

TERTIARY

University of Mauritius/Dental College

14.11.00



B.Sc (HONS) MEDICAL SCIENCE COURSE - NO. OF GRADUATES ETC.

(No. B/267) **Dr. S. Maudarbocus (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the B.Sc(Hons) Medical Science course, he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain -

- (a) the number of students who have followed it in each year since its inception;
- (b) the number of students who have graduated with an Upper 2nd Class Hons.;
- (c) the number of graduates who will be proceeding to the United Kingdom to complete the course for the award of a medical practitioner's degree and
- (d) if the agreement with a French university whereby these students can complete their studies in France still holds good.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius that the intake of students for the B.Sc (Hons) Medical Science course, since its inception, is as follows-

1997/1998	11
1998/1999	10
1999/2000	27
2000/2001	9

I am further informed that all 11 students of the 1997/1998 group have graduated - 4 with First Class Hons. and 7 with an Upper 2nd Class Hons. According to information from the University of Mauritius, eight of those students will be proceeding to UK to complete the second leg of their medical studies.

With regard to part (d), the University of Mauritius has confirmed that negotiations/arrangements with the University of Bordeaux II are on and that all academic implications have more or less been settled. Under this arrangement, students can go to Bordeaux for a *2ème Cycle* and come back to Mauritius for the *3ème Cycle*. The University of Mauritius is expecting the

agreement to materialise before the end of this academic year.

Dr. Maudarbocus: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given the prohibitive cost of medical studies in Europe - England or France - can the Minister approach some friendly countries where medical studies are not so expensive so that these three students who do not have the means to pay for their own medical studies can secure a seat to continue or finish their studies?

Mr Obeegadoo: I will be only too glad to consider any suggestions the hon. gentleman may have.

YEAR 2002

19 JUNE, 2002
26 (3)

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - STUDENTS - INTERNET FACILITIES

(No. B/377) Mr R. Daureeawoo (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, given that the number of projects for the development of information technology is on the increase, he will consider the advisability of providing a free number of hours access to Internet at the residence of students of the University of Mauritius, especially to the vulnerable groups who are undergoing BSc computer courses or graduate related courses at part of the syllabus of their studies.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the internet offers access at the press of a button to a vast amount of information to all categories of members of the community. It has become the great social equalizer, provided access is obtainable. Within the process of turning our country into a cyber island and, in particular, within the e-Education and e-Training perspective, providing affordable access to the Internet for the world of Education has become a priority of Government. With the implementation of the School IT Project, a major step in this direction will be achieved.

Students of the University of Mauritius, I am told, already benefit from free access to internet facilities on campus. I am further informed by the University that, upon request, special arrangements can be made for such access to be available on campus after normal opening hours for specific assignments. The same applies to the University of Technology, Mauritius.

The suggestion of providing home access to the internet to University students, although laudable in itself, requires further investigation as to its implications. For instance, its implementation presupposes availability of computer equipment at home, which cannot be taken for granted. Further, if translated into practice, facilities offered would have to be extended to all students of the University of Mauritius and other tertiary education institutions, and possibly secondary students, the internet being of general interest.

I thank the hon. Member for his suggestion.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - STUDENTS - ACCESS TO INTERNET
(28/05/02)**

(No. B/350) Mr R. Daureeawoo (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether, given that the number of projects for the development of information technology is on the increase, he will consider the advisability of providing a free number of hours access to Internet at the residence of students of the University of Mauritius, especially to the vulnerable groups who are undergoing BSc computer courses or graduate related courses as part of the syllabus of their studies.

(Withdrawn)

29/4/03

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**DENTAL COLLEGE, ARSENAL - BHAVNAGAR
UNIVERSITY OF INDIA - AFFILIATION**

(No. B/270) Dr. S. Chady (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will ascertain if the Mauritius National College of Dentistry at Arsenal is affiliated to the Bhavnagar University of India and, if so, will he further ascertain if that University has a Faculty of Dentistry.

The Minister of Education and Scientific Research (Mr S. Obeegadoo): Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to that question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, allow me to point out that the so-called Mauritius National College of Dentistry includes the terms "Mauritius" and "National" in its appellation. According to information received, the promoters, R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust have neither sought nor obtained permission to use the term "Mauritius" or "National".

As regards the first part of the question, my Ministry has been communicated a letter from Bhavnagar University addressed to the Chairman of the Trust and dated July 02, 2001, wherein Bhavnagar University states its agreement in principle to grant affiliation to the proposed Dental College subject to 8 conditions being met. As at today, the Ministry has not been informed whether the said conditions have indeed been fulfilled and affiliation in effect granted.

Incidentally, I am advised that according to the Indian Universities handbook 2002, Bhavnagar University does have a faculty of Medicine offering, *inter alia*, a Bachelor of Dental Surgery course (BDS).

CA/D07/P12/1
(No. B/270) (contd)

Dr. Chady: Is this dentistry school operational in Mauritius?

Mr Obeegadoo: It has come to my attention that certain courses are being run at Arsenal, and we have informed the promoters that they are not entitled to do so. We will see to it that, unless and until they obtain the green light of Government, that is not so.

Dr. Chady: It would be good if the Minister could check whether Bhavnagar University really offers courses in dentistry. According to my information, they don't offer these courses.

Mr Obeegadoo: As I have said, the document we have consulted is the Indian Universities handbook, which lists all the recognised universities of India and the courses they offer. It appears that Bhavnagar University has a faculty of medicine which runs different courses, of which the BDS course is one.

Dr. Chady: I also have a list with me, and it does not mention dentistry specifically. The Minister is right for having not allowed them to operate as yet, because affiliation is something else. I would like also to ask the Minister to check whether this university that they are opening here would satisfy all the criteria, according to the Dental Act of India, because this is what is required. Unless they satisfy all the qualifying criteria, as laid down by the Dental Council of India, there is no way they can operate.

Mr Obeegadoo: We shall look into that, Sir.

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**K.M. SHAH CHARITABLE TRUST - DENTAL COLLEGE &
HOSPITAL — SETTING UP**

(No. B/345) **Dr. B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether any request for the setting up of a Dental College and Hospital in Mauritius by K.M.Shah Charitable Trust has been considered by Government and, if so, whether he will state what has been the outcome.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, on 24 February 2002, the K.M. Shah Charitable Trust sent a proposal to my Ministry to set up a Dental College and Hospital in Mauritius.

An evaluation of the proposal was made by a Technical Committee under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director, Tertiary Education Commission and comprising representatives from the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Mauritius Institute of Health and the Dental Council of Mauritius.

After careful consideration, the Technical Committee did not recommend the proposal from the K.M. Shah Charitable Trust, as it had serious doubts as to the quality of training that would be provided by the proposed Dental College.

1st July, 2003

(14) (15)
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(6)

mrl/d24p05.04

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PRIVATE TERTIARY EDUCATION

(No. B/440) Mr M. Chumroo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether Government proposes to encourage private tertiary education and, if so, whether his Ministry has proposed any incentive for Mauritians to launch such enterprises in partnership with foreign universities and whether he will give the number of requests received so far in connection therewith, indicating their outcome.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the Ministry of Education is fully conscious of the need to rapidly expand access to Tertiary Education in Mauritius in order to meet the economic and social challenges of the future. While it is universally acknowledged that education and training represent the most powerful engine of growth and development, it is a matter of concern that the tertiary participation rate (defined as the total number of persons enrolled on a tertiary level programme as a percentage of the number of persons in the age group 19 to 24) is only of 16%. In comparison, the tertiary participation rate for the newly industrialised countries of East Asia is 35% on average.

Despite the rapid expansion in the supply of seats and significant broadening of the spectrum of courses on offer in our two public universities, it is obvious that the State alone cannot meet actual and projected demand.

Accordingly, over the last decade, a number of institutions, both local and foreign, offering courses or tutoring at tertiary level, have come into operation. Some of these are premised on a partnership between locals and foreign tertiary institutions. According to information provided to me, four such requests, that is, requests made by partnerships of local and foreign tertiary institutions have been received in the recent past, of which three have already been considered and two approved.

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(P.Q. No. B/440 ctd....)

Sir, in parallel to efforts to meet local demand, we shall increasingly have to position our country as a regional provider of educational services especially at tertiary level. Accordingly, the need to promote the development of a knowledge industry with a regional dimension holds a prominent place in our plans for the future.

The hon. gentleman may wish to note that ongoing preparation for reforms at tertiary level include a regulatory framework to promote quality assurance with respect to private providers and incitative measures to encourage further initiatives relating to provision of tertiary level educational services.

Mr Chumroo: May I know what are the incentives offered to those who have already been given authority to operate?

Mr Obeegadoo: The Ministry of Education does not provide incentives, Sir. I said that within the perspective of the White Paper, which is presently under study, there are different matters being considered, one of which is the incitative measures for the development of the knowledge industry.

Mr Chumroo: What are the incitative measures that the hon. Minister is talking of?

Mr Obeegadoo: I repeat, that is under consideration and should the hon. gentleman have any bright ideas, we should be quite happy to consider and accommodate, as far as possible, those ideas.

Dec Unit (7)
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D33/IF/P01/3

Debate No. 33 of 19.08.2003 ←

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

DENTAL COLLEGE, ARSENAL - OPERATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. N. Ramgoolam) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Dental College, Dental Hospital and Oral Institute operated by the R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust, he will state -

- (a) if all the relevant permits had been obtained at the time of the inauguration, giving details thereof, and
- (b) whether the Dental College had started to run courses, prior to obtaining all licenses and in breach of any condition/s laid down by the Ministry, and if so, what action has been taken.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to briefly state the background against which Government has considered with great interest private initiatives as regards tertiary education generally, but also this proposed course in dental surgery.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the Members of the House would be aware, at present the tertiary enrolment rate, defined as the number of persons undergoing full time tertiary training as a percentage of the target population aged between 20 and 24, stands at 17% which is far below the corresponding percentages for the newly industrialised countries of south East Asia which average 35%. In addition, it is estimated that about half a number of students successfully completing the Higher School Certificate do not proceed to further studies whether locally or abroad. Indeed, at present, our two public Universities enroll only about 45% of qualified applicants each year due to limited capacity. Such a state of affairs represents considerable wastage of our human resource potential and is definitely not in line with the vision that Government holds for the future economic and social development of the country. Hence, the very many initiatives taken by

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Government and my Ministry to lay the basis to create the environment for the gradual development of Mauritius into a knowledge hub. It is against such a background that should be viewed Government's keen interest to support private initiatives to open up opportunities in the educational and training fields including dentistry, subject to norms and standards being established or maintained as appropriate and the quality assurance mechanism being put into place.

I am informed that in 1997, the then Government approved a project proposal of the Indian Ocean Medical Institute Trust, promoters of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College to run a school including a training course in Dental Surgery. However, there was no follow up on that specific proposal by the SSR Medical College until 2001.

In the meantime, on 12 August 2001, the R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust wrote to my Ministry expressing its interest to set up a 100-seat Dental College to run a Bachelor Dental Surgery (BDS) Course in Mauritius. A Technical Committee was set up on 27 September 2001 under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director of the Tertiary Education Commission with officials of the Ministry of Health, the Mauritius Institute of Health, representatives of the University of Mauritius and the Dental Council to study the proposal.

In February 2002, the Committee reported that the proposal of the R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust to establish a Dental College affiliated to Bhavnagar University in India would be beneficial to Mauritius. At the same time, the K.M. Shah Charitable Trust of Gujarat, India wrote to my Ministry indicating its interest to set up a Dental College and hospital. In addition the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College submitted a proposal to proceed with its project to run a BDS programme. Accordingly, the Technical Committee was requested to consider all proposals submitted and consult with parties concerned.

contd./

DR/D33/P02/1
(PNQ Cont'd)
(Mr Obeegadoo)

In March 2002, the University of Mauritius informed my Ministry that subject to approval from Ministry of Health, it would agree for the SSR Medical College to run the BDS programme since that college is affiliated to the University of Mauritius.

In May of the same year, the Ministry of Health gave its agreement to the BDS syllabus as proposed by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College. It should be pointed out that in June of that year, the SSR Medical College was called to order after it came to light that it had advertised a BDS programme in India without formal approval of Government being obtained.

In July 2002, the Technical Committee recommended that provisional permission be granted to R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust to enable the Trust to start its project while final permission would be granted subject to the satisfactory report of a Monitoring Committee to be set up. The Technical Committee did not find merit in the proposal of K. M. Shah Charitable Trust and proceeded to further examine the SSR Medical College's proposal.

R. F. Gandhi A. K. Trust was informed in August 2002 that provisional permission had been granted but that final permission was conditional upon, *inter alia*, creation of appropriate infrastructure and related facilities, satisfactory inspection by Bhavnagar University, affiliation to Bhavnagar University and the local Monitoring Committee's green light.

In April 2003, information came to light that the R. F. Gandhi A. K. Trust had already started running courses at its Dental College in Arsenal. State Law Office's advice was sought and a letter issued to the Director of the Trust informing him that he was in breach of the conditions laid down by the Ministry and instructing him to cease forthwith the running of courses. The course, described by the Director as an induction one, was immediately interrupted as confirmed by an inspection team of my Ministry.

In June this year, Government agreed to give provisional permission to the SSR Medical College to run the first two years of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery Programme and in July of this year the Technical Committee reported that in the case of the R. F. Gandhi A. K. Trust affiliation to Bhavnagar University had been obtained and the conditions laid down for the grant of final permission had been complied with.

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**DR/D33/P02/2
(PNQ CONT'D)**

The Technical Committee, accordingly, recommended that final permission be granted to the Trust for the operation of a private Dental College and that was linked to a number of conditions adherence to which would be monitored on an ongoing basis.

These were *inter alia* that -

- (i) there should be no discriminatory practices by the Trust in recruitment of students;
- (ii) that students below a certain standard should not be recruited;
- (iii) the Trust should not use ambiguous or give misleading information in its marketing activities;
- (iv) for any reason the College would cease to operate in Mauritius. The existing students should be given the opportunity to complete their course at the Trust College in India at no extra cost to students;
- (v) students from overseas should return to their respective countries after completing the course; and
- (vi) the Trust should comply with the laws of Mauritius and should any dispute arise it would be settled in Mauritius.

The implementation and monitoring process was entrusted to the Tertiary Education Commission. I wish to stress that the same criteria were used by the Technical Committee to evaluate both the proposals of the R. F. Gandhi A. K. Trust and the SSR Medical College proposal. These criteria being entry requirements, syllabus, duration, award institution, infrastructure requirements, teaching scheme, teaching and non-teaching staff requirements, assessment in examinations, internship guarantee to ensure completion of studies and finally insurance and other liability related issues.

So, the final permission was communicated to the Trust in July of this year and the inauguration of the Dental College was set to 15 August. A few days earlier, I am informed that a case was entered before the Courts to seek an order *inter alia*, restraining the Trust from holding its inauguration ceremony and that order was not granted by the Courts.

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**DR/D33/P02/3
(PNQ CONT'D)**

As regards the specific points mentioned in the question, I am informed that all the relevant permits were indeed obtained at the time of inauguration, that is, clearance from Education had been obtained as well as registration from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority and as Members would know, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority registration is premised on other clearances being obtained, such as fine clearance, trade licence and health clearance.

As regards the second part of the question, yes, I did refer earlier in my answer to the episode of April 2003 when the Trust was called to order by the Ministry for the running of what it termed was an induction course.

Dr. Ramgoolam: The hon. Minister mentioned that the SSR college had made the application, I think, in 1999 or sometime around that date. Can he confirm that they did not go ahead at that time because there were several conditions attached to it and they were trying to satisfy those conditions?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, factually, the promoters of the SSR Medical College did not go ahead with the BDS programme. The promoters did explain to me that they were fully engrossed with the setting up of the Medical College which has now reached its third year, I believe; and it was only in 2001 that they submitted a new and detailed proposal concerning the BDS programme.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I want to confirm whether they did not go ahead, because I was told, at that time, there were several conditions that needed to be satisfied and, therefore, they would try to see if they can satisfy them. Can the hon. Minister tell the House how many Dental Colleges have been granted permission to operate by the Ministry actually?

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me again state that I am not in a position to inform the House why SSR Medical College did not go ahead after 1997 or 1998 with its project. What the promoters have told me is that they were fully engrossed with the setting up of the Medical College and they decided to move ahead concerning the Dental College in 2001.

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DR/D33/P02/4
(PNQ CONT'D)

Concerning the second question, as at present only one Dental College promoted by the R.F. Gandhi A.K. Trust has final permission to proceed, whereas the SSR Medical College holds provisional permission so that they can make progress on their proposal before final provision is eventually granted.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Can the hon. Minister say whether the policy of the Ministry is to allow as many Dental Colleges as we want to operate in Mauritius or is it going to be limited?

Mr Obeegadoo: I explained, at the very beginning, that our tertiary enrolment rate is far from satisfactory. So, Government is fully committed to providing opportunities both in the public sector and in the private sector for expansion of capacity at tertiary level so that we may provide all our qualified young people with the opportunity to proceed beyond secondary, with tertiary education or vocational training as appropriate. I am aware that the Technical Committee has looked at the number of dentists actually working in Mauritius. I understand there are presently some 150 dentists of which about 50 are in the public sector, that there is a scarcity of dentists in the public sector. Overall for Mauritius in 2002, the ratio of dentists to Mauritians was 1:8 thousand which compares favourably with many African countries, but which does not compare favourably with the developed countries where the ratio is approximately 1:2 thousand. So, the strategy is to gradually improve this ratio until such time that we can attain the standards set by the developed countries. This is why, I will repeat, Government is following, with keen interest, the expressions of interest in the private sector. We shall support the materialisation of initiatives both in the public and private sector, provided norms and standards are established and complied with; and as we go along, an ever improving quality assurance mechanism is performed.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether there is a report dated 01 July of last year whereby TEC advised the Ministry that only one Dental College was needed in Mauritius and that only one such institution should be allowed to operate?

D33P03CO1
PNQ (contd)

Mr Obegadoo: The advice of the technical committee was that we should start with one Dental College, which is indeed the attitude of Government. We start with one, it is given final permission, it begins to operate, we are satisfied with that operation and then we could move to others. Let me be very clear about this. The Dental College which is in operation, I speak from memory has, as its objectives to recruit 80% of its students abroad and only 20% locally. Now, if we want to make progress on the ratio of dentists to our population and ensure that we are convened to address the scarcity of dentists right now in the public sector, we will consider more than one Dental College provided it is in the national interest to do so.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I take it, therefore, that the TEC did not advise the Minister that there is only a place for one Dental College. That is why I wanted a confirmation from him. Can he confirm that some of the permits for the Gandhi Trust Dental College were obtained on the very date of the inauguration?

Mr Obegadoo: I am aware that the registration from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority was indeed delivered on 15 August 2003, but I must point out that the application was made on 07 May 2003. This application was processed with visits carried out by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority to the premises in Arsenal. Certain recommendations made remedied steps taken, inspected anew other clearances, as I said, Fire Services, trade licence, health communicated and the whole process was reviewed by a Board meeting at the Mauritius Qualifications Authority on 01 August 2003 where the recommendations of their technical committee was approved before letters were issued and certificate of registration granted on 15 August 2003.

In other words, the final green light of MQA came on 15 August, but that was the end point of a long process which had begun in May and had followed all the appropriate steps.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Ramgoolam: Does he realise that in spite of what he is saying the permits were given on the day as he has confirmed, but that invitations had already gone out for the inauguration? Is he aware of that?

D33P03CO2
PNQ (contd)

Mr Obeegadoo: That is indeed the case.

Dr. Ramgoolam: So, does not the Minister find it strange that invitations have been issued before actually all the permits have been obtained?

Mr Obeegadoo: As I said the role of the Ministry of Education is to ensure that conditions are complied with. The implementation of the conditions, which were imposed by Government in July were closely monitored. The Ministry of Education was at all times satisfied that the processing of application to MQA was under way. I am not responsible for issuing invitations for the inauguration as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would agree, but I have been put a question to which I am providing a factual answer: yes at the time of the inauguration all clearances had been obtained.

Dr. Ramgoolam: The Minister must be aware that there were three Ministers present at the day of the inauguration, I hardly think that they were given invitation on the very day. Can he confirm that?

Mr Obeegadoo: Well, I received my invitation earlier and I would have been present had I not had another pressing commitment. As I said, the Dental College is operating with all the authorisation required.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I would have liked to have the confirmation that the Minister was invited before. Can he confirm that the Gandhi Trust made an application for affiliation with the Gujarat University and that this was turned down?

Mr Obeegadoo: I do not have such information in my possession. All I do know, Sir, is that from the very outset, this proposal concerned affiliation to Bhavnagar University which already runs a Dental College and such affiliation was obtained prior to Government giving its green light.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

D33P03CO3
PNQ (contd)

Dr. Ramgoolam: May I remind him that there was a question in Parliament before to ask him to check whether in fact Bhavnagar University runs Dental Colleges and he said that he would look into it. Can he confirm that this University actually runs Dental Colleges?

Mr Obeegadoo: The information which has been provided to me by the technical committee is to the effect that yes, the Trust runs a Dental College, a Dental Hospital and an Oral Research Institute in Vadoodarah Gujarat and that this college has the necessary approval of Dental Council of India and is affiliated to Bhavnagar University.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Is he aware that a newspaper, Sandesh Bhavnav Edition newspaper had an article on 06 March saying that Bhavnagar University has wrongly given affiliation to the Dental College in Mauritius? Is he aware of that?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, Sir, I try to read each and every newspaper published in the country, but I obviously missed that article.

Dr. Ramgoolam: Would he, therefore, look into that, because it is a serious accusation that this newspaper has made.

Mr Obeegadoo: Certainly, Mr Speaker, I have endeavoured in my answer to show that we have had all along a principle stand and we have been looking at all the different applications on the basis of the very same criteria. Now, should Members of the Opposition be privy to any information suggesting impropriety, I would invite them to communicate such information to me and it will be fully investigated.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I would have thought that the Minister would have more resources to do that than the Opposition! Can I ask him if he is aware that there are three Senate Members from Bhavnagar University who have issued a writ in Court challenging the right of the University to give affiliation?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, Sir.

D33P03CO4
PNQ (contd)

Dr. Ramgoolam: Well, I would have asked him to look into this very seriously because this is a writ in Court. It is actually ...

(Interruptions)

I can give him evidence later, because I do not have it with me. But I would have thought the Ministry which is running with a panoply of officials can get the evidence for him! Do we have to do his job now?

(Interruptions)

He should be doing his job and it is not for us to do the job of Government! The Opposition is here to oppose and to make suggestions.

(Interruptions)

But it is for Government to take its responsibility and do its job!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is taking a point of order.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, you have given your ruling on this precise point. Statements are made to the effect that a given newspaper article has appeared, that three Members of the Senate have entered an action and so on. Surely, as per your ruling, whatever evidence the Leader of the Opposition has, should be put before the House, Mr Speaker.

Dr. David: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Let me give my ruling first. It is true that when hon. Members put questions to Ministers, the purpose is to seek information and not to give information. It is true that if the hon. Leader of the Opposition has information, he has to give it, because it is in fact a statement being contained in the question.

D33P03CO5
PNQ (contd)

Dr. Ramgoolam: I would like to know whether the Minister is aware. If he is not, I will tell him. If he cannot do the job, I will do the job for him, but can I ...

The Deputy Prime Minister: On a point of order, it is very unfair to pass a comment "if he cannot do his job, I will do his job for him" Mr Speaker. If the Leader of the Opposition does not lay evidence of what he is saying, what is saying is useless and he should not be allowed to pass a comment on the performance of the Minister, Mr Speaker.

Dr. David: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir ...

Mr Speaker: Let me give my ruling on this point of order and I will call you. I have given my ruling last time and I take it that Members have understood what I have said. As I said, last time, information cannot be framed in the form of a question and put in the House. This is not fair. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has the information - of course, what he is stating is a statement of fact contained in the newspaper. Where is it?

What is your point of order, hon. David?

Dr. David: My point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. There was a question from the Leader of the Opposition. He asked whether the Minister is aware of it or not. He said he is not aware.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please! Hon. David! Can I draw the attention of the House to paragraph (h) of Standing Order 22, this is what it says, I hope you will listen to this paragraph well -

- (h) a question shall not include the names of persons or statements of facts unless they are necessary to make the question intelligible and, in the case of statements of facts, can be authenticated by the Member concerned, (...)

(i)

It is clear, is the Leader of the Opposition prepared to authenticate it?

Dr. Ramgoolam: Yes, Sir.

D33P03CO6
PNQ (contd)

Mr Speaker: If you are prepared, please do it now.

Mr Dulloo: Yes, why not?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dulloo, I am not talking to you. I have given my ruling.

Mr Dulloo: I am a Member of the House.

(Interruptions)

If I may, Mr Speaker, on a point of order, when you are addressing the House, you are addressing me also. I am a Member of the House.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Yes, but you cannot comment on my ruling and the more so from a sitting position. Did you ask for the floor, hon. Dulloo.

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PNQ (cont'd)

Mr Dulloo: Yes, on a point of order, Sir. This subsection (h) refers. We are ready to authenticate it at any time.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member do it now?

Mr Dulloo: Not right now!

(Interruptions)

This is investigation! This is not a Court of law! We are not lying as people have lied in a Court of law. Courts of law have seen them to be liars. We are not liars here!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! The hon. Member can keep his comments for himself. I know it is not a Court of law. This is the National Assembly.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I allow to respond, Mr Speaker, Sir? After all these points of order, let me say that I take strong objection to the assertion that I should not be properly fulfilling my mission. We have results to show and the comparison with the *bilan* of the Opposition is damning.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Ramgoolam: Mr Speaker, Sir, ask the Minister to sit down.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! The question is clear. The Minister cannot speak of the *bilan* of the former Government.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, can I be allowed to give my answer?
Cont'd...

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PNQ (cont'd)

Mr Speaker: Yes, but there is no need for the Minister to refer to the *bilan* of the previous Government. This is clear.

Mr Obeegadoo: But then there is no need surely to refer to the way I do my job!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order! Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Paya!

Mr Obeegadoo: I have been asked two questions. Over the last half hour I have been endeavouring to answer questions ...

Dr. Ramgoolam: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister should answer the question that I was asking by short answers instead of making long *bla-bla-bla*. This is because he cannot answer. In fact, I put it to him that there have been fraudulent practices in this case.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! This is an accusation against the Minister that there have been fraudulent pretences. I do not think this is fair. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has to withdraw it. It is an accusation against a Member of this House.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order, Sir. Is the Deputy Prime Minister allowed to make comments from a sitting position?

Mr Speaker: Nobody has the right to do so.

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D33P04cl/2

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PNQ (cont'd)

(Interruptions)

Dr. Ramgoolam: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister himself has just confirmed in his answer at the beginning that there were administrative fraudulent practices.

The Deputy Prime Minister: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have given a ruling. The Leader of the Opposition should abide by your ruling and withdraw the allegation which he has made that money has changed hands.

Mr Speaker: For the sake of the dignity of the House, it is better for the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw and reframe what he wants to say.

Dr. Ramgoolam: I withdraw. But I say that the Minister had said that there was breach of conditions and that the induction courses had to be stopped ...

The Deputy Prime Minister: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. When your ruling is for a Member to withdraw he has to withdraw unconditionally. The Leader of the Opposition can put other questions, but he has to withdraw unconditionally.

Mr Speaker: I think he has done so.

Dr. Ramgoolam: That is what I have done. Can I ask the Minister whether he does not agree that there was breach of conditions? Did he not say that the induction courses had to be stopped?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me make two things clear. All questions have been answered. There have been two allegations. A press article which we have never seen and which has not been laid on the Table of the House and a wild allegation concerning a case in India, again no tangible evidence has been placed before the House. These are the only two allegations.

Cont'd...

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PNQ (cont'd)

As regards the last question, this is already in my answer. I did explain that the Ministry had cause to call to order, at one time, the SSR Medical College, and, at another time, the Gandhi Trust.

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the hon. Minister when were the proposals submitted to the Board of Investment and what were the conditions attached to the proposals?

Mr Obeegadoo: I cannot give the date for submission of the proposals to the Board of Investment. What I can say is that, at the time Government gave provisional permission to the Gandhi Trust to forge ahead, the BOI also wrote to the Gandhi Trust, laying down conditions amongst which compliance with the points raised by the Ministry of Education.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been no compliance.

(Interruptions)

I have a right to stand up and speak! Mr Speaker, Sir, it was clearly spelt out ...

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Beebeejaun, please! Hon. Boolell, I have given you the floor to put questions.

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the Minister whether, amongst the proposals, there should be transfer of foreign direct investment amounting to more than Rs135 m. and there should be the construction of a dental school on a five acres of land? I would like to know why these criteria have not been fulfilled.

Mr Obeegadoo: All the conditions laid down by the Technical Committee have been fully spelt out. It was on the basis of recommendations of the Technical Committee comprised of respected

Cont'd...

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PNQ (cont'd)

personalities from the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Health, the Mauritius Institute of Health and other institutions that a recommendation of the Technical Committee was made to Government and final approval granted. I have also stated that, as regards the broad conditions which have got to be complied with, the Tertiary Education Commission has been entrusted with the task of implementation and monitoring. That is an ongoing process.

Dr. Chady: As far as I can remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, we did put two questions in April where we were asking the Minister to check whether the training is up to the standard. The answer was: "after careful consideration the Technical Committee did not recommend the proposals from K.M. Shah Charitable Trust as it had serious doubts as to the quality of training." I then put a question concerning the affiliation which is important. The Minister answered that he would check. Can he say whether he has checked the list according to the Dental Act of India? The problem is whether this dental school is operating under the norms that are required because life of people is at stake.

Mr Obeegadoo: First of all, the hon. Member should guard against any possible confusion between the Shah Charitable Trust which has not been recommended by the Technical Committee and the Gandhi Trust which we are debating today.

Secondly, affiliation was verified and I am thankful to the hon. Member for his helpful suggestions at the time. We verified not only with Bhavnagar University, but also with the Dental Council. It was only when the Technical Committee came with a statement of fact that affiliation was there both with the Dental Council and the University that permission was granted.

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PNQ (cont'd)

Dr. Ramgoolam: Is the Minister aware of an advertisement that was made in India that the College of Dentistry was going to be opened and is affiliated with Bhavnagar University and that, in fact, this permit has not been given, that this advertisement was put in India before the permits were given? Is he aware of that? I can lay copy of it on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Obeegadoo: In several advertisements both locally and abroad, and, as I stated earlier, the Technical Committee did call to order various promoters concerning advertisements before final permission was granted.

Mr Speaker: Time is up. Before we proceed to the next item, let me make it clear once for all that these rules have been made by this Assembly and we have to observe them. I have given my ruling, precisely, because I want to protect Members of the House and people who have no protection, from being defamed because under the cloak of immunity and under the cloak of questions I would not allow any person to do mud-slinging. This should be very clear. Next item!

18/5/04

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**POLICE STUDIES - CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA/B.SC. (HONOURS)
DEGREE COURSE**

(No. B/404) Mr M. Nanhuck (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the Certificate/Diploma/BSc (Honours) degree course in Police studies at the University of Mauritius, obtain from the Commissioner of Police information as to -

- (a) when the course was first introduced and how many officers have been selected for each academic intake;
- (b) how many female officers have been selected for each intake;
- (c) how many officers started the courses and how many successfully completed them, and
- (d) whether any pay increase has been offered as an incentive to successful officers at Diploma and Degree levels and, if so, the number who have benefited therefrom and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Certificate/Diploma/ B.Sc. (Honours) degree course in Police Studies was introduced in September 1999.

I am laying on the Table of the Assembly a statement giving the information as provided to me by the Commissioner of Police on the academic intake and the number of female officers selected for each intake.

To date, forty-seven Police officers who started the B.Sc. (Hons) Course in academic year 1999-2000 have successfully completed their four year studies and have graduated in August 2003. Those who joined the University in academic year 2000-2001 will soon sit for their final degree examination.

So far, no pay increase has been granted to officers who have obtained their Diploma/Degree. These officers are entitled to incremental credits. Relevant papers are being processed by the Police Personnel Division and the approval of the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms will be sought soon.

(PQ No. B/405 - see after PQ No. B/406)

**PRIVATE COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES
- MEDICINE AND/OR NURSING - SETTING UP**

(No. B/15) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Scientific Research whether he will state if he has received any application from foreign institutions for the setting up of private colleges or universities in the field of Medicine and/or Nursing and, if so, will he state -

- (a) the number and names of the applicants, and
- (b) the outcome of each application.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, it is to be noted that my Ministry does from time to time receive applications for the setting up of private tertiary educational institutions in Mauritius. These applications come either from existing institutions or from individuals seeking to set up, for the first time, the organisational structure in Mauritius; presumably, they reflect the ever increasing local demand for tertiary education. The applications are invariably referred to the Tertiary Education Commission, which is the umbrella organisation for our tertiary sector.

It is important that we regulate our tertiary education sector in order to ensure its integrity and increase public confidence. I should like to point out that through the adoption of an open-door policy, certain countries have caused a lot of harm to their own tertiary education systems. The approach worldwide is now to have a robust regulatory framework for the tertiary education sector. Accordingly, my Ministry is coming up with legislation to put in place a regulatory framework for our tertiary education sector very shortly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has received two applications from overseas for the setting up of medical colleges as follows -

- (i) Shri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute which is a deemed university based in Chennai, India for the setting up of medical college;
- (ii) Baqai Foundation, a foundation based in Pakistan for the setting up of a Medical University and Teaching Hospital in Mauritius.

These two applications are being processed.

SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE - COURSES - COMPLAINTS

16/11/04

(10)

(No. B/821) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education & Scientific Research whether, in regard to the SSR Medical College, he will -

- (a) state if his Ministry has received any complaint regarding its courses leading to the MBBS degree or to any other qualifications;
- (b) ascertain if it is affiliated to, and recognised by, any other external university and, if so, will he table copy of any document witnessing same, and
- (c) ascertain how are examinations being conducted and by which authority.

Mr Obegadoo: Sir, an anonymous complaint dated 18 May 2004 allegedly from a group of parents expressing concern about the SSR Medical College was indeed submitted to my Ministry. The complaint which pertained essentially to the following -

- Quality of the MBBS training being provided by the SSR Medical College;
 - Student experience at the College;
 - Misleading information in the marketing activities by the College;
 - Work and employment conditions of the staff at the college
-

was transmitted to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for consideration.

I am informed by the Commission that an investigation is under way to shed light on the complaint. However, preliminary findings have revealed that the SSR Medical College is complying with the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) set up by the University of Mauritius for the MBBS Programme, comprising senior medical professionals from the UK, India and South Africa. The International Advisory Committee has visited the college on two occasions in January 1998 and in May 2000 and another visit is scheduled before the affiliation of the SSR Medical College to the University of Mauritius and the award of the first MBBS degree in 2005.

The affiliation of the SSR Medical College to the University of Mauritius has been approved in principle by the Senate and Council of the University. The memorandum is being finalised for signing. By virtue of this affiliation, the MBBS degree to be awarded to students of the SSR Medical College will be that of the University of Mauritius which is a recognised University. Therefore, the question of the SSR Medical College being affiliated to and recognised by any other external university does not arise.

Examinations at the SSR Medical College are conducted under the overall supervision and authority of the University of Mauritius. As such, staff of the University of Mauritius invigilate the theoretical and practical examinations at the SSR Medical College. The University of Mauritius also co-opts external examiners whose terms of appointment are approved by the Senate of the University, the practice of having recourse to external examiners is a tradition of British Universities which has been adopted by the University of Mauritius since its creation. External examiners may review scripts already marked by the local examiners to ensure that marking standards are in line with their standard as well as with other international standards. The external examiners submit their report to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius. The same mechanisms apply for all other courses run by the University of Mauritius proper from its Réduit campus. Furthermore, the University of Mauritius is represented on the Academic Board and the Board of Examiners set up by the SSR Medical College.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may we know from the hon. Minister who are the external examiners?

Mr Obeegadoo: I do not have the information at hand, but I would be very glad to lay a copy listing all the external examiners in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Chumroo: May I know from the hon. Minister whether any practical examination is carried out at Medical College?

Mr Obeegadoo: As I have just said, Sir, it is a long answer which is why I went through it rather quickly. Reference is made to practical examinations which are invigilated by the staff of the University of Mauritius.

Mr Chumroo: May I know whether this is carried in collaboration with the Ministry of Health?

Mr Obeegadoo: The answer I have been provided with does not refer to the Ministry of Health.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister how these external examiners are being remunerated?

Mr Obeegadoo: It is a matter for the University of Mauritius to decide, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister whether a proper library exists at the school? Does he have this information?

Mr Obeegadoo: I would not have been aware, Sir. I seem to recollect from a visit to the SSR Medical College that they do indeed have a library, but whether it is adequate or not, is not for me to say. But the International Advisory Committee does have that as part of its mission.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the Minister confirm whether adequate dead bodies are being provided to the students for experience?

Mr Obeegadoo: Again I would need notice of such a question, Sir.

SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE - ACCREDITATION

1122/3/05

(No. B/229) Dr. R. Beebeejaun (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if the SSR Medical College has applied for accreditation to the Mauritius Qualification Authority and, if so, when, the outcome thereof and will he make a statement thereon.

Reply (The Minister of Training, Skills Development, Productivity & External Communications): I am informed that the SSR Medical College is not yet accredited by the MQA.

The MQA will accredit the SSR Medical College as soon as it is affiliated with the University of Mauritius. I am informed that the Senate of the University of Mauritius has sought the advice of an International Advisory Committee to ensure international standard and quality criteria in the MBBS and DBS programmes. The International Advisory Committee had already met twice. The Tertiary Education Commission informed me that the affiliation with the University of Mauritius will be finalised before the award of the first MBBS Degree in May/June 2005.

YEAR 2005

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - ACADEMIC STAFF ALLOWANCES & FEES - 2004-2005 (18/10/05)

(No. I B/371) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius the amount of -

- (a) overtime paid to its academic staff, and
- (b) fees paid to part-time lecturers during the financial year 2004-2005.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius that for the financial year 2004-2005 –

(a) No overtime was paid to its academic staff. However, excess lecturing allowances of Rs9,319,250 were paid to the academic staff in view of the inability of the University to recruit the required academic staff.

(b) As regards fees paid to part-time lecturers, an amount of Rs12,094,317 was disbursed.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is normal practice not to pay overtime to the academic staff of the University of Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: As a matter of fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, academic staff are not paid overtime, but they are entitled to extra lecturing allowances.

Mrs Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that there are cases whereby academic staff has been paid overtime during normal working hours, that is, from 9 o'clock to 16 hours?

Mr Gokhool: This is not the case. As far as I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, academic staff cannot be paid overtime during working hours, but when they work extra hours, they are paid an allowance. This is provided in the University regulations.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS –
BSC (POLITICAL SCIENCE) COURSE

13/01/07

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(No. I B/554) **Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, in regard to the BSc (Political Science) Course, information as to whether –

- (a) there is a shortage of lecturers for first and second year students;
- (b) these students are facing any problems with their semestrial timetable, and
- (c) the course was properly planned and approved by the Board of the University.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) I am informed by the University of Mauritius that the BSc (Political Science) Course is being offered only since October 2005 in response to a high demand.

In fact, this BSc Course is a revised version of the BSc Social Science Course (with specialisation in Political Science), which was launched as from Academic Year 2003/2004.

As regards lecturers, the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities has one full-time academic staff in Political Science, who is employed on a contractual basis.

However, since the modules for the BSc (Hons.) Social Science (with specialisation in sociology) and the BSc (Hons.) Social Science (with specialisation in psychology), there is sharing of resources. Moreover, part-time academics are also employed.

Before launching the BSc Political Science Course, the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities had initiated action to recruit two full-time academic staff in Political Science. Two applicants were even offered appointment, but neither of them assumed duty.

I am advised that action has been initiated for the filling of vacancies.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that students are not facing any problems with their semestrial timetable. The timetable for the B.Sc. (Hons.) Political Science course has been discussed with and accepted by all students attending the course.

As regards part (c) of the question, the course was offered after it had obtained all necessary approvals. It was approved firstly by the Faculty Board on 30 November 2004, then by the Curriculum Development and Distance Education Committee on 07 December 2004, and lastly by the Senate on 27 January 2005.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - ALLEGED PLAGIARISM *Debate of 16 of 22/11/05*

(No. I B/555) **Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, the number of cases of alleged plagiarism reported thereat during the past five years, indicating what steps have been taken to prevent or discourage this practice.

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The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius that six cases of alleged plagiarism were reported during the past five years.

With a view to preventing or discouraging plagiarism at the University, students are required, since academic year 2004/2005, to sign a form known as the "Plagiarism and Fabrication or Falsification Form" within two weeks of the start of the academic year. Students are also made aware, during orientation sessions, of related issues on plagiarism and fabrication/falsification of results/documents, as well as penalties applied in case of default. They are also provided with a handbook or CD-ROM containing the relevant sections on plagiarism.

**SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE – MAURITIAN STUDENTS –
ALLOCATION OF SEATS - 2006**

(No. B/70) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state the number of seats allocated to Mauritian students at the SSR Medical Centre for the 2006 intake, indicating whether these students were asked to effect payment of entrance fees in US\$.

Reply: I am informed by the University of Mauritius, to which the SSR Medical College is affiliated, that the intake for the academic year 2006 is as follows –

- (i) 54 Mauritian students (including two Rodriguans) for MBBS and eight for BDS.

49 foreign students coming from India, Nepal, Gulf Region, USA, UK and South Africa for MBBS and four foreign students from India and South Africa for BDS.

It is to be noted that 65 Mauritian students had initially enrolled for the MBBS programme but only 54 confirmed their seats.

- (ii) The newly enrolled Mauritian students have to pay a one-off fee of US\$18,000 for the 5-year duration of the MBBS course or US\$6,000 per year if paid on a yearly basis and a one-off fee of US\$9,900 for the 4-year duration of the BDS course or US\$3,500 per year if paid on a yearly basis.

In addition, they have to effect a payment of US\$1,500 as non-refundable entrance fees.

- (iii) The SSR Medical College apparently claims in dollars for the sake of uniformity.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - TELUGU & MARATHI –
B.A. COURSES (04/04/06)**

(No. B/164) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black

River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius information as to whether full-time B.A. courses in Telugu and Marathi are being offered for the academic year starting September 2006 and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows –
(i) all full-time and part-time BA programmes in Oriental languages are mounted by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute according to the rules and regulations of the University of Mauritius (UoM), which awards the degrees;

(ii) the UoM does not have any in-house academic resources to teach oriental languages. These are taught by MGI or by part-timers recommended by MGI, and

(iii) MGI has the capacity to run BA courses in Telugu and Marathi, and is prepared to run these on a full time basis provided there is the required minimum number of eight to ten students.

The hon. Member may, however, wish to note that the system is being reviewed to make use of existing resources for running courses in the two languages irrespective of the number of students.

BAQUII UNIVERSITY, KARACHI, PAKISTAN – MEDICAL SCHOOL – SETTING UP IN MAURITIUS (11/04/06)

(No. B/199) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if the Baquii University from Karachi, Pakistan has submitted an application to operate a medical school in Mauritius and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, an original proposal for the setting up of a Medical University/Teaching Hospital in Mauritius was submitted to the then Ministry of Education and Scientific on behalf of the Baquii University Foundation of Pakistan in October 2004 by Sir Djamil Fareed in his capacity of Adviser to the then Minister of Health.

The promoters themselves submitted a project proposal to the Board of Investment on 28 January 2005. Same was referred to the Ministry and the Tertiary Education Commission for views.

Given that at that time, the Ministry of Education and Scientific

Research was embarking on defining its criteria for the setting up of brand name institutions in Mauritius in the context of developing Mauritius into a Knowledge Hub and a Centre of Higher Learning, it could not make any recommendation on the proposal straight away. Its interlocutor and the Board of Investment were informed on various occasions of the difficulties in doing so in the absence of a clear-cut policy paper on the issue.

The Knowledge Hub Report was released in June 2005 only a few days prior to the holding of the general election.

In September 2005, the promoters from Baquii came to Mauritius and made a presentation of their project to a High-Powered Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whereby I was also present.

The promoters were subsequently requested by the Board of Investment to submit additional information and documentary evidence pertaining to their original submission. I am given to understand by the Board of Investment that these have not been received so far. Consequently, the project is kept in abeyance at their end.

Mr A. Jugnauth: May I ask the Minister whether when Sir Djamil Fareed deposited the application to the BOI, he did it in his capacity as Adviser to the Minister of Health?

Mr Gokhool: No, no. He was Adviser to the Minister of Health.

Mr Varma: Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether the Baquii University is the first and largest Medical University operating in the private sector in Pakistan?

Mr Gokhool: I understand that this is a University operating in Pakistan. I cannot say whether it is the largest.

SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE – COMPLAINTS (18/04/06)

(No. B/321) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he has received complaints from some students of the SSR Medical College in regard to practical anatomy sessions and the punishment method used by the lecturers thereat and, if so, will he state if any inquiry has been carried out and the outcome thereof.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has not received any official complaint from students of the SSR Medical College regarding practical anatomy sessions and relevant punishment methods used by lecturers.

Furthermore, the University of Mauritius to which the SSR Medical College is affiliated has informed my Ministry that it has also not registered any such complaint. However, after further investigations carried out by the University of Mauritius, my Ministry has been informed that an incident did occur recently whereby a lecturer of anatomy asked a whole class to kneel down following difficulties to maintain discipline in the class.

According to the lecturer, this was resorted to as an exceptional measure after various unsuccessful attempts to calm a group of students who were not co-operating.

I have requested the University of Mauritius to take appropriate action so that such practices are not resorted to.

POLICE CONSTABLES – UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - GRADUATION COURSES (04/07/06)

(No. B/878) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to Police constables having followed graduation courses in Police studies at the University of Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) if any specific assignments have been entrusted to these officers.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the BSc (Hons) degree in Police studies was launched in September 1999 by my first Government as part of an integral programme for the reform and training of the Police cadre. Even the former Prime Minister congratulated us for this initiative.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since September 1999, 136 Police Officers from the rank of Police Constable to Assistant Superintendent of Police, have successfully followed the course of BSc

(Hons) degree in Police studies.

The course was designed to enable Police Officers to acquire professional knowledge and ability to develop, influence and drive organizational innovation and change in response to the needs of a modern, democratic, pluralistic and multi-ethnic society.

However after 2000, following the completion of their graduation programme, many of these Police Officers, if not most, were assigned the same duties that they were performing before.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police authorities are exploring new avenues for job enrichment and job specialisation for the officers who have successfully followed the course with a view to providing them with more meaningful and challenging assignments, opportunities for advancement as well as increased responsibilities. Attention will be focused in areas such as Disaster Management, Risk Management, Forensic Science and Anti-Terrorism. The advent of such a programme constitutes a landmark in the professional development of the Mauritius Police Force and the career development path of the officers.

Mr Guinness: Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, out of the 136, how many were Constables and how many out of these officers have been promoted up to now?

The Prime Minister: This is what I said. They did the degrees, but there was no change in their status. In fact, I told the Commissioner of Police that he should ensure that those who obtain degrees should get higher responsibilities, then the promotion that go with it.

Mr Bérenger: Will the hon. Prime Minister say what explanations did the Commissioner of Police offer?

The Prime Minister: None whatsoever.

Mr Bundhoo: Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister why was this specific course on Police studies chosen and whether we are contemplating or introducing a postgraduate degree course and undergraduate course?

The Prime Minister: As I said the course was designed to allow Police officers to acquire more professional knowledge to be able to perform higher duties and to face the various difficulties in certain areas,

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry and the NGOs badly need data of scientific and research value. May I appeal to the Prime Minister to constitute a Unit so that data are collected scientifically for research purposes? These might be helpful to the various Ministries, Women's Rights, for example, for children, the other Ministries and the NGOs as well.

The Deputy Speaker: How does this relate to the question?

Mr Lauthan: These people have been trained in terms

The Deputy Speaker: I am just asking the question.

Mr Lauthan: These Police Officers have followed courses at the University, but they could review the whole things, so that we can collect data of scientific and research value to be helpful to the Ministries and NGOs as well.

The Prime Minister: To the reply to the former Prime Minister who has just asked me about the explanations given by the Commissioner of Police. Not everyone has not been given any different duties, but most have not. I should say that. I have said at the beginning that most of them have not been given any extra duty, a great majority of them, even more than most.

(Interruptions)

From what I understand, the hon. Member is asking that some of the officers should be asked to collect data, but we want to confine them to higher visible duties. I can ask the Commissioner of Police to look into that.

Mr Guinness: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether actually Police constables are following the courses or whether it has stopped? If so, will he say whether applications will be called for such courses in the near future?

The Prime Minister: There are strict criteria as to who can apply and the procedure is completely independent. So, if the candidates satisfy the criteria, they will be allowed.

FOREIGN STUDENTS (31/10/06)

(No. B/1230) Mrs B. Juggoo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College Belle Rive, information as to whether foreign students are not allowed to register directly in Mauritius for a seat at the college and, if so, the reasons thereof.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr D. Gokhool): Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, this is the last time that I am calling you to order.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information has been obtained from the SSR Medical College and the answer is as follows -

- (i) Foreign students are not allowed to register directly in Mauritius for a seat at the college but have to enroll through the following overseas recruitment offices/centres of the college –
- (a) New Delhi office (for Indian students)
 - (b) Durban office (for African students)
 - (c) Kuala Lumpur office (for South East Asian students), and
 - (d) Dubai office (for students from United Arab Emirates and Gulf countries).
- (ii) The major reason for the college to have recourse to such practice is for administrative convenience as the results of qualifying examinations for the entry to the programme run by SSR Medical College are published at different times in different countries and it is therefore difficult to organise a common registration exercise.

Furthermore, such an arrangement ensures that proper information and advice are provided to potential students in their home country.

- (iii) The SSR Medical College claims all fees in US dollars, irrespective of the nationality of the students, for the sake of uniformity, as is the practice.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he could refer to clause 4B at page 7 of the Prospectus, where it is mentioned, I quote –

“Indian students can obtain and submit the completed admission form at SSR Medical College, Mauritius, or Delhi office.”

I’ll lay a copy on the Table of the National Assembly. Can the hon. Minister confirm this?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I’ll check this information. But, as I just stated this is the information which was provided to me.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from the school fees that are being paid by the students in India specifically, can the hon. Minister confirm whether there are any other fees to be paid?

Mr Gokhool: I think the question related to the registration, not specifically to the fees. If a substantive question is put, I’ll look into the whole fees structure which is claimed from students.

YEAR 2007

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES (10/04/07)

(No. B/113) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) ask the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to whether it is currently facing financial difficulties and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission which has the statutory responsibility of allocating funds to tertiary educational institutions in the light of their annual and long term programmes as follows -

- (a) The University of Mauritius, while reviewing its 2006/07 recurrent budget in February 2007 as part of its routine annual budgetary exercise, indicated that it had an anticipated deficit of Rs49.2 m, out of which Rs25.0 m was due to shortfall in revenue resulting from a lower student enrolment than projected. The projected number of students for Academic Year 2006/2007 was 8658 whereas the actual intake was 7849 resulting in a shortfall of 809.
- (b) After several rounds of discussion between TEC and UoM, the

deficit was brought down to Rs23.0 m., which is being provided by TEC. The total amount of recurrent grant to the UoM to fund its recurrent budget for the year 2006/07 will therefore be Rs264.0 m against Rs241.0 m as originally provided.

(c) The whole issue of anticipated deficit, resulting from the shortfall of the UoM recurrent budget, has now been resolved.

(d) It is to be noted that the anticipated deficit was only a budget deficit. There is no cash flow problem, and the UoM does not have any liquidity problem to complete the financial year 2006/07

(e) The UoM has been requested to diversify its funding sources and to manage its financial and human resources more efficiently and effectively.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has approached the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for an audit of the financial management of the UoM to be carried out by the Management Audit Bureau.

Mr Guinness: Can I ask the hon. Minister how does he explain that lower intake at the University when we know the number of students who normally do not get seat?

Mr Gokhool: The information I have been given is with respect to part-time courses where the demand was low and, therefore, the projected figures did not materialise and that resulted in a shortfall of the revenue of the University.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – FACULTY OF MEDICINE (24/04/07)

(No. B/212) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to whether there is a faculty of medicine thereat.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows -

(a) There is no Faculty of Medicine at the University of Mauritius (UoM).

(b) However, there is under the Faculty of Science, a department of Health Sciences and a Department of Medicine under which the following programmes are offered –

(i) Department of Health Sciences –

- Diploma/BSc(Hons) Biomedical Sciences
- BSc(Hons) Physiotherapy

- Diploma/BSc(Hons) Occupational Therapy
- Diploma in Sanitary Sciences
- (ii) Department of Medicine –
- BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Since we are talking of world-class education and world-class recognition of degrees and diplomas - the hon. Minister himself is an academic - can he explain to us whether it makes sense that when a University does not have a Faculty of Medicine how can it confer degrees in Medicine to the students who are studying at the SSR Medical College?

Mr. Gokhool: It is true that the University does not have a Faculty of Medicine, but I think it is another question and I'll answer to the question when replying to PQ No. B/214.

**SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE – BOARD OF TRUSTEES –
COMPOSITION, MEETINGS, ETC. (24/04/07)**

(No. B/214) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the SSR Medical College, information as to –

- (a) the composition of the present Board of Trustees;
- (b) the number of times the Board has met to date, and
- (c) the date of its last meeting.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the SSR Medical College is affiliated to the UoM.

As regards the question of quality raised by the hon. Member, if you would allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to state that it is true that the University of Mauritius does not have a Faculty of Medicine, but because the SSR Medical College is affiliated, there are mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of education and training.

The first mechanism is that there is an international Advisory Committee of experts and this Advisory Committee is set up by the Senate of the University of Mauritius. It has got terms of reference which basically look at the issue of quality of education and training in the medical field.

The Committee has met on three occasions recently. The first meeting was from 19 to 22 January 1998; the second meeting: 05 to 06 May 2000, and

the third meeting on 30 June 2005.

Apart from this international Advisory Committee, there is also a quality assurance framework of the TEC which is in force and this requires a panel to visit the institution concerned, at least, once each year to ensure that all the registration and accreditation criteria are adhered to.

And thirdly, as I replied with regard to the courses which are run by the University of Mauritius, for the B.Sc. (Hons.) Medical Science which is a 3-year degree course, if the student obtains at least an upper second class honours upon completion of the degree programme, the graduate is eligible to admission to clinical medical studies of three years' duration variable at any one of the following universities with which the UoM has established linkages –

- (i) Université Victor Segalen, Bordeaux II;
- (ii) University of Cape Town, South Africa;
- (iii) University of Pretoria, South Africa, and
- (iv) University of Leeds

These are arrangements which are in place in the absence of a Faculty of Medicine.

As regards part (a) with regard to the composition of the present Board of Trustees, the composition is as follows -

1. Mr R. P. N. Singh, Chairman and Managing Trustee
2. Mrs M. Singh
3. Mr Harsh Vardhan Pratap Singh
4. Mr Raj Vardhan Pratap Singh
5. Mr T.V. Sujanandan
6. Mrs T. Sujanandan
7. Mr Harshad D. Gandhi
8. Mr Bijaye Madhou, Director-General, MBC

As regards part (b), this institution is run by a private Trust. It is not possible to look at the internal day-to-day management of the Trust, but from information available, the Trustees are physically based at various locations and, therefore, decisions of the Trust are taken by members through the circulation and adoption of written regulations.

The last resolution has been signed and adopted by all members in February 2007.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his

answer. May I ask him whether he is aware that in 1997, there was the nomination of a chairman of the Indian Ocean Medical Institute Trust for life. That means that, as long as he is going to live, he is going to be the chairman of this institute. Is the Minister aware of this?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot confirm, but I know there is a chairman and this is a private Trust that manages the SSR Medical College.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what actually is happening, we'll come to the solution later on. In a resolution dated 19 May 2004, it is written that the college has received international applause and recognition by agencies like the WHO and the ECFMG of the USA. Is the Minister aware that actually this is far from being true and the SSR Medical College is not recognised because even if you go to India with the qualification from SSR Medical College, one has to sit for an examination first, conducted by the Indian Medical Council, to get recognition and the same thing applies when one goes to South Africa. Is the Minister aware of this?

Mr Gokhool: As regards the first part of the question, I'll have to check the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to the recognition, as I mentioned, the SSR Medical College is affiliated to the University of Mauritius.

As far as recognition by other countries is concerned, this is a matter for the institution to sort out with the other countries and that's why those who complete their studies at SSR Medical College have to sit for exams to have their qualifications recognised by the countries where they want to obtain the qualifications.

Dr. Hawoldar: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister told us about committees and sub committees. I'll lay the resolution on the Table of the Assembly. I'll read from the resolution which comes from the Notary in Mauritius. It is written –

“It is decided that all other Boards proposed in the Bye Laws of the IOMIT's SSR Medical College and Trust Deed need not be invoked and constituted lest it shall create confusion in the proven smooth functioning of the IOMIT and its institutions.”

This was written in year 2004 and I am going to lay it on the Table of the Assembly for the information of the Minister. Being given the situation is a bit confused, wouldn't the Minister think it is reasonable if we ask the

Tertiary Education Commission to set up a special committee to look into the technicalities involved with the SSR Medical College and after listening to the complaints of the students, the lecturers and all the stakeholders concerned, to see in what way they can revisit the rules and regulations and make sure that the standard of this college which is not only of a national interest, but of a regional interest, is not only maintained, but is improved for the betterment of all students who will attend this college in future.

Mr Gokhool: In all fairness to the hon. Member, I must say that there have been representations from time to time from various quarters which have been addressed by the University, but I think the concern for quality is mutual. I think everybody is concerned about maintaining quality and I take good note of the suggestion made by the hon. Member and I will see to it that TEC carries out this exercise.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES – AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS (08/05/07)

(No. B/281) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the award of scholarships for university studies, he will state if it is proposed to assess the applicants therefor strictly on the basis of their academic performance, as is the case for the State scholarships, and to do away with the practice of calling applicants for an interview.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two categories of scholarships awarded to secondary school leavers, namely the State funded ones and those provided by friendly donor countries. The award of State funded scholarships to secondary school leavers is made on the basis of ranking as communicated by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate through Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and as such no interviews are held.

As regards scholarships offered by donor/friendly countries, the High Powered Scholarships Committee (HPSC) chaired by the Chief Technical Officer of my Ministry currently carries out the selection of candidates according to new criteria as agreed by Government on 30 September 2005 based on academic qualifications only with no interviews being held except for countries which have not agreed to that decision. A marking system to gauge the academic qualifications of the candidates has been devised taking into consideration the SC and HSC qualifications for undergraduate and SC, HSC and 1st degree and additional degree and research papers for postgraduate scholarships.

I wish to inform the House that following the above Government decision, consultations were held with representatives of the various Embassies represented locally. The High Commission of India and French Embassy have maintained that interviews be carried out. As regards the latter, this would be in respect of undergraduate studies only. The hon. Member may wish to note that for postgraduate scholarships awarded by France, selection is carried out based on academic qualifications and a '*dossier de candidature*' which the candidate has to submit.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of the weightage given to interviews which are being carried out for those countries who have preferred, among other criteria, that pre-interviews be considered? What is the weightage given to interviews, for example, for Government of India and for the Government of France?

Mr Gokhool: The weightage is 60% for academic qualifications and 40% for the interviews.

Mr Bundhoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether it is the same for the Government of India and the Government of France?

Mr Gokhool: This is the weightage used by those countries.

Mr Mohamed: May I ask the hon. Minister who are those people who carry out the interview?

Mr Gokhool: There is a High-Powered Scholarships Committee chaired by my Ministry and there are representatives, if I remember well, from the Prime Minister's Office and other Ministries, who carry out the whole exercise.

Mr Mohamed: I have a supplementary question to this one. Do we get into situation where finally you have got people carrying out the interview for a field of study of which they themselves have no notion of?

Mr Gokhool: In such cases, they can get help from people who are co-opted in the committee. I mean whenever the need arises, they have to co-opt people.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding State Scholarships, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is no need to consider combining the list of boys and girls? They are taking the same exams and they will be pursuing

the same studies. May I ask the hon. Minister what is the rationale behind keeping separate list?

Mr Gokhool: This a valid suggestion. I am taking note and we will take care of this.

Mr Bundhoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister what can he do in order to make sure there is uniformity in the allocation of scholarships by donor countries and the State of Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: This is not within my control, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Mungur: Can I ask the hon. Minister how this 40% weightage is distributed?

Mr Gokhool: 40% is for interview, there must be a set of criteria which panellists use to allocate marks.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – ACADEMIC STAFF (08/05/07)

(No. B/325) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the number of academic staff employed thereat;
- (b) the actual expenditure for their salaries;
- (c) the annual expenditure for allowances for lectures delivered outside normal working hours.

(Withdrawn)

15/5/07
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POLICE OFFICERS - BSC ON POLICE STUDIES

X **(No. B/350) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Police Officers who have successfully followed the degree course leading to the BSC on Police Studies from the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) if these officers have been called upon to assume additional responsibilities, indicating the nature thereof.

The Prime Minister: I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Commissioner of Police that since academic year 1999/2000, 191 Officers from the rank of Police Constable to Assistant Superintendent of Police have been awarded a BSC (Hons) degree in Police Studies.

The 191 Police Officers who have already graduated are posted throughout the island at various Police Stations, Branches and Units of the Police Force where they are deployed mainly in operational duties.

JG/D10/P07/5
(PQ No. B/350 cont'd)

I am also informed that with a view to providing new avenues for promotion of Police Graduates and creating more opportunities for advancement in the Police hierarchy, the Commissioner of Police has proposed the following scheme whereby –

- (a) Police Constables and Police Sergeants with more than ten years of service to be promoted to the rank of Inspector;
- (b) Inspectors of Police with more than four years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector;
- (c) Chief Inspectors of Police with more than four years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police;
- (d) Assistant Superintendents with more than three years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Superintendent of Police, and
- (e) with regard to Superintendents of Police and above, all these officers will continue to be promoted on the established practice on the basis of merit and seniority.

I am informed that the proposed scheme will not jeopardize the promotion prospects of Police Officers not holding a degree. The implementation of the proposed promotion scheme will, however, require appropriate clearances from the relevant authorities.

The implementation of the proposed scheme in the Mauritius Police Force will, no doubt, raise a suitable cadre of professionals with the knowledge and ability to develop, influence and drive organisational innovation as well as change in response to the needs of policing in a modern, democratic, pluralistic and multi-ethnic society.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister kindly inform the House when did this course start and by whose initiative did that start?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad to say that this course was started by me under the recommendations of Mr Shattock on 06 September 1999. It was a six-year programme which was launched and was run jointly by the University of Mauritius and the University of Portsmouth in the UK.

JG/D10/P07/6
(PQ No. B/350 cont'd)

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, pending such time that the committee sits in order to recommend for the officers who successfully passed the BSc in Police studies for higher promotion, could the hon. Prime Minister consider the possibility that these successful officers, who have been awarded the BSc Police studies, be rewarded financially, for example, by one, two or three increments or whatever it is?

The Prime Minister: I can pass on this request, there is a procedure laid down about increasing financially and all that.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS –ACADEMIC STAFF (22/05/07)

(No. B/459) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the number of academic staff employed thereat;
- (b) the actual expenditure for their salaries;
- (c) the annual expenditure for allowances for lectures delivered outside normal working hours.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows -

- (a) currently, a total of 239 academic staff are employed at UoM, including 18 academics who are on leave without pay.
- (b) the total actual expenditure for salaries of academic staff during the present financial year up to 30 April 2007 stood at Rs66,191,365, and
- (c) for the last two financial years, that is 2004/2005 and 2005/2006, a total of Rs9,319,250 and Rs11,119,950 respectively was paid by UoM to academic staff for allowances for lectures delivered outside normal working hours i.e. as extra teaching hours. The bulk of the extra teaching hours is only computed and paid at the end of the financial year. Therefore, at this stage, the required information is not available for 2006/2007.

Allowances paid to part time lecturers for the financial years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 amounted to Rs12,094,317 and Rs19,366,403 respectively.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he does not consider it proper to have new lecturers appointed by the University rather than paying extra allowances to lecturers already on the establishment.

Mr Gokhool: The University is, for many years now, going through a situation where there is a scarcity of experienced lecturers. This policy has been adopted to palliate the situation.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

May I inform the House that the Table has been informed that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/472 and B/473 have been withdrawn.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – UNDERGRADUATE COURSES – IT PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATE (29/05/07)

(No. B/551) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to admission to the undergraduate courses at the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to the criteria laid down regarding proficiency in Information Technology for the selection of students.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, the advertisement by the University of Mauritius (UoM) for the enrolment of students on undergraduate programmes for academic year 2007/2008 requires that all applicants should be holders of an IT Proficiency Certificate or an alternative equivalent acceptable to the UoM. A communiqué was issued on this matter by UoM. Some students who have applied for a seat may not be holders of the certificate and they will not be penalised.

The UoM will be selecting/admitting students solely on the basis of their academic qualifications, that is, SC, HSC or equivalent only. In case there are students qualifying under these criteria, but without an IC3 or equivalent qualifications at the time of selection, they will be admitted to the University with a proviso that they should complete their IT proficiency by the end of their first academic year, namely by July 2008.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that students having an 'O' Level Certificate in IT and those having Advanced Level IT have applied at the University of Mauritius and were not given admission? In fact, they were asked to go and sit for the IC3 qualification.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when you go for the course in IC3, you just get an attendance certificate. My question is: why is it that students are being required to get this IC3 certificate when they already have an 'A' Level in Information Technology?

Mr Gokhool: When the IC3 programme was launched, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was understood that the university will admit students who have the IC3 and that is why the communiqué was issued way back in December. But, subsequently, the matter was raised because some students did not have it at the time of application. The university has taken the view that the students will not be penalized, but they will have to complete it by 2008. No student will be penalized for not having the IC3. It is a requirement and this will be fulfilled by July 2008?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister what is the rationale behind it, since the 'A' Level IT is of a higher standard than IC3 and that the course itself costs around Rs750? Why are we forcing students to go and look for a qualification that is lower than what they already have?

Mr Gokhool: As I said, it is IC3 or equivalent and if the student can make a case that he has already followed an IT programme in 'O' Level or HSC level, this will be considered by the University Authorities. In any case, even if the student does not have the IC3, the student will not be penalized.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the students will be required to go and sit for that course again and pay Rs750 for a course which will only provide them with an attendance certificate. I think this is a form of penalising students.

Mr Gokhool: This will not be the case, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I said IC3 or equivalent and if it is considered as an equivalence to IC3, the University will exempt the student.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has just mentioned that students will not be penalised, they will be admitted, but they will be given until 2008 to acquire the IC3 certificate. That is what I gathered from the answer of the hon. Minister.

Mr Gokhool: I think the hon. lady should understand. What I am saying is that if students can show that they have IT qualification which is equivalent to IC3, they will be exempted. I mean, this is the procedure at the university.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, 'A' level is higher than IC3 qualification.

Mr Gokhool: What I am telling the hon. lady is that all students may not have 'O' level or 'A' level IT and for those students they will have to go for the IC3.

Mr Speaker: This is the problem. The question is: those who have got the 'O' level or the 'A' level, will they still have to go for that course? That is the question.

Mr Gokhool: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is the possibility of exemption. It is either IC3 or equivalent. If the student has got IT 'O' level or 'A' level, it is much higher. It can be considered for exemption.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we need a clarification from the hon. Minister. The question is: whether students having an 'O' level or 'A' level in IT will be required to go for this particular course.

Mr Gokhool: Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, when a student applies to the university...

Mr Speaker: The question is so simple. If a student or an applicant has got an 'O' level or an 'A' level, will he still have to go for that examination?

Mr Gokhool: But the communiqué is very clear, Mr Speaker, Sir: IC3 or equivalent. An 'O' level or an 'A' level is much higher. So, it is logical that the university will not require IC3 certificate.

Mr Speaker: Alright! Next question!

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION – COURSES (19/06/07)

(No. B/665) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice & Human Rights whether, in regard to the courses being offered by the Council of Legal Education, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to whether the courses will be reviewed.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, since its inception in 1985, the Council of Legal Education has limited itself to the conduct of vocational and training courses for prospective barristers, attorneys and notaries only. These courses cover the substantive, adjectival and procedural aspects of the law applicable to Mauritius, and the contents of these courses are regularly reviewed every year in the light of amendments to the law and of recent case law. The current course contents or syllabus are meant to remedy the major shortcomings which the Council considers may be experienced by an aspiring barrister, attorney or notary due to his not having studied, at his law degree level, any subject that is considered essential for actual practice as a lawyer.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Attorney-General aware that there have been representations made to the effect that proper amenities are not available for the students studying for the Bar examination or for the course leading to qualify as an attorney or a notary?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware of same. We have set up a committee to look into the different aspects that concern the Council of Legal Education and we'll have to liaise with the new Chief Justice in order to find a solution. I must inform the House that this morning itself, I had a meeting with the Chief Justice and one of the items on the agenda was the Council of Legal Education. I believe that by September we'll have some changes in the same light of what the hon. Member has raised.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Attorney-General has stated that there is a committee. Could he inform the House when the Committee was set up and its composition?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Committee was set up last year and it comprises myself as Chairperson, the second member is hon. Dr. David and the third one is the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications, my good friend, hon. Sinatambou. We have been sitting and we have also set up a secretariat. There has also been an advertisement in the newspapers. We have received only two written representations from members of the public and we are considering different aspects. We are soon coming with amendments to Law Practitioner's Act.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Attorney-General kindly inform the House whether there is any intention of the Government to request the University of Mauritius to conduct these professional courses?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, we will consider all options and then we'll come in due time with the propositions and I hope Members here will take part in the debates.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Attorney-General whether he finds it proper that practicing barristers dispense courses at the Council of Legal Education?

Mr Valayden: I myself believe that it is proper. The very simple reason is that it is a vocational course. Therefore, to understand what is the vocational practice in reality, you must have people who are practising, you can't have academics coming and teaching you and they don't have any command of different practices.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Attorney-General whether there is a sort of rotation for those practising barristers or are there fixed persons dispensing the courses?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a completely different matter. We will look into it.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Attorney-General aware that there are no manuals available for the students following the professional course?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, this will be one of the areas of reform. There is no exact syllabus, no manuals, no exact dates for examinations and proclamation of results. We will look into all these issues.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Attorney-General say how many times the Ministerial Committee has sat?

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, they have sat, at least, four times. But, in the meantime, we have asked one person from my office to look into the different representations - we have received two written representations - and also to consult those who have sat for these types of exams at university level as well as other institutions around the world, in order to come with proposals. Then, we will have to liaise with the Chief Justice and the Council of Legal Education. In order to make reforms, we will have to bring amendments to the Law Practitioners Act and the clause covering the Council of Legal Education.

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (10/07/07)

(No. B/736) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to tertiary education, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to –

(a) the measures that will be -

(i) implemented in the future;

(ii) taken to align local distance education initiatives with international developments, and

(b) if it has commissioned any study with a view to revisiting the Commission's organizational chart and, if so, if a report has been submitted, indicating its main recommendations.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that the measures that will be implemented in the future are laid down in the Strategic Plan of the TEC for years 2007-2011 which is available on the website of TEC. I am assuming that the question asked by the hon. Member relates to distance education. Insofar as distance education is concerned, it is proposed to develop Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as a means to increase access to post secondary education and lifelong learning locally and regionally by –

(i) planning for the strengthening of open and distance learning;

(ii) concretising strategic alliances to provide relevant and quality Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes locally and regionally, and

(iii) activating appropriate integration of information and communication technology through e-learning and open educational resources initiatives in the tertiary educational institutions.

Furthermore, the White Paper on Tertiary Education will also address the issue of Distance Education and Open Learning. It has to be emphasised that Distance Education and Open Learning will remain an important mode for broadening access to higher education and for lifelong learning.

As regards part (ii) of the question, may I inform the House that my Ministry is already taking the lead with regards to the setting up of an Open University in Mauritius. Such Open Universities are now common places in the international arena as a key strategy to expand access to higher education. In this respect, the Commonwealth of Learning is fielding in September 2007 the mission of an expert to assist my Ministry in the setting up of an Open University. My Ministry is currently examining the legislation regarding the setting up of an Open University.

Mr Speaker Sir, our assets in distance education already exist and simply need to be rationalised. Most of the tertiary educational institutions have already a division of distance education, for example, at the University of Mauritius, we have the Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies (VCILT) and also the Centre for Professional Development and Lifelong Learning (CPDLL).

Mauritius is the Lead Agency for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Distance Education and as such is in constant touch with latest developments in the field of distance education and open learning. The Director of the Consultancy and Contract Research Centre (CCRC) of University of Mauritius is the Coordinator of the ADEA Working Group on Distance Education; he is assisted by a small Committee set up locally comprising officers of my Ministry and the Tertiary Education Commission. Most of the private providers in Mauritius offer distance education. Enrolment by this category of providers (which are 40 in total) is about 6,500, that is, about 20% of the total enrolment. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division of TEC ensures the quality of programmes offered through the distance education mode by private providers.

In view of these developments, the TEC's Organisational Chart needs to be reviewed. The House may wish to note that the existing Organisation Chart dates back to the setting up of TEC in 1990.

In view of the expanded statutory responsibilities devolving on the Commission, the following amendments brought to the TEC Act in 2005 with regard to the setting up of private post secondary educational institutions and in line with the strategy of developing Mauritius into a Knowledge Hub and a Centre of Higher Learning, the Tertiary Education Commission Board decided in August 2006 to revisit the organisational structure of the Commission.

In that respect, the exercise was entrusted to the management with the advisory assistance of a Board member experienced in organisational structures. The study has been completed and the ensuing restructuring proposals are currently being considered by the TEC Board. It is premature to go into the main recommendations as the document produced so far is only a working document and the Board has not yet deliberated.

Mr Ganoo: I'll come to the last part of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Although I have listened very carefully to the Minister saying that the report and proposals are still being considered, can I ask him whether he is aware

that the main recommendation of the report recommended the doing away of the Distance Education and Learning Division? If that is so, is it not surprising that this report recommended unambiguously the doing away of distance education?

Mr Gokhool: I think the first part of the answer clearly spells out that this is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: I agree, but I have listened carefully to the first part of the answer of the hon. Minister, and my question is: isn't that surprising that such a report could come and propose the doing away of distance education when the avowed mission of the TEC is different?

Mr Gokhool: I don't think this would be correct. I have not taken cognizance of the recommendation. In any case, if this is the recommendation, it does not go in line with the policy as spelt out in the first part of the answer.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, when we talk of distance education and open learning, its main strategy should be how to optimise its outreaching capacity, how to mainstream education facilities for previously marginalised target groups like women, housewives, the physically handicapped, people with physical illness, people who are at home and so on. This should be the strategy of distant learning. Can the hon. Minister explain how this will be done? How does the hon. Minister hope that this will be done in the near future?

Mr Gokhool: I think this is an important issue, that is, of broadening access to the public at large and not only to people going to universities or institutions of higher learning. But this technology has to be developed and it is being developed slowly. In fact, the VCILT is already catering for members of the public.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister give us the details of the organisational chart contained in the new report and who was the author of this report?

Mr Gokhool: It was the management of TEC with the support of a member of the Board.

Mr Ganoo: Was there any consultant enlisted for that purpose? Did TEC have recourse to any consultant of international repute to do such a job?

Mr Gokhool: I have enquired, it was not at this stage.

POLICE OFFICERS – BSc DEGREE – SCHEME (24/07/07)

(No. B/ 819) Mr J. R Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)

asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the implementation of the proposed scheme for Police officers having completed a BSc degree in Police studies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) if the appropriate clearances from the relevant authorities have been obtained, and
- (b) the number of Police officers, rank-wise, who are concerned with the scheme.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/350 on 15 May last. I had indicated then that the Commissioner of Police has proposed a scheme for Police Officers who have successfully completed a BSc degree course in Police Studies.

In brief, the proposed scheme provides for -

- (a) Police Constables and Police Sergeants with more than ten years of service to be promoted to the rank of Inspector of Police;
- (b) Inspectors of Police with more than four years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector of Police;
- (c) Chief Inspectors of Police with more than four years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police;
- (d) Assistant Superintendents of Police with more than three years of service in the rank to be promoted to the rank of Superintendent of Police, and
- (e) Superintendents of Police and above will continue to be promoted on the basis of merit and seniority in accordance with the established practice.

I am now informed by the Commissioner of Police that the draft new proposed schemes of service for the grades of Inspector of Police, Chief Inspector of Police, Assistant Superintendent of Police and Superintendent of Police are being worked out and will thereafter be referred to the Ministry

of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and the Disciplined Forces Service Commission for approval. Once the schemes of service of the relevant posts are prescribed, action will be initiated by the Commissioner of Police for filling of the posts.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 191 Police Officers who have successfully completed their BSc degree in Police Studies are concerned with the proposed scheme. These include officers from different ranks, I do not know whether the hon. Member wants me to list the ranks, but I can do so if he wants.

Mr Spéville: I thank the hon. Prime Minister. Concerning the scheme which was launched in 1999 – I think last year or this year, the first batch has been completed – can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Government intends to revamp the scheme so that the new comers can join the scheme of BSc in Police studies?

The Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Member for reminding us that the scheme was launched by my previous Government in 1999 and I will assure him

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/826 addressed to the hon. Prime Minister will be replied by the hon. Minister of Social Security, time permitting. I am also advised that PQ Nos. B/846, B/847, B/866, B/869, B/871, B/874 and B/881 have been withdrawn. Questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

PQ Nos. B/820 – B/823 – See Written Answers to Questions

TEC – ADMINISTRATIVE CONSULTANT - EMPLOYMENT

31/07/07

(No. B/952) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if any consultant is employed thereat and, if so, his qualifications and the terms and conditions of his employment.

Reply: I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that presently only one administrative consultant, namely Mr Deochund Sookhoo, has been employed on assignment to advise on administrative matters in connection with the implementation of the new regulatory framework for post-secondary education and assisting the administration division in the systematic and diligent application of Board and management decisions.

By virtue of his long previous experience as Secretary and Head, Administration Division of the Tertiary Education Commission and unblemished record since 20 December 1990, and also in view of his thorough knowledge of TEC and its functioning, Mr Sookhoo was recruited initially for a period of six months starting 05 October 2006 and his assignment has been extended subsequently for the periods 05 April to 30 June 2007 and 01 July to 31 August 2007 respectively.

It is to be noted that before joining TEC, he was involved in the preparation of the TEC Act and the setting up of the TEC.

The extensions have been granted to enable him to complete the current assignment and also to undertake two other assignments namely the preparation of the 'Staff Development Plan' and a 'Staff Handbook'.

He holds the following qualifications –

BA (Hons) London

PGCE (MIE)

Diploma in Education (London)

Certificate in Education Management and Administration (Moray House Edinburgh)

Mr Sookhoo draws an all-inclusive fee of Rs33,000 per month. Moreover, he is not entitled to any leave during his assignment.

It is to be noted as Secretary and Head of Administration Division of TEC, he was drawing a basic salary of Rs42,500

Mr Sookhoo worked on several assignments at the Commission namely, 'Medical Scheme and Surgical Scheme for TEC's staff', 'Template for presentation of Papers and Sub-Committee Papers', 'New procedures for the presentation of Papers in respect of Board and Sub-Committee meetings'. Ongoing assignments include 'New Organisational Structure for TEC', 'Review and Conditions of Service' and 'Streamlining of the new Administration procedures at the Commission in connection with the implementation of the new regulatory framework.

TEC – STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
- BENEFICIARIES

7/8/07
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(No. B/1006) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Staff Development Programme available at the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, for the past five years, information as to –

- (a) a list of the beneficiaries, indicating
 - (i) the courses followed;
 - (ii) the cost thereof
- (b) the relevance of these courses to the substantive post of each beneficiary, and
- (c) if special leave was granted to any of the beneficiaries to attend Summer School in the United Kingdom.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that three staff members, namely Mr A. Valaydon, Ag. Head Research & Planning Division, Mr P. K. Seeruttun, Officer in

Charge, Centre for Instrumentation Services and Mrs K. Charitar, Ag. Financial Controller & Head Finance Division have benefited from Staff Development Programme.

The details regarding the courses followed, the relevance of the courses and whether special leave was granted to the officers concerned to attend Summer School in the UK are given hereunder –

Mr A. Valaydon has followed the M.Sc. in Training and Performance Management, University of Leicester, U.K. (by Distance Education) from April 2003 to November 2005. The costing for the course was £4900

Mr P. K. Seeruttun has followed the M.Sc. Information and Communication Technology, University of Mauritius (part-time) from August 2003 to June 2005. The costing for the course was Rs90,800.

Mrs K. Charitar has followed the MBA-Finance Course, University of Leicester, U.K. (by Distance Education) (ongoing) from April 2006 to August 2008. The costing for the course is £7,000

As regards part (b) of the question, for Mr Valaydon, the course was partly relevant to his substantive post. For Mr Seeruttun and Mrs Charitar, their courses are fully relevant to their substantive posts.

With regard to part (c) of the question, there was no Summer School attached to the courses of Messrs Valaydon and Seeruttun. As regards Mrs Charitar, the TEC Board has recommended that special leave be granted to her to attend the Summer School in the United Kingdom.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Minister satisfied that, in all these cases, the courses followed by each of the officers were relevant to their position and jobs?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, I said for Mrs Charitar and Mr Seeruttun, the answer is yes. Mrs Charitar is the acting Financial Controller, Head Finance Division, and the MBA was in finance, whereas Mr Seeruttun followed the M.Sc. in Information and Communication Technology and he is the Officer-in-Charge, Centre for Instrumentation Services which requires a lot of IT knowledge and skills. Mr Valaydon is the acting Head of Research and Planning Division and he went for a training programme in Training and Performance Management. I believe that for planning of human resources,

the course in Training and Performance Management would be partly relevant. That is what I said in my main reply.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us under what provision was the special leave granted because, as far as I know, the PRB does not make any provision for special leave?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe the special leave was granted because the Summer School forms part of the programme which was approved by TEC. Once we approve the programme, the leave has to be granted, otherwise, the students will not benefit from the Summer School.

PNG

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – COURSES, CURSUS, PEDAGOGICAL METHODS, ETC.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr N. Bodha) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to post secondary education, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission and the University of Mauritius, information as to the changes that have been brought at the University of Mauritius this academic year in relation to the –
 - (i) number of courses which will be offered;
 - (ii) facilities provided for lectures to students;
 - (iii) cursus and pedagogical methods, and
 - (iv) conditions of employment of the teaching staff, and
- (b) state if he is aware of the difficulties, if any, encountered in the implementation of the above and, if so, the measures he proposes to take to ensure quality education.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the advance notice he gave me yesterday ...

Mr Speaker: That is a secret; the hon. Minister should not reveal it!

Mr Gokhool: but, more importantly, the opportunity which is given to me to clear certain confusions and allay apprehension that has been highlighted and blown out of proportion in certain quarters as regards the start of this academic year on the Réduit campus. Mr Speaker, Sir, all "*rentrées scolaires*" in Mauritius and elsewhere have their lot of issues to tackle and this is not new. I would, once again, like to refer hon. Members to the numerous PQs and PNQs to which I have replied in order to enlighten the House and the nation at large about the ongoing Reform Programme in the Education and HR Sectors.

Mr Speaker Sir, I have, time and again, stated that we are at the end of an economic cycle. We have to stand on our own feet and fight our own battles as a team. Let us not forget that education is and will remain a national priority.

In this connection, since July 2005, my Ministry has undertaken some crucial and fundamental transformations in line with Government Programme 2005-2010. All along we have adopted a holistic, comprehensive and inclusive approach in introducing interdependent reform from pre-primary to the University, going to secondary, post-secondary and tertiary. The process is on, it is a multi-pronged strategy that we have adopted.

Two years down the road, the time has now come to further consolidate the actions that have been undertaken so far, and this is precisely what we are achieving now. Because the education sector is being called upon to supply the human capital required for higher value-added, more innovative knowledge- and skill-intensive activities that would unlock the knowledge-based future, we are now coming up with a major Strategy for the Education and Training Sector that will contain a suitably costed and timeframed Action Plan with relevant KPIs.

In this context, I am glad to say that the Development Partners, who are deeply appreciative of the efforts that have been undertaken so far, have agreed to support us in this venture. Consultancy will be provided by the European Union with the support of UNDP and the deliverables will comprise a Strategy Paper with a detailed matrix of Action as well as a costed Implementation Plan. These will be ready by the end of this year.

For Tertiary Education, which is the focus of today's question, reforms in the Tertiary Sector are highlighted in my Ministry's forthcoming White Paper on Tertiary Education which we are finalizing in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. The White Paper will focus consistently on policies and strategies to provide an ongoing flow of highly skilled human resources in line with the demands of the country for the coming years. At the same time, it will propose policy measures to upgrade the sector and to allow it to become further focused, synergistic and outward looking.

Some of these strategies relate, *inter alia*, to increasing access to post secondary/tertiary education, ensuring quality and relevance of programmes, and especially the financing of post secondary/tertiary education. While it is fitting that the White Paper also has as a basis for the provision of a boost to a culture of lifelong learning and employability, the ultimate objective is to make Mauritius a knowledge hub and a centre of excellence in the region.

I wish here, Mr Speaker Sir, to highlight that all these measures that my Ministry has in the pipeline never puts in question the autonomy of Universities. We are here, as a Ministry, as a regulatory and policy-making organization and I respect the autonomy and trust the institutions falling under our aegis. What we are here for is to determine new strategies to solve problems. As I have stated, and I again assert, we cannot solve today's and tomorrow's problems with yesterday's knowledge and mindsets.

An important indicator of this development of our high level human capital is the participation level in the tertiary education. Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to submit to the House some figures to show that we are on the right track. The enrolment in the tertiary sector has increased from 26,074 in 2004 to 28,864 in 2005 and to 33,230 in 2006. The figures are estimated to reach 35,000 in 2007 with the current start of the academic year. This shows there has been a marked improvement in the GTER (Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio) from 24% in 2004 to 28% in 2005 and an estimated rate of 34% in 2006. As per the new TEC strategic plan 2007-2011 the GTER is expected to increase to 40% in 2010 and to 45 % in 2015.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when hundreds of our youngsters want to acquire higher education and join the University, can we deny them this opportunity? We are, therefore, Mr Speaker Sir, presently putting considerable emphasis on the tertiary sector to put in along the same avenues as the other sectors in education. In this respect, we are presently building mechanisms to consolidate the MoUs and partnerships, the relationships and pathways that the sector has with local institutions such as the IVTB and the TSMTF, as well as with other brand name institutions from abroad. This will improve the articulations with the world of work and make the University less academic and more proactive in its programmes.

All along we are proceeding through dialogues and consultations and that is why I met the Students' Union representatives at my Ministry on Monday 20 August 2007 to review the situation at the University.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) -

- (i) Out of the 126 courses that were advertised, the University will be running 110 courses. The UoM routinely revisits its courses and curriculum to respond to new and emerging challenges. The UoM runs collaborative courses with all local publicly-funded Tertiary Education Institutions. Collaborative programmes are also jointly mounted and run with private sector, for the MEF, MIM, CMT and other organizations.

Certain courses will not be run given the critical mass has not been attained.

As regards part (ii), the following facilities are provided for lectures to students -

- RGB and laptops (20 pairs),
- CD/VCDs/DVDs/VHS,
- Air-conditioned lecture theatres fully equipped with public address system,
- Overhead projectors,

- White boards/screens,
- Electronic handouts,
- Supplementary teaching materials;
- Internet,
- WIFI,
- Educational technologies - use of innovative learning technologies such as i-learn and moodle,
- From chalk and talk to blended learning and to develop self- learning attitude,

As regards the RGB and laptops, I have to inform the House that during my meeting with the Students' Union I agreed that this resource has to be provided and arrangements are currently being made with the Tertiary Education Commission to equip all lecture rooms/theatres and some laboratories with these.

With regard to part (iii), the UoM is aligning itself to international norms, that is, lecturing larger cohorts (instead of classroom teaching), use of latest educational technologies to increase access and ensure equity.

The curriculum is dynamic and is regularly revisited in consultation with all stakeholders (students, private sector and public sector). Any curriculum emanating from a given departmental initiative is channelled through several bodies: faculty, advisory boards, board of studies, faculty board, teaching and learning committee, programme validation and monitoring committee, and Senate.

The Quality Assurance Office ensures that international norms are complied with from conception to delivery phases. The House may wish to be informed that the UoM was the first TEI to submit itself to an international audit exercise, the findings thereof which are available on the Internet, are commendable.

In designing new courses, UoM always takes into consideration emerging sectors and challenges. These include Information, Communication and Telecommunications (ICT), sustainable development, entrepreneurship, finance, textile, Land-based Oceanic Industry (LBOI) and sea food hub.

Examples of such courses are -

- BSc (Hons) Marine Science and Technology
- BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition
- BSc (Hons) Agri-science and Technology
- MSc Investment and Entrepreneurship
- MRes (Research Methodology)

With regard to part (iv), the conditions of employment of the 'teaching staff' are being maintained as per prevailing PRB.

With regard to lecturing, lecturers are required to lecture (face to face, distance education, and other modes of delivery) up to 270 hours per year equivalent to an average of 9 hours per week. This needs to be reviewed in the light of international trends and development taking place in the higher education landscape. By way of comparison, in certain UK universities, lecturers have a working time of 1650 hours per year and they lecture 15-18 hours per week generally.

Lack of human resources especially in scarcity areas led the university to have recourse to extra teaching by full-time academic staffs. However, in the spirit of promoting better quality in lecturing, research and administration and services, extra teaching is being discontinued.

The UoM has a rich pool of knowledge base which plays a leading role in the national development process. The UoM is also solicited to contribute in the regional and international arena.

It is expedient that the solidarity and sense of belonging of the academic staff of the university be mobilised to confront this new paradigm shift to conform to international trends and the emerging markets.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is placing emphasis on providing financial support to the tertiary education sector as evidenced by the increase of 30% in the recurrent grant for the sector from Rs572 m. in 2003/04 to Rs746.5 m. in 2007/08.

The UoM has to ensure that all resources allocated to it and available are used judiciously and optimally.

The problem is more of how to use available resources (financial, infrastructure and human and others) more efficiently and not just a matter of economic or financial consideration.

The UoM wants to optimise the use of all its resources. The need to optimise resources was long overdue to be more competitive and also to be in line with international practice. Without hampering quality, the UoM is trying to do more with less resources, *comme on dit dans toutes les conférences internationales, "bien gérer pour mieux éduquer"* as advocated in all international fora on education.

I am informed by the TEC that additional funds have been provided to the UoM, whenever a need for same has been felt after careful scrutiny of the request made.

I am also informed by the TEC that over the last 7 years Government grant approved for the UoM has not been fully utilised, except for 2 financial years - 2003/04 when the PRB report was out and 2006/07 when the actual number of students was less than what the UoM had projected.

The UoM is in a transitional phase from a developmental University to one operating in a global and competitive environment so as to assist Mauritius to emerge as a knowledge hub in the region.

In pursuit of the Government's vision to increase access, promote quality and equity it is imperative that a new mode of operation and administration of the UoM should be developed to allow for greater flexibility and dynamism. Some changes are required and it is normal that these changes need to be managed.

As regards quality, I am going to table a paper as regards the measures the university is taking to ensure that quality is maintained.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I never gave prior notice, I gave private notice. I just remained silent to a question that the hon. Minister put to me yesterday. Let me ask my first question, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I start with the issue of budgeting? Will the hon. Minister confirm that the TEC budget falling under his Ministry is subject to the MTEF guidelines which say that the TEC should provide "guidelines and advice on the basis of which the budgets of the tertiary institutions have to be proposed and the examination of the budget by the TEC is carried out in the light of the long-term plans of the institutions and priorities of the sector and it covers all aspects, including staffing, enrolment, courses and programmes?" May I ask the hon. Minister whether the TEC has not failed in its duty as a regulator and to provide the correct guidelines to the University of Mauritius to come forward with the budget that it needs so that it can make the best use of funds and resources?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition has referred to MTEF which is a new technique which is being put in place to ensure that funds are allocated to programmes in regard to activities being carried out and the resources are required. I think this is a good practice and my Ministry is working along with the MTEF. But with regard to its requirements, the university prepares its budget and submits to TEC, and the TEC examines the requests which have been made and makes allocation as per the requirements with which the TEC is satisfied. It is normal that when the university will ask for an amount of money, TEC will examine and may well agree to the sum which has been requested or even make adjustments. I am told that the University requested for Rs312 m. recurrent and TEC has allocated Rs270 m. In line with the policy of the University that they must optimise the resources which are available, it is quite normal that we'll have to make good use of the resources and if they require additional resources - I said it in my reply - this will be allocated upon justification. Even now TEC is providing additional resources with regard to the technological support that is needed. This is an ongoing process. It doesn't mean that when the budget has been approved, TEC will not provide additional funds.

Mr Bodha: How can the hon. Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, then explain that there has been firefighting at the University for the last three years when it comes to a deficit every year for the budget?

CA/D30/P03/1 PNQ (Contd)

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Leader of the Opposition should bear in mind that the University exists for many, many years. If he goes through the press cuttings between 2000 and 2005, he will see that, every year, such problems crop up. The University keeps on asking for more funds, the students go on strike, etc. On 21 December 2001, we see that it is reported '*crise à l'université*'.

(Interruptions)

Ce sont des problèmes qu'on a dans toutes les universités à travers le monde ! *Our friends know how universities are. At every stage, new issues come up.* Il y a toujours des difficultés pour ce qui est de la rentrée scolaire, mais il faut savoir les gérer. Comme je l'ai dit, l'université doit développer un nouveau modèle de fonctionnement, et ils sont en train de le faire. Il faut plus de flexibilité, plus d'emphase sur l'optimisation des ressources. Il faut aussi changer les mentalités, M. le président.

Mr Bodha: M. le président, y a-t-il eu une crise à l'université de l'envergure de celle que nous avons aujourd'hui à gérer, où l'université se retrouve en confrontation avec la TEC, où les professeurs sont mécontents, où les étudiants ne sont pas satisfaits ? Et la crise continue ! M. le président, puis-je demander au ministre si on a eu une crise de cette envergure ces dernières années ?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will invite the Leader of the Opposition to come with me to the University. I was there yesterday for the graduation ceremony of SDIM. At the beginning, there were issues and there were discussions going on at the campus. It is quite natural for students to manifest. Comme ministre de l'éducation, je trouve cela normal. J'ai été à l'université, j'ai été étudiant, beaucoup d'entre nous ont été étudiants à l'université. Mais, il faut savoir gérer cette situation. C'est pourquoi l'université a entamé des discussions. Lorsque j'ai ressenti le besoin d'intervenir, j'ai convoqué les étudiants. Hier, j'étais à l'université et je me suis posé la question : où est la crise ? Je crois que le *Leader* de l'opposition est trop influencé par certains articles de presse. Il doit aller voir comment cela se passe à l'université.

Mr Bodha: M. le président, puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre s'il y a eu une mise en demeure des chargés de cours à l'université dans le passé ?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure there has been, because...

(Interruptions)

No! There have been many cases. I have got the press cuttings showing how the staff protested. They always protest. This is typical of universities. Students protest, the staff protest, they send *mise en demeure*. It's nothing new, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think that we must not overreact. *Il ne faut pas dramatiser la situation. Il faut être un patriote. L'université de Maurice a un track record de plusieurs années.* Our products of the university come up among the best in international universities. We must be careful. I

think that it is the duty of the Leader of the Opposition to put a question. But, let's not over dramatise and be carried away by certain articles, certain comments that people make. I, as Minister of Education, am satisfied that the situation is coming back to normal, the students are in the classes, the lecturers have started to deliver the lectures, and they are working normally.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come back again to the TEC and the MTEF guidelines. Is the hon. Minister aware that, in the guidelines of the MTEF for tertiary education to be applied by the TEC, one of these is to reduce, for this year, the unit cost per full time equivalent students by 5% by June 2008? This means that we are reducing the amount of funds that is being allocated to each student. This is what the TEC is doing. Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is: how can we reconcile knowledge hub, world class education, quality education, and the problems that we are having today with the cuts in the budget?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just answer by mentioning the figure. Is it possible to have a class running with 30 students in 2007, when we have so many challenges to face? Is that possible? Is that cost-effective? Will that contribute to quality? Can we continue with face-to-face, chalkboard and talk? What we are doing is bringing technology, modernising and giving access to materials. There is a different model of university functioning and administration that we want to promote. This is the first year, and it is difficult. Resistance to change! We have to handle all these difficulties. We should not lose our heads. I think we are creating a new model. I have talked to the students and explained to them that they must go for the change. Otherwise, the students themselves will compromise the future of the University. I must congratulate the students. I have talked to them and they understood. The Leader of the Opposition phoned the Student Union, and they said that they were not going to enter into demagogy.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I never called the Student Union.

Mr Speaker: This is a point of personal explanation.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that he went to the University yesterday. I would like to ask him whether he is aware that for certain lectures yesterday, there were not enough chairs available for the students. Are they called upon to '*Amène to block*'?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are used to such statements coming from the hon. Member. He is referring to yesterday. I am regularly at the University, and I know the situation. We are implementing a new model, and I don't think the hon. Member is right in what he is saying. This is not the case!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned the new mindset. May I ask him whether this is the way to implement a new philosophy in tertiary education and a new mindset, when you erect infrastructure on a weekend to accommodate students on Monday, which was done last week? Is he aware that, at a council meeting, the academics said that they needed one academic year to change the mindset and to come

with the new changes? Is the hon. Minister aware of this? How can we change the mindset in a few days?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the structures which were being put up, I think the University had its plans, that the plans were being implemented, as the students made representations. We have to implement the plans. Otherwise, we will have what they are expecting, that is, a big strike at the University. The University administration engaged discussions, and proposed to look for new space to accommodate the students. As regards the change of mindset, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can tell you that if this country is facing all those difficulties, it's because they were in Government and have not taken the steps that they should have taken in many sectors, particularly in the education sector. If you look at what has happened over the past five years in the education sector, they looked only at the grading system and construction of a certain number of buildings. But, what we are doing is bringing fundamental changes. We have to go fast, because we cannot wait. There are so many young people who want to go to the University. As I said, my priority is to open the doors of the University for our young people to go to the University.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that, in the Government Programme, we intend to make Mauritius a knowledge hub and that we are living in a competitive edge, can I ask the hon. Minister what he has been doing for the last two years, in order to align Mauritius with regard to intake in tertiary education, for example, like countries such as Singapore, Malaysia or even South Africa? Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, earlier the Minister said that he has met the Student Union...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member cannot raise two issues in one question.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I indicated in my main reply, one of the indicators of the health and dynamism of the higher education is the gross tertiary enrolment ratio which measures how many young people of the age group of 20 to 24 have access to higher education in a country. On that score, I have given the figures and we are aiming to go for 45%. If you go back to 2003, when the previous Government was in power, that figure was 16% only and the Minister of Education at that time was very impatient; he was comparing the low figure of 16% to 35% of Asian industrialising economies. That is an indicator and, on that basis, we are already making good progress. This is what is happening as far as the intake of students and the number of people who are getting access to higher education in Mauritius are concerned.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether it is proper, at a time when there is a crisis at the University, that the Vice-Chancellor be allowed to leave the country tomorrow to attend a Conference and will be back only in 20 days?

Mr Gokhool: First, I have said there is no crisis. Mr Speaker, Sir, at times, it is a question of how you look at a situation. Some people may look at a situation as a crisis, but a crisis is a disguised opportunity and this is what we are looking at. It is a disguised opportunity to bring fundamental changes in the way a university of the third millennium should operate.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that the private sector derives direct benefit from the fact that they recruit graduates and professionals from the University of Mauritius, does the hon. Minister consider the advisability of enlisting the support of the private sector in contributing partly to the financing of the courses?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the issues that universities across the world have to face is funding and sustainability. As we know, the University of Mauritius depends heavily from Government finances. Many universities are trying to explore other avenues, for example, the University of Mauritius has set up a Trust of Alumni and in many countries Alumni contribute to the running of universities. This is a new development that has taken place at the University; they have set up a Trust so that Alumni can associate with and contribute to the University.

Secondly, the University has diversified and come up with the Mauritius International Business School which will be operated along private sector lines and which can generate income for the University. There are ways and means which the University is exploring to mobilise more revenue. This process has started. I believe this process will continue and the University will be able to generate additional revenues to run its activities and bring about improvements.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the hon. Minister mentioned that certain courses will not be run. Can we know why and can he enumerate the courses that will not be run?

Mr Gokhool: I think the hon. lady was lucky to be at a university and she knows what goes on at the university. Mr Speaker, Sir, when a programme is advertised, it depends on how many people apply and are qualified for admission. I have checked the figures. In some programmes the number of people who have applied and are eligible for enrolment is 7 or 5 or 3, obviously, it is not recommended. In any university, you cannot recommend to run a programme on the basis of not having the critical mass. The main reason is that some programmes, unfortunately, do not attract the critical mass and, therefore, the university cannot run these programmes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the budget for part-time lecturers has been increased? May I also ask him whether employees of the Tertiary Education Commission are part-time lecturers at the University of Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: I think the contact of the hon. Leader of the Opposition at the university has not given him the right information.

Mr Bodha: I am asking the question.

Mr Gokhool: I am going to give the Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Speaker: Hurry up!

Mr Gokhool: ...because if he is relying on the President of the UMASU, I don't think this is...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, the University does its workload planning on the basis of allocating full-time lecturers first. If part-time lecturers are required, the University can employ as many part-time lecturers as it wants. It all depends on the workload plan. It is like that all the time. As far as employees of TEC are concerned, I think the University has a list of people from the private sector and those from the public sector also can lecture at the University on a part-time basis; this is a normal practice.

Mrs Martin: M. le président, *with regard to part (3) of the question*, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si l'université envisage de contraindre les étudiants à adopter une méthode de dissertation à plusieurs?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, normally at University, one student does a dissertation. But it's not all the time; we can have cases where students do the work in group. I have been at the University for so many years and I have myself supervised dissertations where people worked in group even at post-graduates level, but this is not the general practice. It has to be looked into carefully if the University wants to bring a policy. In other countries, even at the graduate level, students are not required to write a dissertation. All these problems have cropped up and the University will have to devise new policies and modalities with regard to dissertations. A committee has been set up at the University where students will have the opportunity to give their views and new policies will be framed with regard to dissertation for the future, but, for this year, the same practice, as it prevails, will be implemented.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can confirm whether second year and third year students have been asked to run courses at the University of Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: I don't think this is the case. I am not aware of it. I know that, in other universities, senior students, with the help of lecturers, do give tutorials to students in the first year, but this is not the practice at the University of Mauritius.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree that he is making money become one of the conditions for education? Will he consider what we proposed when we were in Government, that is, a loan to students for studies which they would reimburse later after having finished their studies? The way they are doing is, in fact, depriving most of the students access to the University. Will he consider granting that loan to students to pursue their studies?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said money and economic consideration are not the only issues. It's a new model which will take into account a new approach to the functioning and administration of the University, which means optimization of resources, but wherever additional funds are required, these have to be justified and will be provided. As regards the proposal for loans, a White Paper is being prepared and many of the issues regarding the financing of higher education will be tackled.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Order!

At this stage, Members of the MSM Opposition left the Chamber.

SHRI

RAMACHANDRA MEDICAL COLLEGE (20/11/07)

(No. B/1167) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to whether the Shri Ramachandra Medical College has been given approval to operate in Mauritius and, if so, since when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which is responsible for the registration and accreditation of post secondary educational institutions and their programmes respectively that the Shri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute (now Shri Ramachandra University) has at to date not been given approval to operate in Mauritius.

I am further informed that TEC has so far not been able to finalise the registration of the institution and the accreditation of the MBBS programme it proposes to run in view of the application being short of the full set of documents requested for.

Reminders were sent to the promoters on 09 October 2007 and 07 November 2007 and a reply is still awaited.

4/12/07

36 (a)

TEC – RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

(No. B/1379) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the restructuring exercise being carried out at the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the names, qualifications and experience of the individuals involved therein;
- (b) if an appropriate resource mapping has been carried out *a priori*;
- (c) how many cadres thereof are qualified in higher education or policy development, and
- (d) the research work carried out and published by its staff.

Reply: In view of the developments in the higher education sector and the expanded role of TEC, I wish to inform the House that the TEC Board has approved the principle of a restructuring exercise. As this is a major one, management has undertaken a first diagnostic exercise taking into account the mission, vision, objectives, activities, functions and responsibilities of TEC to determine a different structure for the TEC.

As regards part (a) for this diagnostic exercise, a Committee chaired by Hon Justice B. Domah, Board Member and comprising Acting Executive Director TEC and Administrative Consultant (Mr. D. Sookhoo) was set up.

It is premature to envisage a full resource mapping without Board's approval and recommendation of this first diagnostic exercise. In case, the diagnosis reveals that there is a need for a resource mapping, a decision will be taken in due course by the TEC Board.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that as per the Scheme of Service, all officers at senior level at the TEC are required to have postgraduate degrees and/or PhD's although not necessarily in higher education or policy development where it is difficult in the local market to specifically recruit staff with such a profile.

It is not incumbent upon the Staff of the Commission to carry out research for publications in refereed journals. However, the staff is required to carry out research for assisting in decision making and policy formulation. I am tabling the items of research carried out by the staff of the Commission, which illustrates that they are involved in their daily duties in research work in policy formulation and higher education.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA MEDICAL COLLEGE (04/12/07)

(No. B/1272) Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to whether the Shri Ramachandra Medical College has been given approval to operate in Mauritius and, if so, since when and, if not, why not.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which is responsible for the registration and accreditation of post secondary educational institutions and their programmes respectively that the Shri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute (now Shri Ramachandra University) has at to date not been given approval to operate in Mauritius.

I am further informed that TEC has not registered the institution and accredited the MBBS programme it proposes to run in view of the application being short of the full set of documents requested for.

At the time of application, applicants are informed of all procedures and modalities as well as the information/documents required for registration and accreditation of programmes. I take this opportunity to inform the House that some applicants invariably take undue time to submit the missing information/documents. This causes delay in the processing of the applications.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister which document, in particular, was missing from the set of documents?

Mr Gokhool: I have copies of the correspondence of TEC addressed to the Institution and there is a list of documents which they require to submit. I cannot say which particular document, but there is a list of documents which they would have to submit.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Will the hon. Minister lay on the Table of the National Assembly this list of documents which was missing from the application of the Ramachandra Institute?

Mr Gokhool: There is no problem, I can submit the list.

MEDICAL COLLEGE, ST. PIERRE – SETTING UP

11/12/07
37

(No. B/1325) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if the Commission has received an application for a permit to operate a Medical College in the region of St. Pierre and, if so, if the permit has been granted and, if not, why not

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Tertiary Education Commission has received an application from CAYMET India Ltd. on 28 May 2007 for the setting up of a Medical College in the industrial area, near the Police station at Saint Pierre, Moka.

The institution made an application on 19 June 2007 for accreditation of Year I and Year II of an MD (Hons) programme awarded by Khazar University, Azerbaijan, which it proposes to run in Mauritius.

I am further informed that TEC has so far not been able to finalise the registration of the institution and the accreditation of the MD (Hons) programme it proposes to run in view of the application being short of the full set of documents requested for.

At time of application, applicants are informed of all the procedures as well as the documents required for registration of the institution and accreditation of programmes. I am tabling a list of such documents required. However, applicants invariably do not fulfil all the requirements and take undue time to submit the missing documents. This causes delay in the processing of the applications.

In reply to PQ No. B/1272, on the Sri Ramachandra Medical College on 04 December 2007, I informed the House that the onus to submit a complete set of required documents lies on the applicant. This is another case where the TEC had sent a letter to the applicant on 24 August 2007 for submission of missing documents followed by two reminders on 11 September and 19 November 2007. Up to now, the documents are not forthcoming.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not find it strange that, each time people make applications, they seem to submit the sets of documents with a few papers missing? Isn't something wrong in the way the TEC calls for these documents?

Mr Gokhool: On that score, I don't think so, because, the list of documents which I am tabling is available on the web site and applicants have to go through them and check which documents have been submitted. A reminder has been sent and there has been no reply.

Mr Bérenger: In the case of India, for example, I think that now we have an established procedure that the University Grants Commission is the correspondent of the Tertiary Education Commission, therefore, we get all the required information. Can I know how the TEC is going to get information on that educational institution which we are talking about in Azerbaijan?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, this university wants to tie up with Khazar University in Azerbaijan to offer courses. They have to submit the programmes to be accredited. This information should come through CAYMET India and not through any other sources. That is why we are waiting for the documents to be submitted. At this stage, it is for CAYMET India to submit the documents. When a document is submitted and it has to be verified or crosschecked, the TEC may as well refer to University Grants Commission. But, first of all, the documents must reach TEC and they have not.

Mr Bérenger: May we know whether we have a correspondent in Azerbaijan to get information? Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a local correspondent? Do we have the details of the local correspondent who is moving this project ahead?

Mr Gokhool: I don't know. But, I can give some additional information just to put the problem in perspective. This university tied up with Khazar University to offer programmes, and now we have received – I am just mentioning with the caution that is required – from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation a *note verbale* to the effect that, due to the suspension of educational medicine experts at the University of Khazar since 2006, the continuation of training of students at this high school is not possible.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, do I understand from the hon. Minister that the diplomas from the said university are not recognised in Mauritius for registration to the Medical Council?

Mr Gokhool: I must say that I can't give that information as regards registration, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: When the Minister replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, I got the impression that had it not been for the missing papers, CAYMET would have obtained its permit. The Minister said that it was because of the missing papers. May I ask the hon. Minister, if the papers were there, whether he was satisfied with the set-up of a Medical College at the Industrial Estate?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that the fact of the matter is that they have to submit all the documents and the processing will take place. I don't think we can look at the site.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

11/12/07
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TEC – ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(No. B/1376) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Acting Executive Director of the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) if the incumbent is also employed as part-time Senior Lecturer at the University of Mauritius, indicating if this conflicts with his duties as Acting Executive Director of the Commission, and
- (b) if his contract will be renewed for another term.

Reply: I am informed that the Acting Executive Director of TEC is presently not employed as part-time Senior Lecturer at the University of Mauritius. As such part (b) of the question does not arise.

TEC - ACTING HEAD QUALITY ASSURANCE

11/12/07

(No. B/1377) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Acting Head Quality Assurance of the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to -

- (a) if he is also employed as part-time Lecturer at the University of Mauritius and private institutions;
- (b) his experience and track record in research carried out in quality assurance in higher education and publications in peer-reviewed journals;
- (c) if he is assuming this post, on a roster basis, and
- (d) if the substantive post is being advertised and, if not, why not.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by TEC that its Acting Head, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division is presently employed as a part-time lecturer at the UoM. However he is not teaching in private institutions.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed that no publication has been made by the officer to-date. However, he has attended several workshops on quality assurance and conduct of academic audit of tertiary education institutions (locally and overseas). He has also organized quality audit workshops for the MIE and the MGI.

As regards part (c) of the question, the post of Acting Head, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division is not on a roster basis at TEC.

As regards part (d) of the question, the substantive post is not being advertised. Consideration is presently being given for the restructuring of the Commission and I will give more details thereon in my reply to PQ B/1379. It is only after such an exercise is completed that the post will be filled.

TEC – SECRETARY - RECRUITMENT

11/12/07

(40)

(No. B/1378) 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 recent recruitment exercise carried out at the Tertiary Education Commission to fill in the post of Secretary, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the names and qualifications of the short listed candidates, and
- (b) if the post has been filled and, if so, the name of the selected candidate.

Reply: The TEC advertised the post of Secretary in August 2007 following a decision taken by its Board to proceed with the recruitment exercise.

The recommendation of the Appointment Committee, approved by the TEC Board was submitted to my Ministry for approval by the Minister as provided in the TEC Act.

The recommendation was not approved as criteria laid down for the post had not been met. The Commission has therefore been requested to carry out a fresh selection exercise.

At this stage it is not proper to divulge the names and qualifications of the short listed candidates.

TEC – RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

11/12/07
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(No. B/1379) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the restructuring exercise being carried out at the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the names, qualifications and experience of the individuals involved therein;
- (b) if an appropriate resource mapping has been carried out *a priori*;
- (c) how many cadres thereat are qualified in higher education or policy development, and
- (d) the research work carried out and published by its staff.

Reply: In view of the developments in the higher education sector and the expanded role of TEC, I wish to inform the House that the TEC Board has approved the principle of a restructuring exercise. As this is a major one, management has undertaken a first diagnostic exercise taking into account the mission, vision, objectives, activities, functions and responsibilities of TEC to determine a different structure for the TEC.

As regards part (a) for this diagnostic exercise, a Committee chaired by Hon Justice B. Domah, Board Member and comprising Acting Executive Director TEC and Administrative Consultant (Mr. D. Sookhoo) was set up.

It is premature to envisage a full resource mapping without Board's approval and recommendation of this first diagnostic exercise. In case, the diagnosis reveals that there is a need for a resource mapping, a decision will be taken in due course by the TEC Board.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that as per the Scheme of Service, all officers at senior level at the TEC are required to have postgraduate degrees and/or PhD's although not necessarily in higher education or policy development where it is difficult in the local market to specifically recruit staff with such a profile.

It is not incumbent upon the Staff of the Commission to carry out research for publications in refereed journals. However, the staff is required to carry out research for

assisting in decision making and policy formulation. I am tabling the items of research carried out by the staff of the Commission, which illustrates that they are involved in their daily duties in research work in policy formulation and higher education.

SSR MEDICAL INSTITUTE – MBBS COURSE 2008 – ENROLMENT (25/03/08)

(No. B/62) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the students enrolled with the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical Institute for the first year of the MBBS course 2008, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Institute, information as to the number thereof.

Reply: The answer is as follows –

(i) Provisions which govern the recruitment of students at the SSRMC are laid down in the Public Information Notice to the general public and the Memorandum of Affiliation signed by the UoM and the Medical College.

The Public Information Notice does mention that enrolment of Mauritian Students should be, at least, at the level of 20% of a given cohort.

(ii) As regards the number of students enrolled on the first year of the MBBS Programme for Academic Year 2008 which started on 03 March 2008, the situation is as follows - a total of 106 students comprising 67 Mauritians and 39 foreigners.

SSR MEDICAL COLLEGE – MAURITIAN STUDENTS – INTAKE (08/04/08)

(No. B/194) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to if the College has been informed that henceforth, the number of Mauritian students admitted to the first year of the MBBS course should not exceed 20% of its annual intake and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, as I informed the House in my reply to PQ B/62 on 25 March 2008, the provisions governing the recruitment of students at SSR Medical College (SSRMC) are laid down in the Public Information Notice to the general public of 1999 advertised by the SSRMC, whereby enrolment of Mauritian students should be, at least, at the level of 20% of a given cohort, and the Memorandum of Affiliation (MoA) signed by the UoM and the SSRMC in 2005, whereby the number of Mauritian students admitted on the programme shall not exceed the limits prescribed by the University from time to time, in consultation with the Medical College.

My Ministry is aware that a letter was issued by the vice-Chancellor to the SSRMC in February this year, communicating that the yearly intake at the SSRMC for Mauritian students should be at the level of 20%.

The Memorandum of Understanding stipulates that the number of Mauritian students should be admitted on the basis of consultations. However, as no consultations have been held so far, my Ministry has requested the vice-Chancellor on 25 March 2008 to abide by the relevant provision of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding consultations to be made with the SSRMC for intake of Mauritian students, until and unless same is changed.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister the reasons for this change in procedure? Because as he has mentioned earlier, it was, at least, 20%. So, why was the institute requested by the University of Mauritius to restrict this year's intake to 20%?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, the vice-Chancellor wrote to the SSRMC, but it was not on the basis of consultation. That's why the attention of the vice-Chancellor has been drawn to it.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Sir, may I know from the Minister what was the rationale behind it? Did the vice-Chancellor mention why this request was made to the SSR Medical College?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the vice-Chancellor runs the University of Mauritius. I just have to see that all provisions of the law are being observed by the University. This is what I am doing precisely. Consultations have to be held before any limit is set.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take it from the hon. Minister that the vice-Chancellor did not give any reason why he had taken this step earlier?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did not ask the vice-Chancellor. I just asked him to go by the provisions of the agreements which exist between the University of Mauritius and SSRMC.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the quota has been fixed to 20%, what are they going to do with the surplus of students who would have liked to join the Medical College?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I gave the answer that the limit set is, at least, 20%. They can go beyond 20% in terms of admission of Mauritian students. In fact, for the year 2008 intake, they had a total of 106 students, comprising 67 Mauritians, which is far beyond 20%, and 39 foreigners.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem is that here we are being told that it is going to be fixed at 20%. Out of the total intake, if they are going to take 100 students, only 20 Mauritian students would be entitled to join the Medical College. What will happen if more than 20 students wish to join the Medical College?

Mr Gokhool: As at now, this is not the case. That's why the vice-Chancellor has been requested to consult before coming to any limit. But, this is not the case. This is a hypothetical case.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member wants the hon. Minister to practice divination, which is not something that he can do actually!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question reads: '(...)the reasons therefor?' So, I expected the hon. Minister to give me the reasons today.

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

The vice-Chancellor has written a letter without consultation. I said: 'go and consult!'

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister why he didn't find it proper to ask the vice-Chancellor why the SSR Medical College is now required to admit only 20%?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there is no decision which has been taken with regard to the issue raised by the hon. Member, I don't see the reason why I should go and inquire from the vice-Chancellor. If a decision had been taken and if I were to ask him as to the reason, then he would have told me about it.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether this decision was taken because the University of Mauritius is planning to have another MoU signed with some other institution?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether the hon. lady has prepared the question in advance. I am saying that no decision has been taken! She is asking the question on the basis that a decision has been taken. No decision has been taken! This is what I am trying to tell her.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid my question is not on whether a decision was taken. My question was on the reasons for such a decision to be taken.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, according to the Minister, no decision has been taken.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: For such a proposition to be made then?

The Deputy Speaker: No decision has been taken.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us then that – he is categorical about it – the SSR Medical College can take more than 20% in the coming academic year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now, in 2008, this is the case.

If the consultations take place, as I have requested, then the situation might evolve. I can report to the House if there is a question on that.

Dr. Mungur: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, at this point in time, any human resource needs study has been done concerning the doctor/patient ratio?

Mr Gokhool: I won't be able to give a very precise answer. There is need for doctors.

The Deputy Speaker: This has nothing to do with the question.

Mr Bérenger: *Gouverner c'est prévoir!* Consultation in law means consultation. I think the Government as a whole should *prévoir*, *should* be preventive about it. So, we wait for consultation to take place and if the University goes ahead – because consultations are only consultations - then trouble arises, then Government starts looking into the issue. How can we work like that?

Mr Gokhool: The way the University works, it does do its own projections about students intake, programmes to be offered and so on. Before taking any other decision, the University is bound to consult the SSRMC and clear the matter.

If the matter rests with 20%, then the University will have to see what to do in the light of that decision, but it's not like if the University is operating in a void without any projections. I can't accept that.

Mr Rucktooa: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope the hon. Minister is aware that there are many countries in this world where foreign students' admission for medical school is around 3%, that is, they are protecting their people. In Mauritius this 20% should be increased so that they can give a chance to our students.

The Deputy Speaker: This is a suggestion. The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Rucktooa: Can I ask the hon. Member whether he is going to take into consideration this suggestion and then try to change it as far as Memorandum of Understanding, the University of Mauritius and the Medical School of SSR are concerned?

Mr Gokhool: There are two scenarios. If the consultations are held and the limits are raised or modified, then the University or any other interested party may see whether they want to set up medical colleges. Secondly, if the need arises for more doctors to be trained, this will also be taken into account.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister when was the memorandum of affiliation signed between the University of Mauritius and the medical college?

Mr Gokhool: I think perhaps the hon. Member should read the answers which have been given in PQ No. B/62, but I will inform the hon. lady that this was signed in 2005.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got the answer with me. No date was given, yet the hon. Minister has just mentioned that following this in 2005 a new clause was added to this Memorandum of Understanding, can the hon. Minister confirm this?

Mr Gokhool: I can't follow the hon. lady, because there is a Memorandum of Understanding, out of which, I quoted the relevant extract with regard to the need for consultation. As she is referring to an amendment, I am not aware of that. The Memorandum of Understanding was in 2005 and the public information notice dates to 1999. These are the two agreements.

DENTISTRY SCHOOL MAURAS - ACCREDITATION

6/5/08
44

(No. B/408) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Dentistry School MAURAS, situated at Arsenal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to –

- (a) when
 - (i) was it accredited, and
 - (ii) the first degrees will be awarded, indicating by which examining body and
- (b) the validity of the certificates in relation to practice in Mauritius and abroad.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid, the answer will be a bit lengthy, but bear with me.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry.

Dr. David: I think it is my duty to give the information to the House.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but I have been trying to...

Dr. David: It is a two-page answer.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but I am trying to say that it is stated in the Standing Orders that if answers are long, they should be circulated. Do you know why this is the policy? It is because in fairness to all the other Members who are waiting for their questions to be called. Let me tell the House that since some time 40% of the questions are not being

answered because we are taking too much time for supplementary questions. I will remind the hon. Members what I said last week. The Speaker of the House of Commons had to stop a Minister saying that because he expects brief answers from him.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, without contesting what you are saying...

Mr Speaker: I am just drawing the attention of the hon. Member.

Dr. David: I think the House should know the answer.

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Minister feels that his answer...

(Interruptions)

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, if you feel that you have got to stop me, just do so!

Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which is statutorily responsible for the registration of private post secondary educational institutions and accreditation of their academic programmes as from 2005, as follows -

- (i) The MAURAS College of Dentistry and Hospital and Oral Research Institute was granted provisional permission to set up a 40 seat private dental college by the then Ministry of Education & Scientific Research on 23 August 2002.
- (ii) The college was registered with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority with effect from 15 August 2003 to offer the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme in accordance with the legal framework which existed at that time. With the change in legislation in May 2005, the institution is now registered with the TEC. The registration, which is renewable on a yearly basis, is valid up to 03 October 2008.
- (iii) According to the TEC Act, accreditation means confirmation that the proposed programme satisfies the minimum criteria or standards for it to be offered for a specified duration.

Accreditation of the 5-year BDS programme, which comprises a final year of internship is made on a yearly basis for each level of the programme. It is to be noted that an International Monitoring Committee (IMC) was set up by the then Ministry of Education and Scientific Research to monitor the programme and make recommendations as to whether the college can offer the next level of the programme. Meetings of the IMC were held on the following dates -

- (a) First IMC - December 2002
- (b) Second IMC - May 2004
- (c) Third IMC - March 2005
- (d) Fourth IMC - March 2006
- (e) Fifth IMC - March 2008

As at now all the levels of the programme have already been accredited. The IMC also recommended that the one-year internship after the final exams (at the end of Year 4) be monitored as this has been done in March 2008 with the main recommendation that the college can continue with the internship, which is due for completion in July 2008.

- (iv) The first degrees will be awarded, after completion of the internship, by the Bhavnagar University, Gujarat, India.
- (v) With regard to the validity of the qualifications in relation to practice in Mauritius and abroad, the House may note that it is the responsibility of the Dental Council of Mauritius to register the BDS holders to practice dentistry in Mauritius. Once the first batch of Mauritian students of the MAURAS College of Dentistry and Hospital and Oral Research Institute has completed their degrees, they will have to apply to the Dental Council of Mauritius for registration.

The House may wish to note that during all meetings of the International Monitoring Committee, a representative from the Dental Council of Mauritius was present.

A similar process exists in other countries as well with the respective Dental Councils for registration of BDS holders to practice dentistry.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I thank the hon. Minister for his cooperation.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister who is not the substantive Minister: can the Dental Council give the assurance that the holders of a first degree will be able to practise in Mauritius?

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I understand, it is only at the time the first cohort of students is out and their degree awarded by the Bhavnagar University that the students will apply to the Council for registration and the Dental Council of Mauritius will consider same. I understand that this is the practice as well.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have all the correspondences between the Council and the University in Mauritius. Nowhere there is an assurance that after following the theoretical and the practical courses, these students will be able to practise in Mauritius.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been made to understand that there is a distinction to be made between the academic qualification and the professional practice. The academic qualification is granted after five years of successful studies. The professional part of it depends on the Dental Council.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS TRUST -
COMPOSITION AND COURSES

6/17/08
45

(No. B/414) **Dr. A. Husnoo** (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius Trust, he will state -

- (a) its composition, and
- (b) the courses being presently offered by the Trust.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. J. B. David): I am informed by the University of Mauritius (UoM) as follows -

- (a) The Board of Trustees of the UoM Trust, which was set up by the Council of the University of Mauritius, by virtue of a Trust Deed signed on 19 October 2006 and registered on 23 October 2006, is composed of the following -

Chairman

- (i) Prof. Soodursun Jugessur, GOSK, Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of UoM Council

Trustees

- (i) Prof. Sir Edouard Lim Fat
- (ii) Nr Arnaud Dalais
- (iii) Multiconsult Trustees Limited represented by Ms Pamela Balasoupramanien (Qualified Trustee)

- (b) The following programmes of studies are being presently offered by the UoM Trust's Business School -

- (i) MBA International Business (Part Time) - 19 students, and
- (ii) BSc (Hons) International Financial Services and Compliance (Part Time) - 12 students

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the course being offered by the UoM Trust, can the Minister inform us if the UoM Trust are using the infrastructure and teaching staff of the UoM courses?

Dr. David: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I know.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS TRUST – PRIVATE SECTOR -
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (13/05/08)**

(No. B/461) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the running of courses by the University of Mauritius Trust he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to if any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Trust and the private sector.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius that there are three Memoranda of Understanding that have been signed between the University of Mauritius Trust and the following institutions -
(i) MCX Centre of Academia, Mumbai, India in August 2007;
(ii) Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF) in September 2007, and
(ii) Accenture (Mauritius) Ltd in March 2008.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister what are the major features of the arrangements made between the two parties?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the signature of these Memoranda of Understanding relate to the areas in which these organisations are operating and in view of promoting partnership for teaching and learning and research.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the spirit behind the implementation of the Trust?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think there was a question last week and an answer was given. The objective of the trust is to provide to the University operational and financial flexibility and autonomy so that when they run the programmes, they can generate revenues which can be used by the University for its other projects and developments.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister be ready to table the Memorandum of Understanding?

Mr Gokhool: There is no problem. I will do that.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
– LECTURERS, STUDENTS, ETC.

47
20/08

(No. B/546) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Textile Technology Department of the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University, information as to (a) the number of (i) lecturers forming part thereof and (ii) students enrolled for courses dispensed thereby and (b) the amount of fees payable in respect of each course.

Reply: I am informed by the University of Mauritius (UoM) as follows –

With regard to part (a) (i) and (ii) 8 lecturers are presently attached to the Department of Textile Technology, where 107 students are enrolled on the two programmes currently being dispensed namely BSc (Hons) Textile Technology and BSc (Hons) Textile & Fashion Design.

With regard to (b) in line with Government policy, the two full time undergraduate programmes dispensed by the Department of Textile Technology do not attract any tuition fees. However, the following fees comprising general fees, Students' Union Membership fee and laboratory fees are payable per student in respect of both programmes as follows:

Year I	Rs 14,050
Year II	Rs 11,700
Year III	Rs 8,700
Year IV (Re-sit)	Rs 6,900

UoM/UTM – ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009 – INTAKE (01/07/08)

(No. B/759) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether in regard to the intake of students at the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology for the academic year 2008-2009, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if the number thereof will be doubled, and if so, the measures that have been or are being taken to cater for the increased number of students.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with Government policy to increase access to post secondary and tertiary education as enunciated in the Budget Speech 2008/2009, the two public universities and other publicly funded tertiary educational institutions have taken steps to increase student intake as from next Academic Year as follows -

The UoM has already initiated to cater measures for an increased number of student admissions from the figure of 3089 in 2007 – 2008 to 4467 in 2008-2009. These include the merging of classes to optimise access and use of resources, use of flexible programmes, the rationalisation of infrastructure usage and introduction of foundation courses. This will result in an increase of 45% of the intake compared to last year.

The possibility of using underutilised capacity of private institutions through some form of collaboration to run joint programmes with award made by the UoM and the UTM will also be explored.

As regards the University of Technology, Mauritius, I am informed that the intake for Academic Year 2007/2008 which was 900 will be doubled in 2008/2009 so as to reach 1800 by 2009. I am further informed that due to space constraint at the La Tour Koenig campus, UTM which already has recourse to rented accommodation at IVTB, Pointe aux Sables and MIE and MCA will rent additional space for afternoon lectures. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures which I have just enunciated shall in no way be detrimental to the quality of higher education delivered.

To respond to the challenge of broadening access and enabling more of our qualified youth to have access to higher education, our universities have had to revisit their mode of operation.

Today, it is unimaginable to have class sizes of 25, 30 or 40. To assist teaching and learning to larger groups of students, all classrooms are being equipped with new educational technology tools such as laptops, PCs and

LCD projectors. At the same time, all laboratories are being upgraded. For instance, the University of Mauritius is investing in equipment and is purchasing 300 PCs.

We live in a virtual world where access to knowledge should not be only limited to the classroom. Students should have access to information anywhere on the campus. The UoM library is being upgraded to increase space and access to the internet through WiFi connections.

The above, together with the Quality Assurance System already in place will ensure quality of teaching and learning in higher education.

I assure hon. Members that my Ministry is ensuring that measures announced in the 2008/2009 Budget with regard to broadening access to higher education are effectively implemented on a progressive basis.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned several measures. Will he confirm that these measures will be ready for resumption of studies in six weeks? For example, he has mentioned additional space in the library, PCs in all classrooms.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, action has been taken, but I cannot say that all the measures will be completed at the beginning of the academic year. This is an ongoing process. The University is taking steps for the smooth running of courses at the university.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, right now, there is no space for students in the library. With the increase in the number of students, I can imagine what will be the situation. On the other hand, regarding the teaching staff – actually, it is a big problem - has the University already embarked on recruitment of additional staff for the next academic year?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards recruitment of staff, the exercise has started. Concerning the library, true it is that there is a problem of space. I have been informed that action is being taken to increase access to internet facilities, so that students will not have to go to the library. Meanwhile, the library facilities are being upgraded. I don't think all this can happen overnight, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that there will also be evening classes. The fact that there is a big problem of transport encountered by the students, has the hon. Minister taken on board this problem with regard to evening classes?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a practical problem. But, we have taken steps so that part-time courses, where normally students have their own transport facilities, are run in the late evening. We have to make sure that students who attend full-time courses, and who do not have transport facilities, do not face these difficulties.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Minister must have been apprised of the apprehensions of Mr Mohamedbhai, who certainly knows what he is talking about. One of these apprehensions is that, with the doubling of students, the lecturers will have less time to do research work, especially in view of the pressure that will be put upon them with the increase in the number of students. How does the hon. Minister react to that?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that wisdom comes to people after they leave the institution itself. The question asked by the hon. Member relates to quality assurance...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Members on the other side of the House have also to listen to what I have to say! [have to say!](#)

(Interruptions)

Third class Opposition!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the university has got...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: A question has been put. Let the hon. Minister reply!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the university usually has quality assurance processes. For example, there is the Senate, there is the pro vice-Chancellor looking after teaching and learning, there is a team that looks after quality assurance, and there are advisory committees. The system

is in place. Let me also inform the House that we have a system of external examination to look at the quality of education offered by the university. I can assure the hon. Member that all these aspects have been taken into consideration.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that we must forget classes of 25-30. Can he assure the House that when are going to have large groups, the university will have the same facilities as universities abroad?

(Interruptions)

True it is that we have lectures of 100, 200 and 300. Of course!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, put your question!

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Finance is just...

The Deputy Speaker: But, you are not supposed to respond to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Mrs Labelle: Yes, but I have been disturbed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: You have let yourself be disturbed. Put your question!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we are looking forward to have classes of 100 or 200, will the hon. Minister of Education ensure that we have the same facilities, that is, tutorials, teaching assistance? This is the question. We cannot compare...

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

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all I can say to the hon. lady is that, in line with our vision for a world-class quality education, we are going to provide world-class facilities at the University of Mauritius.

At 1.00 p.m the sitting was suspended.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised

that Parliamentary Question No. B/760 has been withdrawn.

**PAUL OCTAVE WIEHE AUDITORIUM - "YOUR RIGHT TO
KNOW ORGANISATION" – REQUEST (01/07/08)**

(No. B/773) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of an incident which occurred on Saturday 04 June 2008 at the University of Mauritius, whereby the members of the 'Your Right to Know Committee' were not allowed to hold a meeting on the premises thereof and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University of Mauritius, information as to the reasons why they have not been allowed to do so.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that the date to which reference is made in the question, is Saturday 14 June and not 04 June, which was a Wednesday.

I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows -
(i) a request from 'Your Right to Know' a Non-Governmental Organisation, was received for the use of the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium, on 14 June 2008;
(ii) subsequently, on the eve of the event, i.e. 13 June 2008, at 15.45 hours, a letter from the Students' Union reached the University administration to the effect that the event was to be held with its collaboration and hence the Students' Union was requesting the use of one lecture theatre, for same, free of charge.

I am also informed by the University that access to its premises (in this case the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium) is subject to payment of the appropriate fees, i.e. Rs 6,000. Since payment had not been effected by the NGO, access was not acceded to by the University.

Mrs Martin: May I ask the hon. Minister whether members of the organisation "Your Right to Know" were made aware that they had to pay Rs6,000 to be able to use the auditorium?

Mr Gokhool: The organisation's name is "Your Right to Know." It must know what is the procedure prevailing at the University.

Mrs Martin: We don't tell someone about his rights, how do we

expect him to know? May I ask the hon. Minister what are the activities that are carried out by the NGO “Your Right to Know”?

Mr Gokhool: I cannot answer, but I want to tell the hon. Member that the rights are always accompanied with responsibilities.

Mrs Martin: Can I ask hon. Minister whether it is because “Your Right to know” organization has made different remarks against the governmental policy that it has not been authorised to use the auditorium.

The Deputy Speaker: The question does not arise.

Mr Gokhool: I will answer, with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister chooses to!

Mr Gokhool: In fact, I have checked all the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As I said, as regards this organization “Your Right to Know,” rights are always accompanied with responsibilities. They made a request to the University to use the facilities, but they have to pay and, meanwhile, they are sticking posters all around the place. There is academic freedom, but we have to live by the spirit, we can’t stretch it so far. They are waiting for the permission and meanwhile they are sticking posters all around the place. Which University will allow that?

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister just said that it was free of charge. Is that so?

Mr Gokhool: No, Sir.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a letter from the University of Mauritius where it is stated that “Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium will be put at your disposal on Saturday 14 June for the launching ceremony free of charge.”

The Deputy Speaker: For which organisation? Is it related to this organisation?

Mr Giumbeau: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to table the letter. It is written “free of charge” and now they say that it has to pay.

Mr Gokhool: The hon. Member can table the information.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - EVENING COURSES -
TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS (22/07/08)**

(No. B/902) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University, information as to the number of students –

- (a) attending the University;
- (b) enlisted for the next academic year, and
- (c) if public transport arrangements have been made for the students attending the evening courses.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows –

- (a) 7833 students have been attending the University, during Academic Year 2007/2008;
- (b) the total enrolment for Academic Year 2008/2009 is projected to reach 9343 students;
- (c) in general, full-time programmes are run up to 6.00 p.m and public transport is available until 6.45 p.m. As regards parttime students, most of whom are employed, they make their own arrangements when lectures finish after 6.45 p.m;

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give some clarifications concerning public transport for students attending evening courses? Is the hon. Minister also aware that for the time being they are facing a lot of problems? For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, for students residing at Flacq, GRSE and Rose-Belle, how are they going to attend the evening courses? Has the hon. Minister given thought to it and whether any provision has been made for public transport?

Mr Gokhool: I have mentioned that the full-time programmes end at 6 p.m. and the students can have transport facilities till 6.45 p.m. But I think the hon. Member will agree that the University cannot give customised, tailor-made transport facilities to each and every student. However, having said that, the University does take into account whenever there are transport problems; it liaises with the NTA, the bus companies and the relevant authorities to find solutions.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information it is not the exact answer which the hon. Minister is giving. Can he inform the House how many students are following the evening courses at the

University?

—

Mr Gokhool: I don't have the figures but, as I said, even students who follow the evening courses do usually take ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I understand the predicament of the hon. Member. Insofar as the transport situation is concerned, I think he will better address the question to the Minister in charge of public transport to see how public transport can be put at their disposal.

Mr Soodhun: Last time, when I put the question to the hon. Minister at Budget time, he answered that a Monitoring Committee has been set up.

Now the hon. Minister is changing the answer. He said that it is not the Monitoring Committee which is looking at it. According to my information, nowadays the students are getting lots of problems after 6 o'clock. The fact that the hon. Minister has just mentioned that they are going to have evening courses, the problem will be acute and those students would not be able to go to the University.

Mr Gokhool: Since the hon. Member seems to be so genuine, I would request him to submit the facts which I will transmit to the University and I will ask the University to look into it in the committee that usually meets.

POLICE OFFICERS – POLICE STUDIES - BSc (HONS) DEGREE (05/08/08)

(No. B/1031) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Police Officers who are holders of a BSc (Hons) degree in Police Studies, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –
(a) the number thereof, as at to date, and
(b) where matters stand in regard to the scheme proposed for providing new avenues and creating more opportunities for their advancement in the hierarchy in the Police Force.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that to date, 249 Police Officers hold a BSc (Hons) in Police Studies.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed that with a view to enhancing the career prospects of police graduates, the Cadet Scheme is being reviewed to enable holders of BSc (Hons) in Police Studies to join the scheme.

The proposed scheme of service for Cadet Officer has already been worked out and is being re-examined in the light of the PRB Report 2008.

I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/819 on 24 July 2007 where I stated that the Commissioner of Police has made certain proposals to open up avenues for a better utilisation of the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired by the Police Officers. However, some of the proposals are very likely to have repercussions in other services.

The implications of these proposals are therefore being thoroughly examined at the level of my Office.

Furthermore, I wish to point out that the PRB has made appropriate recommendations in order to reward Public Officers including Police Officers, who acquire additional qualifications by payment of additional increments.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House that it was in his first mandate that this course was initiated and it was following a report of “EFFECT consultant”, as far back as 28 June 1997, which found that the training offered to Police officers and new recruits were more of a military nature than on core Police work?

The Prime Minister: I can confirm, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it was further to this report that we decided to start the BSc (Hons) in Police Studies and I am glad to say that today 249 Police Officers hold a BSc (Hons) in Police Studies.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – ADMISSION 2008-2009
(19/08/08)**

(No. B/1158) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University –
(a) information as to the number of students admitted thereat for the academic year 2008-2009, and

(b) a list of the courses, which are no more offered, indicating the reasons therefor, in each case.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows –

(a) as at date, 2825 students have registered for the 2008-2009 academic year. The projection made was 4467. 3980 seats were offered, and

(b) as has been the practice for several years, the University proposes in its advertisement a wide range of programmes of studies to prospective students. Inevitably, certain programmes do not fetch the required number of applicants and therefore cannot be run for efficiency reasons (high investment/cost compared to very few candidates). Out of a total of 133 courses, 17 will not be run. I am tabling a list of the courses that will not be run. A fresh advertisement has been issued by UoM to give another choice to candidates to join other courses where seats are available.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister for the subjects which have been cancelled, whether a certain number of applicants had applied for these and if so, the number of seats that were filled?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have this information, but there is a critical number of candidates who should register for the programme to be run. I believe the University has taken this into consideration and has decided not to run these courses.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if a survey was carried out beforehand to decide on the courses that would be offered to students?

Mr Gokhool: This is normal practice. When the University plans the courses, it has got various consultations with the private sector; there are various committees and then they come with a list of programmes. There is also the question of demand and supply.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether any inquiry was carried out to find out why there are about 1,900 students, if I am not mistaken, who have chosen not to be admitted to the University?

Mr Gokhool: No enquiry has been carried out but, as is the practice, some students apply for various universities. Some get the seats, others decide not to join universities and take up a job. There are various reasons and this happens every year.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister what lapse of time there is between the closing date of calling for applications and the students are informed whether they have got a seat or not?

Mr Gokhool: I will not be able to give a precise answer, but there is a certain period which is given for them to apply and then they are informed whether they have got a seat or not.

Mr Guinness: I am asking this question because in cases of courses where we have very few candidates, I suppose that these students lose their chance to get admitted in another institution. In September, when they are told that the courses are not being offered, they have no possibility to apply for another institution.

Mr Gokhool: As is the case, normally, students apply to various universities. But, for students who apply for the University and do not get a seat, a new advertisement is made by the University so that they are given the chance to apply for other courses.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he tried to find out for students who did not choose to get admitted to the University whether there is no link between this shortfall in number with the fact that these students could not pay for the fees at the University?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have this answer, but we can find out from the University.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has got the information about the number of students who have benefited from the special loan scheme for admission, in this term, to the University?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! It does not relate to the question. Next question!

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – CAFETERIA ?(19/08/08)

(No. B/1182) 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 cafeteria of the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University, information as to if any outstanding amount is due by the operator thereof and, if so, indicate the measures that have or will be taken to recover same.

Reply: I am informed by the University of Mauritius that there is no outstanding balance as at date in respect of payments from the Cafeteria operator. However, two to three months arrears were noted during the previous years. These arrears were subsequently offset against amount due by the UoM to the Cafeteria in respect of services provided by the latter for University functions.

The University of Mauritius is closely monitoring payments received from the Cafeteria Operator.