods whereas the circular of the Minister says that next year it will be 34 periods teaching time. Where is it in the PRB report that it will be compulsory next year for students to take eight subjects? And we know what financial difficulty it means for slow learning students. In the circular, it is said 30 periods have to be taught; here, the hon. Minister is saying 34, eight subjects are compulsory. Where is it said in the PRB report?

Mr Gokhool: I have said in my answer that a committee has been set up. There have been reactions and representations with regard to the timetable arrangement, that is, about 28 to 30 periods, but this, I have said, will be looked into and discussions will be held with the stakeholders before we arrive at a final decision. When I open up to dialogue, people say I am not dialoguing, but this is dialogue.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll come back to the reply made by the hon. Minister. At the beginning of his reply, he said that this measure is a temporary one and that students will leave school at 3 o'clock at from 2009; next he just said that there is no problem for students because students will continue to leave at 2.30. Which is which? Is that a temporary measure and a full measure will be implemented in 2009?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my answer, I don't think I have stated that students will leave at 3 o'clock. I have said that they will leave at 2.25 and 2.30. This is what I have said. I have not said...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please!

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister how he will reconcile with what is in this reprehensible circular letter where it says: 'Similarly, Heads of departments will be required to teach 28 periods of 35 minutes, totalling 980 minutes, and in the PRB report, vol. I, page 286, recommendation 14.22.71: 'We also recommend that education officers now restyled educators performing the duties of Heads of department should continue to teach subjects of specialisation for a maximum of 25 periods'. Maximum means that there is a ceiling. It could be 20, 25 and here it says 28 periods. This is against the recommendation of the PRB report.

Mr Gokhool: The difficulty in this House is that when you answer people don't listen. I have already said that the matter of the timetabling 28

to 30 periods for educators and those of Heads of departments will be discussed in the implementation committee because there have been representations. The only measure which is being implemented is that school hours will be extended to 3 o'clock. That is all.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I have heard the hon. Minister state again and again that he is sticking to the PRB report. I'll just ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken note of his circular letter where he states that teachers have been neglecting work ancillary to teaching. May I ask the Minister what he meant by that? Whether he is stating that teachers have not been doing that work and whether he thinks that within 30 minutes teachers will manage to do that work if they have not been doing it till now.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said certain ancillary activities have been neglected. I have not said that all teachers are doing that. In fact, I have to pay tribute to many teachers who are doing their work very professionally. But I have also received complaints and we have got representations from parents that children do not receive any homework.

How do you reinforce teaching and learning when children are not given a little bit of homework? We are recommending, we are asking the teachers to make that extra effort on behalf of the children of the Republic of Mauritius. That is all.

Mr Jhugroo: Will the hon. Minister confirm that, as from January next year, the students will leave school 30 minutes earlier than teachers?

Mr Gokhool: This matter will be looked into because we have received representations. I cannot now, having received the representations, decide unilaterally. The stakeholders wanted to discuss the matter. We have asked them to come forward; we will discuss the matter and then we will finalise the timetable for 2009.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the proposed timetabling, is the hon. Minister aware that, at the MGI and all the several MGSS, there already exists nine periods. The first period is 40 minutes, there are eight periods of 35 minutes. When it is added, it is 320 minutes daily, multiplied by 5, it is 1,600 minutes teaching time, break, lunch time are not included. In this one, there are nine periods of 35 minutes; 9 times 35 is 1,575. This means that what MGI has been doing for several decades is 25 minutes more. Now the hon. Minister is proposing 1,575 minutes; this is already

being implemented at the MGI, year in year out, in all the SSS we are having performance to the tune of 100%. Is the hon. Minister saying that at the MGI teachers are not performing? Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that all teachers are not performing, all teachers are *brebis galeuses*?

Mr Gokhool: I'll only comment on the relevant part of the question where the MGI does more work, that is, the hours of work are longer than what is being recommended. If they are doing more and they want to continue doing more, there is no problem about that. We are going by the norm which has been recommended by the PRB and if MGI wants to do more for the students, they are most welcome.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – EDUCATORS -- WORKING HOURS (19/08/08)

(No. B/1177) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the recommendation of the Pay Research Bureau to extend the working hours of the educators by thirty minutes daily, he will state if his Ministry has carried out any study of its pedagogical effect, prior to the implementation thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ. No. B/1172)

At 5.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – EDUCATORS – PRB REPORT - WORKING HOURS (19/08/08)

(No. B1180) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the additional teaching time of thirty minutes daily in the secondary schools as per the recommendation of the Pay Research Bureau Report, he will state if his Ministry has set up a mechanism for the implementation thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ. No. B/1172)