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No. 2 of 2023

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.)

Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Education (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Registration, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Cooperatives, Handicraft, Industrial Development, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Vocational Training, Civil Status, Customs and Excise (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Postal Services (Administration), Marine Parks, Water Resources
Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Transport, Environment, Community Development, Housing
Mr Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Production, Forestry, Plant & Animal Quarantine
Mr Jean Nicolas Volbert	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Social Security (Administration), Fire Services, Prisons & Reforms Institutions (Administration)
Miss Marie Christiane Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection/Price Fixing
Mr Jean Alain Wong So	Commissioner responsible for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology & Telecommunications
Mr Joseph Varok Ravina	Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports, Arts and Culture, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Library Services

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson - Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian, G.O.S.K.

Deputy Chairperson - Tolbize, Mr Justar

Deputy Clerk - Clair, Miss Marie Chrismélanie

Serjeant-at-Arms - Perrine, Mr Joseph Laval

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RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 02 of 2023

Sitting of Tuesday 14 March 2023

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Mathurin, at 10.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

**RULING ON POINT OF ORDER – SITTING 11 JANUARY 2023 – SECOND LOCAL
REGION MEMBER OF GRANDE MONTAGNE/INTERRUPTION**

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I have one announcement this morning. Further to a point of order from the respected Member, the Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne, at the sitting of the 11 January 2023, I have given due consideration to the complaint and I am now coming with my ruling thereon.

As guardian of the Standing Orders, I expect all Members to set good examples for the smooth running of the business of this House. It is essential that the Chair be allowed to hear the speech of each and every Member in this Assembly without any interruption. Interrupting the business of the House does not only disturb proceedings but they also negatively affect the correct recording of debates whereby gaps occur in the verbatim records of this House. It is my duty as the Chairperson to ensure that each Member is allowed to address this House whenever the floor is granted therefor as per the parameters clearly set out in our Standing Orders. To complete this duty, the Chair needs the collaboration of all respected Members. However, due to the lack of decorum in the House as regards to the content of the point of order and the lack of clarity as to who is saying what, the Chair is unwillingly to rule approximately.

Respected Members, I appeal to you once again, discipline, dignity and decorum should always prevail in this House.

I thank you for your attention and rely on the kind collaboration of one and all.

**CONGRATULATORY – CHAIRPERSON – ELEVATION TO THE RANK
OF GRAND ORDER OF THE OFFICER OF THE STAR AND KEY OF THE INDIAN
OCEAN (GOSK)**

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, allow me to make a short speech at the beginning of this sitting to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, upon your elevation to the rank of Grand Order of the Officer of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. Without doubt, you deserve this decoration which has been proposed by the Executive Council accepted by Cabinet and on the recommendation of the Prime Minister to the President of the Republic, you have been made G.O.S.K. on 12 March 2023.

Without doubt it is a recognition of your contribution in the political, social and educational fields in Rodrigues. You have been a teacher up to now and you have been a

member of the National Assembly from 2000 to 2017. From this side of the House, I have the honour to address to you our sincere congratulations.

(Applause)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, permettez-moi en mon nom personnel et au nom l'équipe de la minorité de me joindre au Chef commissaire pour vous féliciter dans le cadre de votre élévation au rang de G.O.S.K., Grand Order of the Officer of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, dans les cadres des célébrations des 55 ans de l'indépendance et les 31 ans de la république.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Lisette.

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS – NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT (NDU)

(No. B/1) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to infrastructural projects implemented by the National Development Unit (NDU) in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the number thereof implemented and completed since 2012 together with the respective financial costs;
- (b) if any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the relevant Ministry in regard thereto, and
- (c) if the Executive Council has given its approval in 2022 for the implementation of projects under the NDU and, if so, to give details thereof and state where matter stands?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Bonjour tout le monde. M. le président, permettez-moi tout d'abord de me joindre au Chef commissaire et le Minority Leader pour vous féliciter pour votre décoration en tant que 'Grand Officer of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (GOSK)' à l'occasion de la fête nationale.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to question B/1 and part (a) of the question, I am informed that the information is still being compiled.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was not in the file at my commission. Same has been requested from the National Development Unit office (NDU) and I have recently been made aware of same.

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As regards to part (c), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Council conveyed its approval in June 2022 for the implementation of projects under the National Development Unit and my office has been informed that the projects are at the design stage. I wish to point out, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this project will have to be presented to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) prior to the launching of tenders.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is nice to hear that the Deputy Chief Commissioner has taken cognizance of the MOU, even lately. Nevertheless, I would like to ask him as regards to the MOU itself, when was that MOU signed and by whom?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that the respected Member, is aware. It was signed by the ex-Island Chief Executive; I think it is in 2016.

Mr Lisette: The answer is not complete, Mr Chairperson, Sir, because I asked who signed the MOU?

(Interruptions)

The ex-Island Chief Executive, okay. So, being given that the ex-Island Chief Executive signed the MOU, so the MOU should have been in the file, at least at the level of the Central Administration.

My second question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, would be whether there is, in light of public infrastructural projects, completed or to be implemented in Rodrigues, if there is any litigation between the NDU and the RRA or the Commission for Public Infrastructure?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: *Mr Chairperson, Sir, non il n'y a pas de litige. Parce que nous travaillons déjà ensemble sur ces projets. D'ailleurs, j'ai rencontré le Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) et il m'a fait parvenir la liste des projets qu'il veut entreprendre à Rodrigues et justement, c'est cette liste de projet que j'ai ramené au Conseil Exécutif pour informer mes collègues. Et, bien sûre, on a eu des discussions sur comment faire les projets, où et quels sont les priorités de l'Assemblée Régionale en terme de construction des ponts sur les routes côtières, etcetera. Donc, il y a une discussion, oui bien sûre, et nous travaillons ensemble.*

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, given the fact that the Deputy Chief Commissioner now holds the MOU in his hand, knowing the different articles that are included in the MOU, I would like to ask him whether there is any provision made in that MOU for the setting of a CAB Office in Rodrigues?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, il y a provision dans le MOU pour un CAB Office. Mais il y a aussi, dans le MOU, provision fait pour un *joint-committee* qui n'a jamais existé. D'après l'article 5 du MOU. Je vais le citer si vous me le permettez, M. le président. Merci.

« Any dispute or differences arising out of the interpretation and implementation of the MOU shall be settled amicably by mutual consultations and negotiations between the parties. »

Has there been negotiation? Oui, il y a un CAB Office. Est-ce qu'il y a négociation ? Est-ce qu'on a vu, par exemple, le PPS venir voir le Chef commissaire, lui dire, voilà il faut qu'on parle dans l'intérêt de tout le monde. Il n'y a pas eu. Si vous allez me dire qu'on n'a pas respecté le MOU. Eh ben, le MOU n'a pas été respecté aussi par l'autre parti, M. le président. Et, je dois ajouter à cela, M. le président, on va revoir ce MOU. Parce qu'il y a un nouveau gouvernement.

Il y a aussi des nouvelles politiques, donc certainement je fais part au PPS qu'on va revoir ce MOU et bien sûre on va travailler pour signer un autre MOU.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in line with what the Deputy Chief Commissioner has been saying and taking note that this MOU was signed as far back as 2016, I would like to ask him why is it that if there are any terms that are not in his line of policy, why is it that during the whole year 2022 to date, why is it that he has not brought up the issue with the relevant party so as to bring the amendments that should go along with these policy?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il doit se poser la question lui-même. Le MOU n'était pas dans le dossier. Même le Island Chief Executive (ICE) ne savait pas que ça existait. Où était le MOU ? Pourquoi est-ce que vous avez, je ne sais pas, je dirais peut-être égarer le MOU ? Il n'y a pas eu de MOU. Ce n'est que dernièrement-là qu'on a su qu'il y a un MOU et on a cherché à Maurice. On a dû chercher à Maurice pour avoir le MOU.

Donc, tant qu'il n'y a pas de problème tout allait bien mais là lorsqu'ils ont parlé de MOU, *breach* de MOU, on a été voir le MOU. Et, il y a aussi *breach* de leur côté dans ce même MOU.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, on a vu que par rapport au bureau de la NDU et les projets implémenter à Rodrigues, il y a eu récemment plusieurs sorties publiques du Chef commissaire, est-ce que ces sorties publiques ont été suivie des instructions officielles pour que les projets en cour ne se font pas ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je pense que la Minority Leader doit poser la question au Chef commissaire. Concernant les projets, à aucun moment, nous au sein de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, les projets de la NDU qui sont dans l'intérêt des Rodriguais, nous aussi on va pousser ces projets. Laissez-moi vous dire, M. le président, j'ai discuté avec le PPS, il y a des projets dans cette liste pour cette année. J'ai proposé des projets. J'ai dit, ben écouter si vous allez faire là-bas, pour nous, priorité, par exemple, je prends l'exemple de Baie Topaze. J'ai proposé, j'ai dit au PPS, il faut voir si on peut faire Baie Topaze.

Et là, on va s'asseoir aussi pour voir comment implémenter ces projets. Il ne faut pas qu'en implémentant un projet on défigure le paysage de l'île. Parce que d'après ce que moi j'ai compris, il y a un risque. Il faut pouvoir sauvegarder la spécificité, le paysage de Rodrigues, tout en bien sûr, donnant faciliter aux gens. Par exemple, nous avons le projet de Mourouk, le projet aussi de Rivière Coco, très important. Nous avons discuté avec le PPS. Nous travaillons ensemble. Vous voulez que je dise qu'on ne va pas aller de l'avant. Si, on va aller de l'avant. Parce que c'est dans l'intérêt, comme je l'ai dit, de tout le monde, de tous les Rodriguais et bien sûr, l'Assemblée Régionale va apporter tous son soutien dans le respect. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I come back to what the respected Deputy Chief Commissioner spoke out when he stated that there is a dispute resolution.

(Interruptions)

Yes, he said it, that there is a dispute resolution mechanism, given that the MOU, as he rightly said, allows for the setting up of a joint committee, whenever there is some sort of violation of any sort whereby a party has, in a way or another, violated the articles of the MOU. I would like to ask him on this basis, why is it that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has unilaterally and drastically taken the decision of closing the CAB Office without putting that dispute resolution mechanism in place first?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je crois que le Membre doit poser/adresser la question au Chef commissaire.

(Interruptions)

Parce que c'est le Chef commissaire qui a pris la décision, c'est son bureau. *You can come with a substantive question on the next meeting. Thank you.*

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the MOU signed between the RRA and the NDU is in line with the provisions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act or whether it goes against the RRA?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, le Membre est en train d'interpréter la loi, d'interpréter si le MOU est en ligne avec ça. Mais c'est subjectif ! Parce que nous n'étions pas là et puis, nous au sein de ce gouvernement, nous on trouve que ce MOU doit être revu. Vous allez me dire si c'est en ligne. Moi, je dirais ce n'est pas ligne avec notre politique, la politique de ce présent gouvernement. Et, le PPS, je pense qu'il sera d'abord qu'on doit revoir le MOU dans l'intérêt de tout le monde, l'intérêt de la NDU, dans notre intérêt.

Parce que comme j'ai dit, nous avons nos propre *policies*. Mais aussi ce que j'ai remarqué, M. le président, c'est que dans le passé, on a laissé la NDU comme-ci, comme un *body* sans vraiment que l'Assemblée Régionale, à travers ces officiers, à travers le bureau des infrastructures publiques donner son avis et donner du soutien. C'est mon avis. Pourquoi, M. le président ? Parce que je peux dire qu'après avoir fait des projets à Rodrigues et ces projets sont *handed over* à qui ? A nous de la Commission des Infrastructures Publiques. Mais, M. le président, dans ces projets, dès fois il y a des *defects*. Vous posez la question, je réponds. Il y a des *defects*. Comment se fait-il qu'à l'époque on fait une route à Anse Ali, lorsque vous descendez à Anse Ali il y a un virage presque 90 degré, M. le président. Comment se fait-il ? Où était le commissaire à l'époque ? Le Commissaire des Infrastructures Publiques ? Ou est-ce qu'il était ? Ou étaient les officiers ? Et moi, j'ai parlé aux officiers, je leurs ai demandé où est-ce que vous étiez ? Ils me disaient qu'ils n'avaient pas le droit d'imposer. Est-ce que c'est ça défendre, M. le président, l'intérêt de Rodrigues ? Et nous, ce qu'on veut faire, un MOU ou tout le monde doit travailler ensemble, dans l'intérêt de tout le monde. Je vais dire un *effect*, je ne vais pas dire l'autre. Et, c'est la raison pour laquelle nous au sein de cette Assemblée, moi au sein de la commission on va veiller à ce que les projets puissent être entrepris comme il faut et bien sûr, bien fait parce que c'est l'argent des contribuables. Ce n'est pas seulement l'argent du gouvernement régional, ce n'est pas l'argent de la NDU, c'est l'argent de tout un chacun et on doit veiller à ce que lorsqu'on fait un projet le projet soit bien fait.

Mr Chairperson: One last question. Go on, one last.

Mr Lisette: This is an important issue, Mr Chairperson, Sir. This is an important issue.

Mr Chairperson: I know.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, being given that he has stated that there is no reporting as such. The first question is, is he aware that whenever there are site meetings as regards to projects which are implemented by the NDU...

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the member is keeping asking questions, that is good, but I think there should be a fair time for other questions also. But here he is introducing new matter. The question does not refer to what has been going on in site meetings. You should have asked this in the question. My view, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that he is unnecessarily taking the time of the House to prolong on this question, introducing new matter.

Mr Chairperson: So, what is your point of order?

The Chief Commissioner: My point of order is that he is introducing new matter in the question and this is not allowed. He is introducing new matters, site meeting, notes of meeting, this is not in the main question. If you wanted information on site meetings, notes of meeting, it should be in the question. This is how it goes in this House.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you, Mr Chief Commissioner, I am on my feet. I told you the last question, you ask your last question but in line with what we have provision in the question.

Mr Lisette: It is in line with the main question and in line also with the answer that has been provided by the Deputy Chief Commissioner. Because supplementary question should be related to the main question but it is also related to answers given by the Commissioner. But he has been speaking about lack of reporting. So, I have the right to ask him about the reporting process.

Mr Chairperson: Sit down. I have given you... You sit down, I am on my feet. I have given you the time to ask your question. It is not a debate, so you ask your question.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner about the kind of reporting that he has been spoken about, whether he is aware, first, that it is mandatory in the MOU that whenever projects are to be implemented by the RRA...

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to draw your attention that there is nothing mandatory in any MOU. An MOU is a memorandum of understanding. So, the Member is asking a misleading question. There is nothing in any MOU. MOU is just, not even

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a contract. So, he is taking again the time of the House for unnecessarily putting wrong question. There is nothing mandatory in the MOU.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Mr Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has the possibility to answer the question. So, complete your question, please.

Mr Lisette: The question is whatever the for, we can take it, whether it is mandatory or it is a...

Mr Chairperson: Be brief in your question.

Mr Lisette: an amicable process of implementing project, whatever it is, I would like to ask him that whether he is aware that whenever any project is to be implemented there is, as it has been done, first of all, exchange of views between the technical officers of the commission and that of the NDU?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Bien sûr, M. le président. Il y a eu, oui bien sûr. Mais ça n'a pas été pris en considération, M. le président. Et j'ai parlé à mes officiers et c'est la raison pour laquelle je trouve drôle comment à cette époque-là, lui il n'a pas parlé à ces officiers. Pourquoi il n'a pas vu que les recommandations des officiers du Public Infrastructure, n'ont pas été pris en compte. C'est ça la reproche que moi je fais. C'est la raison, j'ai dit, il y a eu des défauts lorsque je parle, et là les officiers me disent – ben parce que nous nous avons attiré l'attention, oui dans les site meetings mais la décision finale d'après le MOU. Qui c'est qui prend la décision, M. le président ? A cette époque-là, la décision finale venait au consultant qui justement suivait et *overview* les différents projets.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – RECRUITMENT – SECONDARY SCHOOL
EDUCATORS**

(No. B/2) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the recent Cabinet decision concerning the eligibility criteria for recruitment of secondary school educators, he will inform the House of the measures taken by his Commission in connection thereto?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that Cabinet at its meeting held on Friday 18 November 2022 has agreed to the promulgation of the Education

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(Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2022. Necessary amendments are being brought to the Education Regulations 1957 as follows:

- (a) Regulation 3 of the Education Regulations 1957 is being amended to cater for the required qualifications in the sector, that is, the applicants should be holders of the appropriate “O” and “A” level qualifications as well as the following: -
 - (i) a degree or joint degree in the subject to be taught, or an equivalent qualification, and
 - (ii) a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from a recognised institution, or an alternative qualification in Education from recognised institution; or
a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) from the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) in the subject to be taught.

The subjects have been set out in the Third Schedule to the Regulations.

- (b) In cases where universities do not offer a degree in the subject being taught at school or the appellation of a degree differs from that of the subjects being taught, the list of acceptable qualifications has been listed out in the Fourth Schedule to the Regulations.

The amendment is in line with the recommendation of the “Declaration on Transforming Education in Africa” made in September 2022 in the margin of the 77th UN General Assembly, where countries have been invited to take the commitment to reform the teaching profession with a focus on quality teacher training and teachers’ recruitment and management policies that improve learner outcomes and help to improve teacher retention and fulfilment.

The Education (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2022 came into force on 21 December 2022.

This decision was communicated to the Managers of the eight private aided secondary schools in Rodrigues through circular dated 28 December 2022 by the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) which is the Authority for these schools.

Following meeting held with the management of REDCO schools on 26 December 2022, the amendments to the Education Regulations were discussed.

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Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as Commissioner for Education of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, I was concerned with this decision as it will inevitably impact on the recruitment of qualified educators by both REDCO and the Rodrigues College.

As a matter of fact, REDCO and Rodrigues College have been encountering difficulties during the past years to recruit qualified Educators in Rodrigues following the change in criteria for recruitment of Educators whereby only holders of a degree in the subject to be taught are considered for recruitment as Educator.

I, subsequently decided to write to the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Honourable Mrs Leela Devi DOOKUN-LUCHOOMUM, GCSK on 28 December 2022 to express our concern that an acute shortage of teaching personnel will be experienced in the eight secondary schools in Rodrigues following the promulgation of the Education Regulation 1957 – Education (Amendments No. 3) Regulation 2022 and, given the scarcity of availability of incumbents holding the required qualifications.

I have thus sought the good office of the Minister of Education so that a derogation is made for the Education (Amendments No. 3) Regulations 2022 not to be applicable to the Island of Rodrigues for the next two years pending availability of qualified applicants for the grade of secondary Educators on the labour market.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is thus with great relief that I took note of the highlight of Cabinet Meeting of Friday 24 February 2023 whereby Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2023. The Regulation will allow a person who holds any degree in the subject to be taught and who is enrolled on a course leading to a PGCE or any alternative qualification in education from a recognised institution to join the teaching profession in a temporary capacity and be confirmed only upon obtention of the certification. This provision would apply exceptionally for the years 2023 to 2026.

As such, the derogation brought to the Education Regulations will enable REDCO and Rodrigues college to still have recourse to Educators holding a degree in the subject to be taught for short term replacement and filling of vacancies if any.

In addition, this new decision will allow Trainee Educators recruited by REDCO who are enrolled for their B. Ed to complete their courses as well as give an opportunity for potential candidates willing to join the teaching profession to enroll for a PGCE or B. Ed course. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire combien actuellement d'éducateur qui, malheureusement, ne pourront être employer parce qu'ils n'ont pas les qualifications requis dans le domaine même si les règlements seront implémentés qu'en 2026 ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not have this figure here. I would invite members if they wanted some information to be precise but I see we have some 17 educators enrolled in B. Ed courses, meaning that they are concerned by this decision. I may find out later and table the information. So, I see here a number of persons – three educators. They were not even educators because they did not hold all the necessary qualifications. For example, a full School Certificate or Higher School Certificate.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire s'il est au courant qu'en 2021 le gouvernement régional d'alors avait sollicité la MIE pour implémenter un programme de formation spécifiquement pour les *degree holders having their degree not in the field they are teaching and they are enrolling actually in a PGCE. For example, let say, someone might have had a degree in Accounts and teaching Mathematics and this person has been enrolled in PGCE in Mathematics. So, it is not in line with the Regulations. Whether these persons, specific considerations have been taken for these persons?*

The Chief Commissioner: No, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I do not think this is to be recommended because, for example, Mathematics which is a specialist field, I believe you need a degree in Maths or related field to be able to embark on a post graduate certificate in education in Maths. Anyway, this is not the same issue. The issue you are speaking about is an issue for out of field teachers. They are not within their field. So, they have to be careful to see whether they get a PGCE in Maths, whether they will be able to register. As you are aware with the Private Secondary Education Authority which is the authority responsible for registration of teachers and they are very strict on this. You need a degree in your field you are going to teach. If it is Accounting, you need a related degree in Accounting, if it is English, you need a degree in English plus your post graduate certificate in English or languages. The two issues are not necessarily the same issues. Even if you have a degree in your field, you need now to embark on the PGCE course to fully qualify.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is an important issue being given that the courses which are being followed by those who are not teaching in their degree field, who have been sponsored by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and in some way there is an accountability of

REDCO and even the Commission for Education who have encouraged them to embark on that PGCE course even though it is not in their field. Of course, Mr Chairperson, Sir, by the time that we are going to reach 2026, these persons who have been sponsored by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through REDCO, will not be entitled to become on a permanent basis. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether he will use his good office to discuss with the ministry on that specific issue as regards what we have been speaking so that these teachers are not penalised?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not think I should use my office to encourage something which fundamentally is wrong. If you have a degree, I do not know, something, you are teaching Chemistry but you do not have a degree in Chemistry. You do not have a degree in Chemistry or an acceptable qualification. It is not only in Chemistry, you could have an acceptable qualification and then you have embarked on a PGCE, I do not know how, I was not there, you decided this policy. It is a wrong policy to encourage people who are not qualified in a field to keep qualifying when they know that they will not be able to get the registration. We have a case, where unfortunately, we had a teacher, where she did have her full School Certificate. She has embarked on courses, been to the university and got a degree but unfortunately, she cannot be registered because she does not have a complete full certificate. This is unfortunate. So, what the member is trying to tell me is that somebody has a degree in Geography and then has embarked onto a PGCE for Maths, this is what he is saying. A teacher who has a degree in Geography and then has embarked on a PGCE for Maths that this teacher should be allowed to teach Maths. I do not agree with this. This is not our policy.

Mr Lisette: For clarification, so as to set thing straight. I am going to take the case, if you so allow me, I will take the case of the first Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

But the regulations come into play only in September this year. But they have been embarked on this process before September. I take the case of, I think I can cite the name, Mr Jean Daniel Spéville, he has got a degree in Hydrology, he did his PGCE in Chemistry and he is teaching Mathematics. But now he is enrolled in a Diploma for Mathematics.

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Chairperson, Sir, of course, when the decision was taken, the educators who were already employed with the REDCO, may be, for years, may be for four or five years, this is actually what we wanted to regulate because we did not want these educators to be penalised

after serving satisfactorily, lengthily with the REDCO or whatever college. This is the point, this is the main point that, I think, the Chief Commissioner should have in mind how best we have to ensure that these educators are not penalized. Because they have been serving for long with REDCO or even with Rodrigues College.

The Chief Commissioner: I know Mr Spéville, very well and we were at the university at some point in time together. He does not have a degree in Maths. It is true. May be he has done a PGCE or something related to Maths but he is not teaching to HSC. Is it not? Maths HSC? Maths main? Our problem, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is that, yes we should make a case for those who are not in the field but who are doing their PGCE in their field. So, they do not have the requisite qualifications to be registered. This is the fundamental concept, registration. If you do not get registration in your field as per existing regulation and criteria, the school/college will not get money for you. You know well that money from the PSEA. We will not get the funds to pay that teacher. Because PSEA says, SC, HSC, degree in your field or related field plus PGCE for new entrance. What can we do? Can I ask someone who has degree in Geography and now has been to PGCE Maths, to teach Maths and he is supposed to be a full-fledged teacher teaching up to HSC Level, 'A' level. So, yes we can make a case, we are going to make case. But look at my example, can somebody who have a degree in Geography teach Maths because he is embarked on a PGCE Maths or something like this? The problem is, with obtaining the registration. I cannot teach French at HSC level because I do not have a degree in French. I cannot teach Accounting at HSC level even though I can do it perfectly, but I cannot. Because it is not in my registration. The only thing I can teach is Economics, not even Maths even though I did a degree in Econometrics or even I studied in France, I could teach French. But only what is in your diploma and qualifications. This is the criteria – registration.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do understand the point of the Chief Commissioner, theoretically speaking because when decision is taken there are consideration which are taken beforehand because his case, the example that he has taken is to the extreme, we will not take someone doing Geography for Mathematics or Geography to French. But there is the qualification of the teacher if he is having an 'A' level in Mathematics and he has done say, Accounts, then he can be teaching Mathematics. There is always a link from the lowest qualification of SC, HSC and up there. My question, as he used to say, I know that he is a student of law, as he used to say in this Assembly itself, I would like to ask him whether he will agree with me that the coming into force of the amendment regulations that he cited

formerly is being applied retrospectively and this is jeopardising the future of some of our educators?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not here to challenge the law. The member is an employee of REDCO. He has locus as he knows put a case and tell the Supreme Court to decide on this. Even the trade unions, we do have a proactive trade union here, they could join hands together and they want to challenge anything. May be they can have the help of the PPS also to challenge this. But we should be aware that people who are doing their B. Ed, the Bachelor of Education, for example, in Maths. It means they are starting anew. These people, he will agree they can teach up to HSC. The problem is those who are out of field but trying to get a qualification as a PGCE. I do not think if the PSEA refuses to recognise that they have right with their degree to teach this, that we should force this. They should retrain or they should opt to go into the B. Ed, B. Ed Maths where they start anew, they relearn the secondary Maths and they become true professional. We cannot keep modifying criteria to accommodate people who are not qualified because it is threatening the quality of education. If we want quality education, we must have quality teacher. What has been done in the past, ten years, 20 years ago, has been done. But today, I agree with government policy that we should have professionals not people who are not qualified.

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc, j'avais demandé au Chef commissaire par rapport au nombre qui seront impacté par cette décision parce que je me disais que surement pendant toute l'année 2022, il y a eu des nouveaux recrues. Si ma mémoire ne me fait pas défaut, je me souviens il y avait plus d'une trentaine d'éducateurs employer comme le premier Chef commissaire, comme mon collègue l'a dit, et d'autres encore qui ont travaillés plus de dix ans. Est-ce qu'on peut faire comme un *plea* auprès du Chef commissaire, qui est le commissaire de l'Education de prendre en compte ces vingtaine ou trentaine d'éducateurs. Parce que comme il a dit, *this will be very impactful on the education system in the different colleges* et aussi sur l'avenir de ces éducateurs déjà engager et qui ont déjà travaillés plus d'une dizaine d'années.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not think that these people will be impacted because according to the Regulations and information submitted to me, the regulations concern only new recruits that will join the service. They will have to be embarked on a PGCE.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I agree with you. Those already in the service may choose to embark on a PGCE course or not for further professional development. Mr the First Member for Oyster Bay, will remember when we did our PGCE in 2000, that some people refused, they opted, they said it is not necessary. Even myself I was not interested. But then some lecturers canvassed us and we join. I even abandoned because it was a bit boring. And then, I was encouraged to complete all outstanding assignments and I did get my PGCE. So, those already in the service may choose to embark on a PGCE course or not. Yes, I agree with you. If you took a decision not to do something in the past, just do it now. You can embark on a PGCE even online. But of course, if there are difficulties my office and REDCO office, where there are special cases, as you have said, they just cannot impose something and take people by surprise. They need to give time for adjustment.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

SHORTAGE – EDUCATORS PER COLLEGE/SUBJECTS

(No. B/3) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to secondary schools in Rodrigues, he will state if there is a shortage of educators and, if so, to give details on the number per college together with the respective subjects and grade?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to B/3, I am informed that the Management of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd has reported that there is a shortage of three Educators in REDCO schools whereas the Rector of Rodrigues College has informed that there is need for one Educator. I am further informed that the following educators are required to fill in vacancies for short-term replacements for the following subjects and grades as follows:

REDCO Colleges

- Le Chou College
 - One Educator to fill vacancy to teach English
 - One Educator for temporary replacement to teach French in Grade 7 and to act as facilitator
- Maréchal College
 - one Educator for short term replacement to teach French up to Grade 13.

Rodrigues College - One Educator to teach Biology up to Grade 11.

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According to information obtained from REDCO Ltd, the company has carried out two recruitment and selection exercises in November 2022 and January 2023. However, all the selected candidates have declined the offer of employment except for one Educator who has accepted the offer. Another recruitment exercise was carried out in Mauritius in March 2023 and three candidates have been offered employment and their replies are being awaited.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Management of REDCO schools that pending the recruitment of required Educators, the following action have been taken:

- (i) internal arrangements are being made at the level of the colleges concerned for existing Educators to attend classes with no dedicated Educators;
- (ii) as far as practicable, Educators in the same field are requested to replace and teach in classes so as not to penalise students, and
- (iii) REDCO had also appealed to some retired Educators to join the service anew in order to palliate for the lack of fully qualified candidates on the market for short-term replacements.

In addition, the Management of REDCO has informed that extension classes will be organised during the forthcoming school holidays, if need be, in view to ensure that students concerned have completed their programme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it has also been brought to my attention by the Management of REDCO that Rectors have identified the need for additional Educators to teach the following subjects as per the timetable for the Academic Year 2023:

- Mont Lubin College - One Educator to teach Computer Science
- One Educator to teach Mathematics/Science
- La Ferme College - One Educator to teach Biology

However, these requests cannot be entertained since both colleges are currently fully staffed as per the prevailing entitlement in line with Section 5 (ii) of circular dated 20 December 2022 from the PSEA which states that “*Managers should ensure that the person to be recruited falls within the entitlement of the school.*”

I am further informed that REDCO has already informed the PSEA of the above and shall seek approval for the recruitment of additional Educators should the entitlement for these Colleges be reviewed by the PSEA.

I also seize this opportunity to invite retired Educators in the fields advertised to call or apply with the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd immediately for short-term employment so as to enable the smooth provision of secondary education in Rodrigues. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous confirmer s'il y a des élèves de Grade 11, 12 et 13 qui ont des examens bien importants à la fin de l'année, est-ce qu'il y a des élèves qui sont concernés par ces manques de professeurs ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, yes, Maréchal College, one Educator is required for short-term replacement to teach French up to Grade 13. And, at Rodrigues College there is one Educator needed to teach Biology up to Grade 11. This is the information I have.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, please allow me. We will have to realise that this question is also related to the previous one, in some way, because we are speaking about the lack of Educators in secondary schools and the Chief Commissioner has rightly said that there has been vacancy sought. REDCO or whatever, may be Rodrigues College also have not been able to get the right candidate, to get into the system. We are here in a columnium which I want to put in front of the Chief Commissioner as a question. Given that those who are ending with their degree in a subject to be taught at secondary level, we have first to be enrolled as per the last amendment brought in the Education Act, they first have to enrol in the PGCE or equivalent field before allow to apply and get into the system.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry. You know, this question is very straight forward. We cannot go back to the previous question. I am sorry. We cannot go like this. If you want to ask a question, I will allow you to ask a question but with line with question 3, not to question 2.

Mr Lisette: In line with education, Mr Chairperson, Sir. It is an important issue.

Mr Chairperson: I know, I am myself an Educator. Right? So, we stick to our Standing Orders.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner to be straight forward. Knowing that there is a lack of Educators in several fields in Rodrigues, how is he using his office or any institution in Rodrigues to inform those who are studying at university level to get embark in specific fields as regards to Educators which are lacking in specific subjects.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a question of personal planning for secondary education in Rodrigues and I have asked REDCO to see that, for example, in scarcity field like Maths and Science subjects, if they can sponsor students and then when these students complete their qualifications, they have a bond, they can come and teach with REDCO. I meant the Chairman of REDCO yesterday and, I have made this proposal. But we have to bear in mind that there is a lack of teachers, qualified teachers nationally. For example, Biology. You do not become a Biology teacher within six months, you need three to four years plus your PGCE, at least one-year full time or two years' part time. So, basically four years on training to become a teacher after your post-secondary qualifications. And, there is the issue that young people, young degree holders, some of them are not interested in becoming teachers. It is a worldwide trend. But I appeal again to people who may qualifications, for example, we need a French teacher up to Grade 7. So, this teacher needs to have at least a degree to help these students, for example, at Maréchal College. But I must admit that there is a sort of imbroglio with the PSEA changing rules. And, here you see for the La Ferme College, I have spoken to the Rector, there is the school entitlement depending on the number of students. There is need for a teacher also. So, how do we reconcile this? So, we have put classes. May be the classes are small and we have given the necessary number of subjects for choice. And now, they say there is the entitlement. When you think back the system we had earlier, from 20 years ago, was better where you had HSC people could teach up to Form IV, Form V, you had degree holders who could teach up to Form V and Grade A teachers who taught up to Form VI. You have three grades, Grade A, Grade B and Grade C. So, an HSC leaver with a good result in Maths can teach Maths at secondary up to Form III. And, in Australia they have the concept of senior teachers and junior teachers, where lead teachers in schools they coach the junior teachers. Unfortunately, this has been eliminated and you need degree PGCE today. It is a bit unfortunate. Because if you have an HSC leaver who can come into a school, maybe before going to university or choosing his studies can get in touch with schools. But today no HSC leaver can enter in a school to get exposure to a school and maybe get interested. So, may be, we can make proposals to the ministry for this. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je pense que le Chef commissaire a été en contradiction avec lui-même dans l'espace de quelques minutes. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir immédiatement quels sont les arrangements qu'on était fait surtout pour ces élèves qui auront des examens important le temps que le recrutement que se fasse ?

The Chief Commissioner: Excuse me, what should be done *pour ces élèves*? What can I do, Mr Chairperson, Sir? The only thing I can do is go and teach them. But even here I cannot because I am not qualified to teach HSC. We are making a public appeal for teachers. I have spoken to the Manager and the Chairman of the REDCO. I have reminded them that the purpose of the creation of the REDCO was to facilitate the recruitment of teachers and not to be bureaucratic. Go and find the teachers – okay. Even if need be, try to see with the French Embassy, maybe there is someone who is in Mauritius or in Rodrigues who is a French teacher who can take charge of these students. But unfortunately, it is a situation where there is a scarcity of teachers and there are no teachers. But the REDCO is being done to do *l'impossible* to find these teachers. We are not letting things idle, we are actively working on it and if need be, they have to go to Mauritius and find the teachers.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

ADMISSION TO GRADE 7 – ACADEMIC YEAR 2023 – CASE OF DISCRIMINATION

(No. B/4) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to admission to Grade 7 for the academic year 2023, he will inform the House on if any case of discrimination in any secondary institution in Rodrigues has been officially reported or brought to his attention and, if so, to indicate measures/actions taken therefor?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, the results of the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) for the academic year 2021-2022 were released on Friday 09 December 2022. As per admission letter issued by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES), students had to call to the secondary schools allocated to them for admission to Grade 7 on Monday 19 December 2022.

With regard to any case of discrimination in secondary schools in Rodrigues following the admission exercise to Grade 7 for the academic year 2023, both the management of REDCO and Rodrigues College were requested to report on the matter as according to official records, no formal representation of discrimination in any secondary institution in Rodrigues has been officially reported to the Commission for Education.

As such, I am informed that Rodrigues College has reported that on the day of registration on 19 December 2022, one boy from the Normal Stream was not registered. According to Rodrigues College, since the child's mother on the registration sheet has indicated

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“NO”, it was considered that she has declined the offer of a seat for her child at Rodrigues College. The latter has thus requested a letter from Rodrigues College which according to her would be required by the College in which she would be admitting her child.

I am however informed that there is no further information from Rodrigues College as to why the mother has declined the offer of a seat there.

The Management of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Limited has reported that there is no case of discrimination at the level of REDCO Colleges.

I am also informed that one parent's whose child was awarded 4 units for his PSAC examinations and who was offered a seat at Rodrigues College, called at the Commission for Education on 19 December 2022 to enquire on the procedures for the transfer of her child to one REDCO College and that she verbally informed that her child wears dreadlocks and same was not in line with the regulation of Rodrigues College. The mother had made an official request for transfer giving as reason that her child was declined a seat at Rodrigues College as he wears dreadlocks. Subsequently, the child was offered a seat at the Ananias André Le Chou College.

I would like to mention that despite no formal complaint was lodged to my Commission, this particular case had gone viral on the social media; more particularly on Facebook.

As the Commissioner for Education, I highly appreciate that Ananias André Le Chou College has welcomed this student irrespective of his hairstyle and I had personally expressed my appreciation to the school. I am of opinion that the natural hair of a child is his natural attribute and thus cannot be discriminated on the basis of rules and regulation and context. This if the facts are proved true, may also be a breach of the constitution and a breach of the right of a child. However, as the House is aware, Rodrigues College is a private institution which is managed by the Catholic and Anglican Church and they may have leeway to have their own internal rules and regulations.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, nevertheless, I have directed the Legal Advisers of my Office to initiate an enquiry to see if there has been any violation of the UN Charter of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Constitution of Mauritius or any other statutory provisions.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will keep the House informed of any development thereon in due course. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, c'est quelque chose de très sérieux parce que non seulement ça a été viral sur les réseaux sociaux mais il y eu aussi les institutions qui ont été appelées à prononcer sur cet état de choses. Et on se souvient, le Chef commissaire était venu ici au Parlement au début de l'année avec son *dreadlocks*. Est-ce qu'avant de prendre position par rapport à ça, le Chef commissaire avait demandé une enquête officielle avant de s'exhiber ou avant de se prononcer sur la chose?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il y a des choses qui sont spontanées. Quand il y a des abus de drogue, on n'a pas besoin d'enquête *when the thing is real. And my actions, whether wear dreadlocks or Indian clothes or anything, I take the responsibility and I am proud of it.*

The Minority Leader: Le Chef commissaire parlait aussi fait mention qu'il allait écrire à des institutions internationales telles que *African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child*. Est-ce que le bureau du Chef commissaire a écrit à ces institutions?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je n'ai pas dit que j'allais écrire; j'ai dit qu'on va initier une enquête. On ne peut pas écrire avant de demander l'avis légal des spécialistes dans le domaine. Mais en tant que citoyen, en tant que politicien, leader d'un parti, un enseignant du secondaire et Chef commissaire, Commissaire de l'éducation, je trouve vraiment regrettable, vraiment révoltant qu'une institution scolaire ait refusé en 2023 l'admission à un enfant de 12 ans parce que cet enfant a des cheveux longs. J'ai regardé l'enfant. Je ne vois pas comment cet enfant gênerait l'enseignement ou les autres élèves ou les valeurs modernes. Donc, chaque institution est libre de modifier ses *rules and regulations*.

Quand il y avait ce débat, je disais je croyais que les filles de foi islamique étaient autorisées à porter leur voile (ce n'est pas le hijab; le hijab c'est le vêtement complet, je crois) et j'ai été étonné qu'un ami de confession musulmane m'a dit que je fais erreur et que le *Rodrigues College* exige que les jeunes filles musulmanes enlèvent leurs voiles. *This is to the point*. Et à Maurice, vous voyez, les collèges respectent cela. Les collèges REDCO respectent cela. C'est quelque chose de culturel. *There is a limit. There is a limit to what can be worn*. Mais je déplore aussi certain comportement.

J'ai vu un recteur, M. le président, à l'annonce des résultats, son commentaire a été «*Lor pié mangue ki envoye ros*». Qu'est-ce qu'il veut dire, M. le président? Il faut que ces gens-là réfléchissent sur eux-mêmes. On ne peut pas être figé dans des valeurs des années 50. Il faut

se moderniser et il faut que la société civile, les enseignants, les *Parents Teachers Association* prennent les devants et mènent le combat.

The Minority Leader: J'étais un petit peu perdue en suivant le Chef commissaire car un moment, il avait dit qu'il n'y avait pas eu d'admission le 19 décembre par rapport à l'enfant où on parle et puis, après lui-même, il vient nous dire qu'il trouve désolant que *Rodrigues College* refuse l'admission à un enfant de 12 ans. *Which is which, Mr Chairperson, Sir?* Y-a-t-il l'admission de cet enfant et discrimination ou il n'y avait pas eu d'admission. Voilà.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai eu l'occasion de parler à des proches de l'enfant. Cet enfant travaillait dur pour pouvoir aller à cette école. Et quand l'enfant n'a pas pu aller là-bas, c'est évident que l'enfant n'a pas été admis à cause d'un attribut physique. La déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme et surtout concernant les enfants stipule qu'on ne peut pas discriminer contre quelqu'un à cause de ses attributs physiques, son apparence, ses cheveux, la couleur de ses yeux, le type de cheveux et cetera, sa taille, son poids. Le *Rodrigues College* aurait dû admettre cet enfant et c'est une faute de ne pas avoir admis cet enfant. C'est une violation des droits de l'enfant et un non-respect envers tous les enfants de Rodrigues, M. le président. Qu'on ne vient pas faire polémique. L'enfant n'a pas été admis. L'enfant a ensuite demandé admission au collège de Ananias André à Le Chou et le recteur de cette institution l'a accueilli.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Chef commissaire peut-il nous dire si dans les règlements des différents collèges y compris *Rodrigues College*, il y a une section spécifique sur cette question de *dreadlocks* ou bien c'est lui qui en parle?

The Chief Commissioner: *There is no...* Il n'y a pas de question spécifique justement, ce qui est dit dans le... J'ai demandé. Quand il y a eu la polémique, j'ai demandé les règlements de ce collège et les règlements de ce collège disent, je crois, si je me souviens bien, les garçons doivent avoir les cheveux courts. *'Moi mo garson sévé longue.'* Les garçons doivent avoir les cheveux courts. Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire les cheveux courts? C'est 1cm, 2cm, 3cm?

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que face à tout ce que le Chef commissaire a dit, on voit bien que c'est une question concernant les règlements des collèges. Est-ce qu'il compte venir avec des propositions par rapport aux règlements des institutions et quelle est, en gros, son idée par rapport à changements?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, malheureusement, je ne peux pas intervenir dans une institution privée pour leur dire de modifier leurs règlements internes. Ça peut se faire

au niveau légal mais je n'ai pas envie de m'engager dedans, d'aller dire: «Ben, voilà, le Rodrigues College, il y a tel règlement qui n'est pas bon». Mais je les invite à réfléchir, la communauté qui gère le collège à réfléchir par rapport à ça. Mais par contre, au niveau de la REDCO, on a créé un REDCO Council, regroupant les recteurs, les *Deputy Rectors* et certains *senior staffs*. On s'était déjà rencontré une fois. C'est très positif et on a justement émis le souhait qu'il y ait *common harmonised school regulations* que le collège de Mont Lubin ne fasse pas dans telle direction au niveau par exemple, la taille, la longueur des jupes des filles, le type de coiffure. Et on est en train de travailler pour des règlements harmonisés pour tous les collèges de REDCO, non seulement les règlements mais aussi ensemble avec les recteurs, harmoniser les procédures de gestion et aussi aller vers l'informatisation de la gestion des écoles.

Mr Chairperson: Next question!

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/5.

CONSTRUCTION/UPGRADING OF ROAD – RIVIÈRE COCO TO SONGES

(No. B/5) The First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Mr. N. Lisette) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction/upgrading of road from Rivière Coco to Songes, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the length of road completed so far together with the scope of work and the costs implications thereof, and
- (b) if his Commission will continue with the upgrading of the road and, if so, to indicate when and the nature of the work?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to our records, the length of road upgraded so far is 1.96km, cumulated as hereunder:

- 1. From Rivière Coco to Anse Raffin filtration plant: 1.52km; and
- 2. From Songes - towards Port-Sud-Est 0.27km and from Songes towards Rivière Coco 0.17km

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the scope of works is as follows :

- 1. Site clearance;
- 2. Excavation works;
- 3. Fill works;

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4. Provision of new road structure;
5. Supply of laying kerbs;
6. Supply and laying of precast drains;
7. Supply and fixing of handrails;
8. Supply and fixing of guardrails;
9. Masonry works;
10. Rerouting of services;
11. Supply and laying of bituminous concrete base course and wearing course;
12. Provision of road marking and road signs

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to records, the works were implemented under the following five works orders;

SN	Description	Location	Works Order Amount (Exc. VAT)
1	Upgrading of road from Rivière Cocos to Songes – Phase 1(a)	From Rivière Coco to Tamarin	21,119,053.91
2	Completion of Upgrading Works at Rivière Coco to Songes Phase 2	Completion – Rivière Coco to Tamarin	19,997,692.66
3	Upgrading of road from Rivière Coco to Songes	From Tamarin to Anse Raffin	13,813,717.30
4	Construction of road and box culvert at Anse Raffin near Football ground	At Anse Raffin	18,542,907.77
5	Construction of parking and ancillary facilities around Songes College	Stretch from Songes towards Port Sud Est and From Songes towards Rivière Coco	23,726,723.64

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the stretch of road is already under construction. Allow me to inform the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the policy of this Regional Government is to ease and facilitate access and mobility of one and all. Accordingly, my office is relentlessly surveying and issuing works orders for the construction of new roads and extensive patching around the island with the budget available. I also wish to inform the House that the construction of roads is very costly and same is being done in a phased manner.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have already apprised my colleagues at the level of the Executive Council on the list of roads to be implemented and they are agreeable to provide proper access to the public and provided their full support to the project. The outcry of road users cannot be left unheard. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I can inform the House that works orders have already been issued to improve the surface characteristics and ride quality on the stretch from Anse Raffin to Songes. I am informed that the stretch road which is about 2.4 km is structurally in good state and requires only resurfacing and it is to a tune of Rs 22.6 m. + VAT.

Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has been speaking about easing mobility and access as regard to road, maintenance and construction but he would surely realise that in that portion of the road that you are speaking, there is a problem of mobility, especially during heavy rains. May I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as it was the case under our Government, he will proceed with the construction of box culvert to replace the existing.... So as to go in line with this policy of easing access especially during heavy rainfall.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do agree with the respected Member but this will come at a later stage. So what we were just doing, we are resurfacing the road. We are improving the visibility across this special road and this will come afterwards.

Mr Lisette: The Deputy Chief Commissioner will surely agree also that resurfacing the road to improve its mobility is fine but one major problem that is going to crop up is that water coming from uphill will carry a risk and mud on the road since in the scope of work that he has mentioned, there is no construction of drain. I would like to know what is the lapse of time that he has given himself to continue with the construction of a drain so as to reduce that problem of water getting onto the road.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it will come maybe in this next financial year.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has mentioned that there is a list of roads that has already been submitted to the Executive Council. Can we know more about the list of roads concerned?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will ask the respected Member to come with a substantive question. I do not have the exact information. But there are many roads that we are going to construct, especially this year, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we want to complete this road, la Route du Sud, this road linking Citron Donis to Anse Raffin because for us, this is very important. It is a very important stretch of road which will be very useful for the road users on the southern coastal roads.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, construction of road for improving mobility is fine and right enough but there is another aspect that I believe that the Chief Commissioner will agree. It is its impact on workmanship.

Mr Chairperson: Impact on?

Mr Lisette: On workmanship. Does he realise that with the scope of work that he has given to Transinvest, there will be very less impact, especially on those skilled workers who are involved in the masonry works?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je comprends la question du respecté membre qui lui aussi était Commissaire à l'infrastructure publique mais nous avons pris la décision de faire des routes, pour construire des routes les plus naturelles possibles. Si on va voir la route de Anse Raffin, qui mène sur la plage de Anse Raffin vis-à-vis du filtration plant, ils ont fait des murs. Mais auparavant, on passait, on pouvait voir la plage devant nous, la côte. Maintenant, on ne voit plus. Je comprends qu'il y a cet aspect de l'employabilité et de pouvoir donner du travail au maçon roche et cetera. Mais il faut comprendre, M. le président, il y a d'autres endroits. C'est ce que j'ai fait. Il y a d'autres endroits à Rodrigues qu'il faut faire de la maçonnerie. Par exemple, Petit Gabriel. Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Par exemple, là où il y a la fontaine, le mur est comme ça, 400 hauteur. Mais il faut remonter.

Est-ce qu'on doit faire la maçonnerie que là-bas? Non, on peut faire des routes naturelles mais aussi, on peut donner le même volume de travail ailleurs parce que je pense aussi qu'il faut être intelligent, M. le président. C'est ça, le changement. C'est ce qu'on voulait faire. C'est ça le changement qu'on a voulu apporter au sein de ce gouvernement à Rodrigues, M. le président. J'ai donné une liste de *masonry work* à faire à travers l'île qui je pense, en parlant de volume, sera beaucoup plus que potentiellement on aurait dû faire sur ce tronçon de

route. Mais il faut comprendre aussi que ce tronçon de route, il ne l'a pas fait mais des ingénieurs disent que ce tronçon de route est plus ou moins en bon état et on peut facilement faire du *resurfacing* en mettant des *curbs* sans venir avec de la maçonnerie et ainsi défigurer le paysage côtier dans ces régions, M. le président. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Yes, if we can construct road without in any way disfigure, to use his word of the road but there is also the question of safety. And, one aspect of safety while constructing a road is about the setting up of bus lay-by, which is very important these days because it impedes on the view, on farsighted, how far you can see whenever a bus is there. Has he taken this aspect of bus lay-by in his scope of work?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, bien sûr, il y a aussi des *bus lay-by* à faire et on va voir au fur et à mesure. Je n'ai pas les données exactes mais on va le faire. Mais il faut comprendre aussi, M. le président, ajouté à cela dans d'autres endroits, si vous me le permettez, on est en train de revoir. On est en train d'améliorer la visibilité. M. le président, en allant vers l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur, il y a le tournant là où il y a lavage de voiture. Nous sommes en train... J'ai demandé la permission. Nous sommes en train de revoir la visibilité. Nous allons refaire cette route. Comment se fait-il qu'on a pu par exemple, à Terre Rouge, on a construit un abribus là où on devait faire un *lay-by*? Vous voyez, M. le président, donc, il y a toute cette question-là qu'il faudra revoir.

Si vous parlez de visibilité, il y a tant d'exemple là. Nous, on doit passer par derrière pour pouvoir améliorer la visibilité à travers l'île et en même temps, veiller à ce qu'il y ait une fluidité dans le trafic à Rodrigues. Sur Songes, bien sûr, on va voir comment on va faire et on sera surtout, M. le président, il y a une chose qui est très importante. Il faut être sur le terrain. Il faut être sur le chantier pour voir. Là où il faut faire des *lay-by*, on va le faire. Comme j'ai dit, il n'y a le nombre de *lay-by* qu'on va faire mais bien sûr, en discutant avec les officiers, on va prendre les décisions qu'il faut dans l'intérêt des usagers de la route, dans l'intérêt de tout un chacun, M. le président. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, enfin, je suis contente d'écouter le *Deputy Chief Commissioner* parlant du coût exorbitant de la route. Donc, il a bien compris qu'aujourd'hui, il faut aller phase wise. Avant, on le faisait, il critiquait beaucoup. Est-ce que je peux savoir du *Deputy Chief Commissioner* combien environ nous coûte un kilomètre de route en ce moment?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, tout dépend de la largeur de la route. Il y a des routes qui sont à 5.5 mètres. Il y a des routes qui sont à 6 mètres. Il y a des routes aussi qui sont un petit peu plus grand. Donc, tout dépend de ce qu'on fait. Si jamais on est en train de faire que l'enrober, donc, pour l'enrober, ça nous coûte autour d'à peu près Rs10 millions, je dirais Rs9-Rs10 millions. Mais tout dépend quels sont les *scopes of work* pour une route qu'on va construire, ça, bien sûr, va coûter peut-être le double ou bien le triple. Je n'ai pas le chiffre exact mais pour seulement *resurfacing*, ça coûte autour de Rs10 millions par kilomètre. Merci.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, everybody knows that on this road, there are various ports which are prone to flooding and landslides. I would ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, only natural scenery will have priority at the expense of the safety of the road users there. We are talking about the actual situation.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, je pense qu'il était dans le Conseil Exécutif à l'époque lorsque le Commissaire est venu. Qu'est-ce qu'il a fait, lui? Maintenant, il fait comme s'il n'était jamais là. Il n'avait jamais eu l'occasion de donner son avis sur la question. Oui, bien sûr, nous sommes des gens responsables. Nous prônons l'écologie. Nous prônons... Pardon. Nous prônons aussi le développement soutenu d'un pays. Mais on va voir, bien sûr. Donc, si vous regardez bien, M. le président, même pour les *track roads* si vous me permettez, on est en train de voir. Il faut faire les *track roads* en ne pas défigurant le paysage. Vous voyez? Donc, et là, il y a un autre souci encore. Vous parlez de *landslide*. Qui c'est qui a donné des baux à Songes dans le morcellement? C'est vous!

Est-ce que vous êtes allés là-bas tout dernièrement? Qu'est-ce qui se passe, M. le président ? Donc, il y a tout un problème. Nous, on a hérité des projets mal faits par l'ancien gouvernement. Et aujourd'hui, ils veulent nous poser des questions comme s'ils n'étaient pas là, M. le président. Mais *rest assured* que nous, M. le président, si vous avez des suggestions, vous pouvez venir me voir, vous pouvez m'appeler, il n'y a pas de soucis. Donc, c'est le projet de tous les Rodriguais et tout le monde doit participer et bien sûr, M. le président, on va faire des projets ensemble. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question!

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/6.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Chief Commissioner....

**CONTRACT AWARDED FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES – DEVELOPMENT OF
RODRIGUES WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY AND DEFINITION OF
PRIORITY ACTION PLAN**

(No. B/6) The First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Mr. N. Lisette) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the contract awarded for consultancy services for the development of Rodrigues Water Resources Strategy and the Definition of Priority Action Plan, financed by the '*Agence Française de Développement*' (AFD), he will: -

- (a) state the terms of reference thereof;
- (b) indicate the number of reports submitted so far to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- (c) highlight the salient recommendations of the report(s), and (d) table a copy of the relevant reports?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, with your permission, I will reply to B6 since it relates to water resources, an area of responsibility which falls under my purview.

(a) With regard to part (a), I am informed that the terms of reference for the consultancy services of the development of Rodrigues Water Resources Strategy and the Definition of Priority Action Plan, financed by the AFD and executed by BRLi consultants are as follows:

- (1) to assess the available water resources, its productivity and the efficiency of their mobilisation;
- (2) to assess current water needs and develop a prospective analysis of the future demand;
- (3) to develop water resources mobilisation and distribution scenarios and investments needs; and
- (4) to identify a set of priority action plan

(b) Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (b), I am informed that BRLi consultants have submitted an inception report and two other reports to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

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(c) With regard to part (c), the BRLi consultants have recommended a list of 22 actions to be considered. The salient ones are as follows:

1. reclaim all the existing water equipment;
2. densify the piped network and reservoirs;
3. reduce leaks and losses in the existing pipe network;
4. regulate and further interconnect the existing pipe network;
5. improve the Operations and Maintenance in technology, rapidity and anticipation;
6. raise the surface water tapping into the piped network and dams;
7. upgrade, expand and secure rainwater harvesting for all;
8. generalise water metering and charge the consumers;
9. raise the desalination capacity.

(d) With regard to part (d) I am tabling a copy of the reports.

Mr Chairperson Sir, before I finish, I wish to inform the House that the *Assises de l'eau* were held in Rodrigues from 23 to 25 February 2023. The objective is to have a roadmap for the water sector development in Rodrigues, with a clear definition of actions around four themes, namely:

1. ground and surface water
2. desalination
3. legal and institutional framework and
4. water distribution.

It is true that many of these issues have been covered in the BRLi report and other reports. Yet, we felt that there was a need to bring together panels of experts and stakeholders to have proposals on how to improve water production and distribution in Rodrigues. With the holding of the *Assises de l'eau*, it was an excellent opportunity to have all stakeholders under the same roof to engage in discussions, proposals and debates on what best suits Rodrigues, taking into account climate change and our specificities. We will have a report that tells us exactly what to do to optimise the exploitation of ground and surface water, what

is best in terms of desalination for Rodrigues, what legal and institutional mechanisms to put in place for Rodrigues and what is the best efficient distribution network for Rodrigues.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regard to the reports and the specified actions that have been mentioned by the Chief Commissioner, I would like to know from him how far are these recommendations being implemented by his Commission?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are going beyond this report as I have said. The recommendations of the report have been fully taken into account, for example, where we have regulate, number 4 – regulate and further interconnect the existing network. We have entrusted to our global consultancy a study to reform, to review the whole water network and to ensure a new water transfer capabilities, large pipes – 180/150 mm pipes in provision of the increase of desalination capacity at Pointe Coton and Songes. We need to overnight be able to transfer large volumes of water from one place, from Pointe Coton to other parts of the Island. So, we have entrusted Lux Consult Consultants with the preparation of a study and tender documents to modernise our network, not only the distribution network but basically, *le réseau d'adduction which I have said, takes water from one place to another.*

Number 5 for example, improve operations and maintenance in technology, we have already entrusted the management and operation of desalination plants to the RPUC because as you know, there are big operational problems and issues with existing staffs, government staff and of course, I am working today and tomorrow on the week, the regulations and laws that need to be upgraded and modified with a view to have a proper legal framework for water, for example, to provide for what do we do when people are scampering with water network. There are existing laws but these are laws which are rarely applied. So, we are working on this and we have had preliminary talks with the representatives of the World Bank in Mauritius so that the World Bank can finance this issue. Number 9, for example, raise the desalination capacity. We have 3500 m3 tender documents are being finalised and will be launched soon. The RPUC has secured finance from private parties for this and at the level of Commission, we are thinking in provision of the forthcoming next droughts to have this containerised desalination plant. So, we have not only the BRLi report but also former reports, the Cheney Report of 2010, the Croda Report and other reports which are being perused during the '*Assises de l'eau*' and we will have a white paper shortly with the concurrence of the MIRC, Mauritius Research Institute. They are dealing with synthetizing the findings and recommendations of

the *assise* which unfortunately, the Member did not deem fit to attend even though they were enthusiastically invited.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question!

Mr Speville: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/7.

**CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AND GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF
EDUCATION EXAMINATIONS IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022**

(No. B/7) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. SEVILLE) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to students who sat for the Cambridge School Certificate and the General Certificate of Education examinations in October/November 2022, he will state and table the number thereof per college indicating the number:

- (a) who successfully passed same and the corresponding percentage, and
- (b) promoted to Grade 12 by college, the number of repeaters and the number of students who had to leave school ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a total of **787** candidates sat for the Cambridge School Certificate in Year 2022, out of which **348** boys and **439** girls. A total of **594** candidates have passed the Cambridge School Certificate 2022; representing a pass rate of **75.48%** as compared to **73.50%** in 2021.

With respect to part (a), the number of students who sat for the examinations per college and the number of students who successfully passed same as well as the corresponding pass rate are as follows:

Rodrigues College	:	Out of 135 students, 132 have passed representing a pass rate of 97.78%
Mont Lubin College	:	Out of 93 students, 83 have passed representing a pass rate of 89.25%

Grande Montagne etcetera. I think all this information is publicly available if you need for any. La Ferme College, for example, out of 98 students, 35 have passed – 35.71%

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I am further informed that 59 students from three REDCO Colleges sat for the General Certificate of Examination (GCE) 2022; that is 17 students at Mont Lubin College, three students at André Lelio Roussety Songes College, 17 at Grande Montagne, 11 students at Ananias Andre, Le Chou College and Marechal College respectively. None of the students who sat for the General Certificate of Education has scored five Credits to be promoted to Grade 12.

(a) As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that **314** students out of 594 students who had passed their examinations had been promoted to Grade 12; representing a percentage of 52.86%. **284** students are repeating Grade 11 to improve their qualifications and a total of **251** students have had to leave schools.

The statistics per college are as follows:

- Rodrigues College – **111** were promoted to Grade 12, **10** students are repeating Grade 11 and **14** had to leave school;
- Mont Lubin – **41** students were promoted to Grade 12, **37** are repeating and **32** had to be dropped out;
- Ananias Andre Le Chou College – **82** students have been promoted, **52** are repeating Grade 11 and **30** have had left school;

Marechal College, Terre Rouge; André Lelio and La Ferme College, the information are available.

I am tabling the number of students who sat for the Cambridge School Certificate and the General Certificate of Education as well as the corresponding pass rate including details on the number of students who were promoted to Grade 12, the number of repeaters and school leavers for each college.

Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire s'il y a eu des enfants qui ont eu le nombre de *credit* qu'il faut mais qui n'ont pu être promus en HSC pour raison de choix de sujet?

The Chief Commissioner: Il se pourrait, M. le président, je n'ai pas cette information devant moi. Mais il se pourrait que les élèves qui... les collèges par exemple, je ne sais pas, musique par exemple, si quelqu'un veut faire musique ou d'autres domaines, il se peut oui, que les élèves qui n'ont pas la combinaison qu'il faut n'aient pas pu avoir une admission.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai eu l'occasion d'en parler ici. Je pense que c'est bon que j'attire l'attention du Chef commissaire encore une fois sur le fait qu'en 2021, au début de l'année, on avait eu une rencontre avec le Chef commissaire d'alors avec le Ministre de l'éducation, la Vice-première ministre et ministre de l'éducation par rapport justement au choix limité de nos jeunes qui ont réussi mais qui ne peuvent avoir par exemple, accès à Grade 12 parce qu'il y a des sujets qui n'existent pas en Grade 12 à Rodrigues. Et donc pour démarrer un sujet en Grade 12, on doit avoir au moins 12 étudiants dans la République et on avait fait une demande formelle pour que ce nombre soit réduit pour ne pas pénaliser nos enfants. Parce qu'on a eu des cas où dans certains collèges, on a eu 10 enfants qui veulent démarrer un nouveau programme, par exemple, le *Food and Nut HSC* mais on ne peut pas alors que Rodrigues est petite et probablement, on ne peut pas considérer le même nombre pour initier un programme qu'à Maurice. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire va continuer cette négociation, cette discussion pour donner plus de chance à nos jeunes pour avoir accès en Grade 12?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, il suffit que l'on sache dans quel domaine ces étudiants n'ont pas eu d'admission et souhaiteraient avoir l'admission. *Food and Nut*, c'est un domaine très intéressant. Dans tous les pays du monde, les élèves qui peut-être font *Food and Nutrition* qui pourraient se spécialiser, il y a un manque de *teachers* au niveau de *Food and Nutrition* dans beaucoup de pays et certainement à Rodrigues et à Maurice. Mais de là à dire que le nombre d'étudiants requis, 12, c'est quand même peu mais il faut comprendre que l'*examining body*, *Cambridge International Examinations*, eux aussi, ils ont des critères et certainement des coûts pour mettre en place ces examens.

Mais il suffit que les élèves, les collèges fassent remonter les informations à la Commission et que la Commission puisse accrocher le MES et les autorités concernées pour justement mettre en place ces... diversifier ces ça. Je ne sais pas si à Maurice, si ce n'est pas *available* à Maurice. Il y a d'autres domaines. Par exemple, les domaines sportifs. Il y a *Sports Studies* au niveau de la HSC ou d'autres comme les langues ou même.... qui doit être ça. Mais il suffit aussi, il faut aussi que les élèves par rapport à ce qu'ils veulent faire après, soient guidés dans le choix des sujets au niveau de *School Certificate*. Si on prend des sujets qui ne sont pas disponibles au niveau de la HSC, il est évident qu'on n'aura pas de combinaisons à la fin. Donc, il faut bien choisir aussi au niveau de la SC.

The Minority Leader: En effet, M. le président, par rapport au nombre pour les examens, ce n'est pas un problème parce qu'une fois qu'on a démarré la première année avec au moins 12, même si après les années qui se succèdent, on a deux, trois, quatre, cinq, c'est

possible. Donc, moi, je demande au Chef commissaire de voir avec le ministère dans le cas de Rodrigues, avec la PSEA aussi. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire par rapport au environ une centaine de *school leavers*, ceux qui n'ont pas pu avoir SC, est-ce qu'ils ont pu trouver... Grade 12, pardon. Ceux qui ont pu avoir accès qui ont dû quitter l'école. Je crois qu'il y a environ une centaine. Est-ce que tous ces jeunes vont ont pu trouver une place....?

The Chief Commissioner: I think she means Grade 11.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: SC. So, M. le président, il y a par exemple, le *Polytechnics Mauritius* qui est très dynamique et qui a des formations vraiment, je trouve, professionnelles, nursing par exemple. Mais est-ce que parce que par exemple, justement, ça revient aux qualifications. Quelqu'un qui est admis pour *nursing*, après, si l'employeur demande un *School Certificate*, est-ce qu'il y aura? Mais peut-être l'étudiant a le *School Certificate* mais n'a pas les capacités pour aller en HSC, oui. Il y a tout ce qui est informatique au niveau de Baie Malgache, là, *Polytechnics Mauritius*. Donc, ces élèves-là peuvent aller vers *Polytechnics Mauritius* ou bien, M. le président, entamer un apprentissage professionnel. Il y a beaucoup de gens ici, des électriciens qui cherchent des apprentis et il y a des aides que ces personnes, ces employeurs peuvent avoir avec HRDC quand ils emploient un jeune pour payer pendant X nombre de mois, d'année.

Pour ça, il faut aller voir avec la Commission. Il ne faut pas s'asseoir avec son SC. Disons, on n'a pas été admis, on a le SC, on dit on attend un travail. Ça, c'est révolu. Il faut un effort personnel. Regardez par exemple, la cuisine, M. le président. Cherchez les entreprises touristiques qui cherchent un cuisinier, un bon, hein. *Tou dimoune kav fer la cuisine* mais la cuisine au service d'un restaurant, d'un hôtel ou chercher un cuisinier, vous n'en trouvez pas. Vous cherchez un bon barman qui puisse faire de bons cocktails *where the sun sets in Baie malgache*. Vous ne trouvez pas. Vous cherchez des femmes de chambres, des femmes de chambres formées. Les femmes de chambres doivent pouvoir parler français, anglais, peut-être plus. Une femme de chambre, ça gagne sa vie très bien mais vous n'en trouvez pas.

Vous cherchez de bons Chefs de chantier, vous cherchez de bon ferrailleurs, de bons maçons, vous n'en trouvez pas. Aujourd'hui, il ne faut pas dire oui, on n'a pas réussi à l'école depuis le primaire, on est maçon. Mais pour être maçon, par exemple, il faut être formé, pouvoir donner des quotations, lire les plans et il y a toutes sortes de formations qu'il y a dedans. Et on

a le programme d'aide à la mobilité. Si ces jeunes ont un bon projet que ce soit au niveau local ou au niveau ils veulent bouger, on est là pour les assister. Ce n'est pas la fin du monde.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, dans sa réponse, le Chef commissaire a fait mention des élèves qui ont pris part pour le GCE Exam qui malheureusement, personne n'a pu réussir pour avoir accès en Grade 12. Je voudrais savoir quelle est la politique du Chef commissaire par rapport au GCE dans les collèges?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je n'ai pas toutes les informations nécessaires mais à ce qu'il paraît, le GCE, c'est un substitut au *School Certificate*. Je ne crois pas qu'on doit encourager nécessairement cela parce que c'est peut-être viser moins bas mais je comprends la politique appartient à chaque collège de décider. Si on voit que nos élèves ont plus de chances au niveau de GCE que la *School Certificate*, au moins, on donne une chance d'avoir un certificat peut-être de moins de valeur que la *School Certificate* mais au moins un certificat. Il y a aussi le HSC Pro qui est très intéressant et qui peut-être devrait être valorisé. Il ne faut pas oublier aujourd'hui, M. le président, que les qualifications académiques sont *mismatched* avec le marché du travail et qu'on peut très bien gagner sa vie en enfilant des bottes de travail d'un champ et chantier en étant un *foreman*, en étant un contremaître et en étant aussi un entrepreneur dans divers domaines.

A Maurice, il y a un manque de main-d'œuvre terrible dans la construction et ce sont les Rodriguais qui sont les entrepreneurs de la construction à Maurice. Pourquoi pas encourager les jeunes Rodriguais à devenir des bons contremaîtres? Cela, il faut faire *Certificate in Construction*, *Certificate in Technical Drawing*, *Diploma in Building and Construction*, *Diploma in Architectural Design*. Il y a ça chez *Polytechnics Mauritius* et que quand vous allez voir, ces gens, s'ils savent saisir les occasions, ils vont gagner leur vie beaucoup mieux que quelqu'un qui va faire un degré et qui peut-être va être dans un collège pour le long de sa vie. Ça dépend de ce qu'on veut faire. C'est aux jeunes de saisir les occasions. Toujours, il faut saisir les occasions. Il ne faut pas hésiter, dire aux jeunes Rodriguais n'hésitez pas à aller apprendre ailleurs, à aller voir si vous voulez réussir, ce qui se fait à Maurice, à la Réunion et ailleurs au niveau de la transformation par exemple. A La Réunion, l'école St Joseph, ils ont des formations courtes pour les jeunes. Ces jeunes-là doivent prendre les initiatives qu'il faut.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to that issue of GCE, as I see things, there are two approaches which are being made by colleges. The first approach is that those who fail Grade 10, they were supposed to be out of school and they are allowed to be promoted

after having said out of school. Then, the student comes to negotiate with the college to have the chance to stand for GCE. This is the first approach. And, there is a second approach whereby, the student is promoted from Grade 10, officially promoted from Grade 10 to Grade 11 but somehow, it is imposed upon them to stand for GCE. These are two different approaches that I see in the colleges. I consider that the interest of the student should be focused upon. It is the interest of the student that we should look at rather than I see things that are happening, colleges today, we are focusing on the end result in terms of percentages. I would like to know what is the view of the Chief Commissioner as regard to these two approaches.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I was not aware of these provisions but I have said, it is up to the latitude and initiative of the colleges to implement these. I remember that at some point in time when you were in HSC, if you had failed or you did not have the qualifications, you were given the first year to get your credit. When you did not have your full SC, maybe you missed a credit in Maths or in English or something, in the main subject. You had a pass, you are allowed to go for it and then, remain in Lower Six. Because Lower Six is a transitory to HSC. So, yes, why not these people, they want to make their GCE, they are allowed to complete this, complete their GCE. But I must say, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that fortunately and for today, SC students, Grade 11 students, they have everything to succeed today. So, it is a matter of putting your head in your studies and not be distracted by *portable, boyfriend, girlfriend, Tiktok*. You remember when we were in School Certificate. We had one book to learn, one book only to learn in the library. I had only one Economics book to learn we got good results. But these fellows today, they have the best teachers. We had schools, we were leaking, we were walking to go to school, kilometres to go to school. Today, students have everything. They should be guided and motivated to work, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I think it is the role of Educators like my learned friend.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, time to move to next question.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/8.

**NATIONAL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (NCE)
– ACADEMIC YEAR 2022**

(No. B/8) The First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Mr J. P. Spéville) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to students who sat for the National Certificate Examination (NCE) for Academic Year 2022, he will state and table the:

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- (a) number thereof per college who sat therefor in the Mainstream and Extended Stream, respectively;
- (b) number thereof per college who passed the examinations, and
- (c) criteria applied for promotion to Grade 10 and the consequent number of students per college who were promoted thereto?

The Chief Commissioner: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I have a cascade of questions today. Yes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment results, they were released on the 16 December 2022 and the pass rate for Rodrigues is 50.5%, representing 572 candidates achieving the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 2 out of 1,132.

With regard to part (a) and (b), I am informed the number who sat for NCE in the Mainstream and Extended Stream and the number thereof who passed per college are as follows (I think the information is being tabled). For example, Grande Montagne College - Out of 115, 45 passed in the Mainstream. Out of 20, the Extended, no student has succeeded.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that the criteria applied for the promotion to Grade 10 are as follows:

Firstly, according to the circular dated 19 October 2020 from the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA), Grade 9 students sitting for the NCE Examinations will be allowed to move to Grade 10 provided they meet Level 2 Qualification on the National Qualifications Framework by achieving the following minimum requirements:

Either

Numerical Grade 6, core subjects including English, French and Mathematics and at least intermediate Level in two non-core subjects

Or

Numerical 6 in core subjects including English, French and Mathematics [...]

Those who do not satisfy these minimum requirements will have to repeat Grade 9, subject to not having already had one repetition of the Grade.

Secondly, in a circular dated 11 June 2021 and Circular 14 November 2022, PSEA has informed that school candidates sitting for the NCE Assessments and who did not reach the

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minimum requirements (Level 2 on the National Qualification Framework) may also be promoted to Grade 10 in regional secondary schools provided that they attained at least Numerical Grade 6 in six subjects including English.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with the mentioned circulars issued by the PSEA, the number of students who have been promoted to Grade 10 are as follows:

•	Rodrigues College	-	126
•	Mont Lubin College	-	103
•	Ananias André Le Chou College	-	103
•	André Lélío Roussety Songes College	-	72
•	Marechal College	-	144
•	Terre Rouge College	-	38
•	Grande Montagne College	-	74
•	La Ferme College	-	59

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House that the number of students promoted to Grade 10 in Academic Year 2023 exceeds the number of students who have passed the NCE assessment as they have been promoted on the basis of Circulars dated 11 June 2021 and 14 November 2022 by the PSEA which stipulates that candidates may be promoted to Grade 10 provided they have attained at least numerical Grade 6 in six subjects including English.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to develop and promote the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Sector as an opted pathway for students in the context of the Nine Year Schooling Basic Education in Rodrigues, there is a need to encourage those students who did not succeed at the NCE Assessments to embrace the TVET Sector so as to enable them to further their education and become a skilled worker in the future.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is also contemplating the possibility to mount and run short courses in Agriculture in collaboration with the *Lycée Agricole* of St. Gabriel for these students as well as functional basic literacy and numeracy courses.

I am tabling the number of students who sat and passed the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment 2022 in the Mainstream and Extended Stream as well as the number of students who have been promoted to Grade 10 per college.

I am also tabling copies of Circulars dated 19 October 2020, 11 June 2021 etcetera, from the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) regarding criteria for promotion to Grade 10.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. In time, I do not have the figures. Actually I want to focus on it first but it is for sure that the percentage of pass in the Extended Stream has been very low. As far as my knowledge goes. Out of all the students who stood for NC Examination in 2022 in the Extended Stream, there are only two students who got through. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether he will consider this aspect of those students who are studying in the Extended Stream to take the matter with the ministry. Because I should say bluntly this is a farce what we are going through.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. If I remember well, this measure was introduced in 2014, *avant*? Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And, I agree with him that it is a sort of waste of time because I have taught in the Extended Stream in an earlier life also, and it is true to say that you cannot teach, I would say you cannot even teach those students. Some have psychological problems, most of them have ADHD, Attention Deficit. They cannot sit in a class and in a way follow the class. So, the need may be another form of education. I agree with him. I see here, in the extended, one, two and three. Only three students, maybe two in REDCO and one in Rodrigues College have managed to go to Grade 10. I do not know whether this is with Grade 6 criteria or is it pass. So, they have passed, three have passed and maybe with modification attaining Grade 6, more have gone to Grade 10? For extended they did not even get the Grade 6? So, yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is an issue. So, we have to see. And, again it is something which is decided nationally and as we do not have our own policy in education, we have to abide to what is decided nationally. The one thing, from my experience also, is that these streams should be separated from secondary schools. Because, I believe, it is not the same thing. They are not the same type of students. It is not the same type of teachers. They have maybe to be in another school's set up. But it is a big debate.

Mr Lisette: I do understand that the Chief Commissioner do not have overall policy on education but as an Assembly and in line with the interest of our students, we have discussed matters here. When I looked at the figure that you, the Chief Commissioner has provided, I

should say that once again we are adding insult to injury. In the sense that, for the number of students who have passed, I think with a 01 notification. Because there are two notifications, 01 and 02. 572 have passed but 719 have been promoted meaning that there are at least 140-150 students who did not get their NCE but have been promoted to Grade 10. And this, is a discrepancy. What is your point of view on this, Chief Commissioner?

The Chief Commissioner: As we have said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a national policy. It is a good thing that those who have not passed but have reached numerical Grade 6, this is the addition. At least have reached Grade 6 and they have been promoted to Grade 10. These kids they have on average 14 years old.

(Interruptions)

It is a good thing if they have had the opportunity. We always say give kids chance. If they repeat they would burden the educational system, you know very well. I would say there should never, for me, they should not be this examination. For me, if I was to decide, there should not be, for me personally. There was a former system. I think I failed in Maths in Form III. I think, you were in the same class as me, there was only boys and we were not very disciplined. But I passed Maths in the School Certificate (SC) because when you go to SC, Form IV, Grade 10, Grade 11, most of them they get a sort of *retour de conscience*. They realise that they need to work. Start of majority. This is a long process. So, when they reach Grade 10, they are in the senior level and they reach Grade 11, they meet teachers like our Chairperson who speak to them. Some, most of them they make their efforts. So, this is why it is a big premature to decide about students' ambitions and promotions with that NCE exams and sending some here and eliminating them whereas, most of them maybe have potential to work. If provided they get the correct family environment, school environment and the good teachers. So, the discrepancy is because the last circular. The circular dated November, I think, said that those who have attained Grade VI including English should be promoted.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I am glad to highlight also one discrepancy which I will classify as discriminatory against those students who are in the Extended Stream. I do realise, as the Chief Commissioner has said, that most of the students they are not keen to be studying in the academic field but there are some of them who can do, who is doing good and I should say, even better than those in the Main Stream. Because I had the opportunity to work, even at the time, with prevocational students. Science, I was studying, I was teaching... Even if it was not allowed at that time, it was not compulsory at that time but I choose on the

advice of my Rector to teach in Prevocational and of them are quite good enough. But the issue today as I realised, is that these extended students who are good, they are allowed to sit only for six core subjects and two non-core. And, they have to pass in all the six and the two non-core, otherwise they are not allowed to go for Grade 10. And, we have students at Maréchal where I worked who have passed in five subjects at core level. They have passed in two at non-core. Good results even they have passed in agriculture also which is not considered by the ministry and these students have not been able to be promoted, they are out of school. And, the question is. Will the Chief Commissioner consider taking that issue with the ministry so as not to penalise those who are good in the extended stream who as he has said when they are allowed they will have this opportunity to go to Grade 10, they will do their best and I am sure that they are going to go through the Grade 11, the SC results?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have noted the proposal and ask the commission to take this issue with the ministry.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, last. The very last.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner rightly said that we have got no policy in education so, we cannot impose what we want to do. But we do have policy in training and he mentioned the TVEC sector which will be another choice and another opportunity for these students mainly those who cannot succeed after their extended. Will he consider investing the amount that is required to diversify the TVEC sector as per recommendation of the report we left finance by EFD on how we can *réinventer l'éducation technique ainsi que le plan d'action du Roland Dubois Consulting* regarding these students.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We will see to it that being given that the increasing number of student who are not in the main stream education in colleges, they have the opportunity to access TVEC qualifications and training according to the report she mentioned.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

RAPATRIATION – FIREFIGHTERS SERVING ON THE MAURITIAN ESTABLISHMENT TO RODRIGUES

(No. B/9) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Fire Services and Others whether, in regard to the repatriation of the firefighters serving on the Mauritian Establishment to Rodrigues, he will inform the House on where matters stand as at to date?

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Mr Volbert: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the issue of repatriation of firefighters serving on the Mauritius Establishment to RRA Establishment is being handled at the level of the Disciplined Force Service Commission.

I am also informed that the staffing position in the grade of Firefighter on the establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is as follows:

No. of established posts	:	53
No. of funded positions 2022/2023	:	51
No. in post	:	51
No. of funded vacancies	:	nil
No. of unfunded	:	02

Thirteen Firefighters from the establishment of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services listed at Annex have submitted repeated applications for permanent transfer to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as follows:

- (i) one application from one Firefighter on 26 February 2027;

Mr Chairperson: You said 2027?

Mr Volbert: 2017, sorry.

- (ii) one application from one Firefighter on 10 July 2018, and
- (iii) common letter signed by all the 13 Firefighters requesting their transfer on 06 August 2019.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware that the previous Regional Government did not take action to address this problem.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, upon my assumption as Commissioner, I was made aware of this dramatic human situation and had meeting with all stakeholders involved.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I met the Government Services Employees Association on 19 April 2022 in the presence of several Rodriguan Firefighters. Immediately the matter was treated and referred to the Island Chief Executive office for appropriate action.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am going to repeat that between 26 February 2017, 10 July 2018, 06 August 2019 and 28 March 2022, nothing has been done by the previous OPR government to attend to this request.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Fire Officer had, on 28 March 2022 stated no objection for their permanent transfer on the Establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA).

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Approval of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission (DFSC) was sought on 27 April 2022 for their permanent transfer. On 31 May 2022, the DFSC asked to seek the views of then Secretary for Home Affairs and same is being awaited. The DFSC was so informed on 08 July 2022. A legal issue has been raised with regards to the status of officers recruited by the Mauritius Establishment and the RRA Establishment given the corporate status of the RRA as per the RRA Act. and a solution is being worked out by the Prime Minister's Office.

The 25 vacancies which existed in the grade of Firefighter have been filled on 22 August 2022.

Another request has been submitted on 22 December 2022 to the Chief Fire Officer for his no objection to seek approval for their temporary transfer to the RRA.

The Chief Fire Officer has, in a letter dated 22 February 2023, replied that since the Mauritius Fire Rescue Service (MFRS) is facing an acute shortage of Firefighters (38 funded and 24 unfunded vacancies in the grade), it is not in a position to support the request for temporary transfer. However, his office may have acceded to the request for permanent transfer provided all the vacant posts at the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services are filled. The matter is being handled by the Island Chief Executive Office and a positive outcome is expected soon. As this matter is being handled by the Establishment Section, I will invite Members from the other side to wait.

Mr Ramdally: Can I ask the Commissioner; how many new recruitments were effected since March 2022?

Mr Volbert: I repeat; 25 vacancies have been filled.

Mr Ramdally: Can I ask the Commissioner with regard to his answer, why these 13 officers were not taken on board in this recruitment exercise?

Mr Volbert: Comme j'ai dit, M. le président, il y a des *issues* qu'il faudra *settled*. Donc, j'ai bien expliqué dans ma réponse. Si le respecté membre veut que je répète encore, je le ferai pour lui. Il faudra attendre et il y a une décision qui à être prise par le bureau du Island Chief Executive en consultation avec le *Establishment* et *very soon these officers will be in Rodrigues*.

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at some point in your answer, you have said that there was no objection by Mauritius to transfer these officers to Rodrigues. So, I repeat the question. Why were they not taken on board for the recruitment exercise?

Mr Volbert: Il faudra écouter la totalité de la réponse. Il n'y a pas d'objection *provided that the 38 funded posts be filled before these 13 Firefighters be released.*

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quand est-ce que les procédures ont été faites d'après ces informations à Maurice de manière à ce qu'on puisse savoir quand est-ce que ces *vacancies* vont être *filled* et à ce moment-là ces officiers seront *release*?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas les informations, ça concerne le Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service. Je pense que ce budget je n'ai pas ces informations. Mais du moment que les postes seront remplis à ce moment-là ils n'auront aucune objection et les officiers, nous à notre niveau ici au bureau du Island Chief Executive, il y a des discussions qui sont partis et qui sont allé jusqu'à loin et *very soon these officers when these posts will be filled in Mauritius, they will be recruited here.*

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner if he is aware that some of these officers in Mauritius, they have sold their personal belongings believing that they would have been transferred immediately to Rodrigues?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je ne suis pas au courant parce que ces officiers sont sur Mauritius Establishment et nous nous faisons des démarches pour qu'ils viennent ici, je ne vois pas pourquoi ils sont vendus leurs *personal belongings*. Je ne sais pas où le respecté Membre a eu cette réponse.

Mr Lisette: Can I ask the Commissioner for Fire Rescue whether there are enough after the filling of the vacancies last year in the Fire Service whether, there is enough vacant post to accommodate those who are coming from Mauritius?

Mr Volbert: *No*, il n'y avait pas. C'est là le Establishment ...

Mr Baptiste: So, I understand that during your mission in Mauritius, you discussed the issue with the Minister and Public Service Commission (PSC) also. So, what was the outcome then? Because as you have said since 2017, but I think that it is already one year since you are here, so why cannot you come here with a real confirm answer with more of assurance that these people will be transferred soon. Because at a certain point in time you talked about temporary transfer?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je ne sais pas si je dois rire ou pleurer. Ils étaient là pendant dix ans, ils n'ont rien fait et maintenant pendant un an, ils veulent que je le fais avec

baguette magique. Vous étiez là depuis 2017, ces gens-là ont demandés leurs transferts, 2018, 2019 et moi je suis venu le 5 mars 2022. Voilà, il y a les lettres. Vous voulez les lettres ? Attendez je vais déposer. Vous voulez les lettres, je vais *table* les lettres. On ne donne pas les fausses informations ici. Parce que vous étiez là, vous étiez Commissaires, vous étiez dans un gouvernement, vous aurez dû faire le nécessaire. Qui vous en a empêché pour faire le nécessaire ?

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je pense que s'est bon de situer un peu les affaires juste avant d'aller plus loin. Le fait d'avoir construit un *headquarters* à Mon Plaisir c'était un plan justement global. On a construit maintenant il faut travailler pour avoir les ressources humaines. Donc, vous pouvez aujourd'hui faire venir parce qu'il y a le bâtiment construite pendant les dix ans. Donc, maintenant est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire quelle est le nombre total requis d'officiers au niveau des services des Firefighters et Rescue, comme on appelle maintenant, quelle est le taux de *needs of a char needed to man the service* ?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas la réponse que la respectée Minority vienne avec une autre question la prochaine fois.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, please.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE – FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

(No. B/10) Mr J. R. RAMDALLY (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Fire Services and Others whether, in regard to equipment available for the department of Fire and Rescue Service, he will inform the House of their present condition, giving details as to any recorded breakdown and the corresponding time period of same?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards to equipment available for the department of Fire and Rescue Services, I am informed that the following equipment together with their present condition breakdown and corresponding time of breakdown are as follows: -

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Sn.	Vehicle	Date in operation	Servicing	Present condition	Remarks
1.	GMR 526 Water Foam Tender	20.12.1994	Every year irrespective of odometer	Breakdown since 2020 due to air pressure leakage	Supplier has arrived yesterday on 13 March to undertake necessary repairs. They are actually repairing these vehicles.
2.	10 RRA22 Water Foam Tender	19.08.2022	Still under warranty. Not even schedule for servicing	Breakdown since 19.12.2022. 2549 km on odometer Air leakage. Gear suit problem	Supplier arrived on 13 March to undertake necessary repairs as same is under warranty
3.	14 RRA 08 Water lorry converted into a utility lorry	04.12.2008	Every 5,000 km	Breakdown due to chassis in	Recommended for write-off
4.	GMR 624 Ex water lorry converted into utility lorry	20.01.2000	Every 5,000 km	In working condition	Corroded since 2020 and it is a utility vehicle same function can be carried out by 4 x 4.
5.	01 RRA 18 Specialised water lorry	21.03.2008	Last servicing done on 05.03.2019	Breakdown since 05.05.2021 due to overheating of engine. No action taken by	Last servicing done on 11.08.2020 at 5204 km

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Sn.	Vehicle	Date in operation	Servicing	Present condition	Remarks
				previous government.	

Equipment:

Sn.	Equipment	Quantity	Date in operation	Present condition	Remarks
1.	Firefighting trailer pump Name ziegler	01	Received on 04.06.2021	In good working condition	At Camp du Roi Fire Station
2.	Firefighting portable pump make GODIVA	04	Received on 04.05.2017	Two in good working condition. Two broken down on 26.11.2013 and 21.02.22 respectively.	No action taken to repair or replace the broken pump since November 2013
3.	Flooding pump Davey	03	Received on 23.03.2017	In good working condition	Servicing done every year. Available for use at Camp du Roi
4.	Portable firefighting pump Ziegler	02	05.07.2006	Breakdown since 26.11.2013 and 15.02.2023, respectively.	No action taken since 26.11.2013
5.	Breathing apparatus (B.A) compressor (for the refilling of B.A)			Off the run	Defect since 2019, only 150 bar can be reached on refilling instead of 300 bar.

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Sn.	Equipment	Quantity	Date in operation	Present condition	Remarks
	Cylinders. Received on 24.12.2015. Make Coltri				

I must admit, I am very disappointed with the behaviour and conduct of certain of these officers. Mr Chairperson, Sir, how can a vehicle costing over Rs 21 m. could breakdown after nearly three months in operation and having not even finish its *rodage* of 5,000 km and having run for only 2,549 km.

Any criminal act and sabotage from the Fire and Rescue Officers upon the examination of the “Black Box” of the vehicle will reveal exactly who was/were responsible for the breakdown of the vehicle.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, disciplinary action will be taken against defaulters if ever, same is confirmed and this will lead by example for other not to repeat same.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson Sir.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, je pense que la priorité doit être mis les équipements parce que ce service est très essentiel pour la population. Donc, ils n’ont pas ... les coups fouets. Donc, le Commissaire a bien dit que depuis 2020, 2019, il y a des équipements qui sont en panne et ça fait un an déjà que vous êtes là. Donc, vous n’avez rien fait vous aussi.

Mr Volbert: M. le président, entre 2019 et 2022, il y avait trois ans. Il trouve un an plus que trois ans, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Mr Volbert: You come for a change, yes. But you were there. There is apparatus broken down since 2013, what were you doing at that time? *Asizé manz larzen! Atan ! Nou pou montré zot comen fer travay la!*

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je peux savoir du Commissaire, qui c’est qui est responsable quand il y a ces *breakdowns* ? Sur qui repose ces responsabilités ?

Mr Volbert: Sur l’Officier en Charge. Parce que moi j’ai que pour *policy*. Pareil comme, *the then Commissioner, Mr Simon Pierre, he was not answerable and not responsible because he was there...*

Mr Chairperson: Please, do not mention name. He is not in the...

Mr Volbert: He was the Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Ramdally: D'après mes informations, M. le président. Donc, il y a un camion, c'est le seul camion qui a accès au *track road*, est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire, si ce camion il est en panne ?

Mr Volbert: Oui, M. le président.

Mr Baptiste: I think that the Commissioner is blaming other Commissioners but I would like to know whether the Commissioner is aware that this is the only time that this has happened that all the lorries have broken down and that the Fire Rescue Services, they did not even have a lorry attached to them and they had to negotiate elsewhere? It has never happened before.

Mr Volbert: Je ne sais pas. Je n'étais pas là. Je ne savais pas si auparavant si tous les camions étaient cassés. Je ne savais pas. Mais là, je ne peux pas faire avec des baguettes magiques parce que ces camions-là sont encore sur le *warranty*. On ne peut pas amener ça a 'Mechanical Workshop'. Il faudra que ces techniciens viennent ici pour réparer. Et, d'ailleurs ils sont là depuis hier. Parce que les procédures, il faudra informer l'agence et puis, ces gens-là vont venir. Et là-dedans, le camion est tombé en panne en décembre et de 15 décembre au 15 janvier, l'agence ne travaille pas, le bureau est fermé. Donc, il a fallu attendre.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, quand je regarde le *budget estimates*, il y a que Rs 20,000 qui a été mis pour le *maintenance of these vehicles in this service*. Qu'est-ce que le Commissaire a à dire là-dessus ? Seulement Rs 20,000.

Mr Volbert: On va voir, si ça va manquer on va faire réallocation. On ne sait pas combien ça va couter, parce que je ne suis pas mécanicien.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand also that there are two lorries which are very essential for intervention during road accidents and that both of them now are not in working order. I would like to know what remedial action, immediate action is being taken, if ever, let us pray that this does not happen, if there are cases where these lorries need to be tucked?

Mr Volbert: Donc, M. le président, comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure dans ma réponse, les techniciens, les mécaniciens sont là depuis hier et là je vois que quelqu'un m'a envoyé un

petit paquet tout à l'heure pour m'informer que ces camions-là sont en train d'être réparé et d'ici l'après-midi un de ces camions-là va sortir. Donc, on peut attendre jusqu'à l'après-midi.

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire si c'est la première fois depuis l'année 2022 que les mécaniciens sont venus pour réparer les équipements étant donné qu'il y a Rs 20,000, ce n'est pas encore utilisé et c'est maintenant que vous allez considérer de réallouer le budget ?

Mr Volbert: Les mécaniciens, je pense, je n'ai pas les réponses. C'est la première fois, je ne sais pas. Attendez, je vais voir. Donc, M. le président, comme j'ai dit, il faudra attendre les officiers.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Address the Chair.

Mr Volbert: I am addressing the Chair. M. le président, le camion comme je vous l'ai dit on a fait le *commissioning* et les officiers étaient venus. Mais les officiers qui devaient faire, je pense que c'est deux agences différents, l'autre camion qui a fait le *servicing* depuis 2019, il faudra faire venir les techniciens. Donc, c'est la première fois pour le camion neuf et on va voir si on peut réparer le deuxième.

Mr Baptiste: I just wanted to know when procedures were initiated to contact the people from Mauritius or elsewhere to come for the repair of the last lorry which broke down in December. Since he is here and he knows that the situation is already alarming. When were they contacted?

Mr Volbert: C'est en décembre, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse tout à l'heure. Les bureaux sont fermés du 15 décembre au 15 janvier et on a fait les démarches, je crois le 16 ou le 17 décembre, je n'ai pas les dates. Mais c'est à eux... Ils ont pris du temps, peut-être les officiers, les techniciens qui sont partis c'est eux, qui étaient en conge, c'est eux qui devaient venir ici. On ne sait pas. Mais là, ils sont là depuis avant-hier.

Mr Chairperson: Now, it is high time to break for one hour.

At 1.05 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 02.15 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, Miss Roussety.

‘ONE VISITOR, ONE TREE’ – PROJECT – ANSE QUITOR/DANS COCO

(No. B/11) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to ‘One Visitor, One Tree’ project at Anse Quitor/Dans Coco, he will provide information as to:

- (a) the promoter thereof;
- (b) the scope and extent of land earmarked therefor;
- (c) the number of planters and breeders carrying their activities in the earmarked area, and
- (d) any consultations held in connection thereto and the outcome thereof?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the ‘One Visitor One Tree’ Project is an initiative of and is being promoted by my commission in line with our strategy to promote the sustainable development of our tourism sector and to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development goals as put forward by the United Nations. The project aims at providing an appropriate platform to encourage visitors in Rodrigues to reduce their carbon print and combat climate change by contributing to our re-afforestation programme.

Each visitor will be encouraged to plant a tree. For this purpose, an initial plot of state arid land of about 5.6 hectares has been identified at Anse Quitor in the vicinity of the Anse Quitor Nature Reserve.

Based on the report from the Agricultural Services, there are about eight livestock sheds within the boundary of the identified land and one plot of land which is under cultivation

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a Steering Committee under my chairmanship has already been set up at the level of my commission to spear head the implementation of the project. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Committee comprises various Stakeholders including the Deputy Chief Commissioner’s Office, which is responsible for Environment, representatives of the Commission for Agriculture and Forestry Services, the Cadastral Office, the Mauritius Wild Life Foundation and Representative of the François Leguat Tortoise Reserve Ltd.

The Steering Committee has already met on four occasions to discuss about the details and the implementation of the project. Moreover, two consultative meetings have been organised with the Village Committees of the locality and the occupiers on 03 February and 03 March, 2023.

All parties have agreed to the project as well as the identified site with the understanding that only the part not occupied by the breeders/planters will be used. A further site meeting with the Cadastral Office is being conveyed to enable the necessary arrangement.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Ms Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Tourism inform the House how the visitors will be made aware they will have to join this project and how many plant are being targeted to be put in soil?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, merci de me poser la question, ça me permet quand même de pouvoir mieux élaborer sur le projet de 'One Visitor One Tree'. Vous savez, le projet de 'One Visitor One Tree' qui a pris naissance dans ma commission consiste justement à donner la chance au visiteur quel qu'il soit, de quel pays qu'il vienne de pouvoir mettre en terre une plante. La raison est bien simple, c'est que nous savons tous que quelqu'un qui voyage quelque part laisse une empreinte carbone pendant son trajet. De ce faite, l'arbre que la personne va mettre en terre, cette arbre, je dis bien ne doit pas être essentiellement endémique, il peut être une plante fruitière tout comme il peut être aussi bien une plante florale. De ce fait, la personne qui met en terre cette plante, participe justement dans le cadre d'un projet de *re-afforestation* et en même temps vient combattre son empreinte de carbone. Le site qu'on a choisi, j'imagine on parle du site qu'on a choisi, c'est que c'est un site d'où on s'est lancé au niveau de ma commission un défi pour dire qu'on peut dans le gouvernement, pas seulement le secteur privé, dans le gouvernement initier des actions qui permettrait de faire comprendre à la population qu'on a le droit et qu'on a la responsabilité de pouvoir quand même *re-afforest* comme il se doit. Ne pas se dire que si c'est secteur privé ça va être bien, si c'est dans le gouvernement on ne peut pas le faire.

Troisièmement, et moi je le dis franchement c'est un projet qui va réussir. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'on va y mettre tous notre énergie afin que ce projet puisse aboutir. Il va sans dire, M. le président. Il va sans dire que comme j'ai mentionné dans mon *statement*, qu'éventuellement il y a des gens qui travaille sur le site. On a eu des pourparlers avec eux. Dans un premier temps c'était convenu que si jamais, on vient prendre les terrains de ces gens-là dans le cadre de ce projet de reboisement, on allait les compenser pour la dimension égale dans un lieu qui leur convient, de leur choix et on fait en sorte qu'ensemble avec la commission de l'Agriculture on arrive à ménager comme il se doit pour que ces gens si jamais, ils arrivent à se déplacer ils aient

en leurs possession un lopin de terre dument aménager par le gouvernement. Merci, M. le président.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire quand est-ce que ce comité, ce Steering Committee a été mise sur pied et est-ce qu'il ne trouve pas nécessaire que les personnes dans les environs, j'ai entendu parler de plusieurs personnes, de plusieurs bureaux qui sont représenter dans ce Steering Committee et pas les éleveurs ou les planteurs du village. Ne pense-t-il pas que, ce serait important d'avoir dans un souci de consultation des représentants ?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, je crois qu'il faudrait dire les choses tel quelle pour qu'on arrive à faire comprendre. Nous on a eu bien avant dans la mise en place de ce comité, on a eu des consultations avec les gens locaux de cet endroit. On en a parlé à mainte reprise, on a eu des consultations en tête à tête. Ils ont accepté l'idée de faire le projet. Si vous suivi l'actualité, le samedi dernier on avait procédé justement à la mise en terre des plantes. Vous avez dû voir quand même dans les photos qui ont été circulé sur le net, dans les réseaux sociaux, qui sont les gens qui ont été présent pour la mise en terre de ces plantes. Il y avait aussi bien des personnalités, bien sûr. Il y avait des gens de l'étranger de Greenings the Islands, mais il y avait aussi bien des gens qui avaient des lopins de terre sur le site qui a été aménagé. Toute une discussion a été fait dans ce sens pour dire qu'il y aura la participation de toute un chacun. Mais il va sans dire comme j'ai dit, si jamais les gens qui occupe les terrains en ce moment-ci sont peu enclin à donner leurs terrains, c'est chose qu'on va accepter de toute façon, il n'y a pas de souci.

Mr Lisette: Can I ask the Commissioner, because he mentioned in his answer that there were two consultations. One on 03 February and the other one on 03 March – consultation with the villagers. I would like to know whether upon the starting of the project which I believe was done with the closing of the octopus season, whether there was any reluctancy from the part of the villagers, there?

Mr Wong So: Vous savez, je l'ai dit, je vais le répéter. La réticence des gens à un moment donner se situer justement dans le déplacement de ces gens-là si besoin est, et qu'en est-il des résultats de ces déplacements. On a donné la garantie formelle aux gens, que si jamais, je dis bien, je répète les mots, si jamais, on avait à les déplacer, on allait donner l'équivalent en terme de superficie de terrain et dument aménager par la commission. De ce fait, que la personne qui est en ce moment-ci travaille sur une terre qui est très rocailleuse aurait, de son

choix, choisi un lopin de terre qui lui convient et que c'est à la commission, la responsabilité de venir aménager ces terrains-là conjointement avec la commission de l'Agriculture pour que la personne puisse avoir un terrain dument aménager comme il se doit avec un titre de propriété.

Dr Agathe: Vous avez parlé donc d'une superficie de 5.6 hectares pour le projet. Vous n'êtes encore sure si ces personnes-là devront bouger ou pas, de quel terrain parle-t-on ?

Mr Wong So: Merci. La superficie de 5.6 hectares qui a été identifié, au préalable, avait été fait en consultation avec les officiers du gouvernement. Je dis bien, avec les officiers du gouvernement, avec le département du cadastre. Il va sans dire, que les occupants, qu'on est en train de mentionner sont déjà dans cette superficie. Donc, dans la réponse que je vous ai donné, que valeur du jour, les gens dont ils sont peu enclins à céder leurs terrains, on va faire en sorte qu'ils ne soient pas dans cette superficie. Mais le 5.6 hectare dans ma réponse, c'est la superficie qui a été identifié dans un premier temps mais qui va être réduit à un moment donner à moins que ça.

Dr Agathe: Il y a quand même un petit problème, vous avez identifié une superficie pour réaliser un terrain de façon technique avec le Cadastre et vous ne savez pas si ce terrain-là sera entièrement disponible puisque jusqu'ici vous n'avez l'accord, il y a pas semblant d'avoir un accord avec les gens qui occupent ces terrains-là. Ce n'est pas une mince affaire quand même. Et de dire que c'est un terrain de 5.6 hectares pour ce projet-là.

Mr Wong So: M. le président, j'ai dit, au risqué de me répéter. J'ai dit que dans un premier temps lorsqu'on avait identifié le terrain, la superficie était de 5.6 hectares. De ce fait, si par la suite s'il y a réticence de la part des gens qui ne veulent pas céder leurs terrains, il va de soi que le terrain sera moins que ce qui a été préconisé. Il va de soi. Parce que nous on avait identifié le terrain tel quel au dépend qu'il mesure 5.6. J'aurais pu dans ma réponse dire *to some hectares*. Mais j'ai dit la superficie exacte.

Mr Lisette: I have listen carefully to the answer of the Commissioner for Tourism and he mentioned about the types of plants to be grown/planted there and bearing in mind the experience that we have from François Leguat, we know very well it is endemic plant which are well adapted, not well adapted but better adapted in that rocky area. I would like to know from him whether well this sort of irrigation system to ensure that the plant that are being, especially those who are not endemic, which will resist less to the drought season, how is he preconizing to ensure that there is minimum death of the plant upon plantation?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, ce projet, je le redéfini encore une fois. Nous donnons la chance à tous un chacun de pouvoir mettre en terre des plantes essentiellement endémiques mais nous aurons aussi la sensibilité de mettre des plantes fruitières pour la bonne et simple raison que les plantes fruitières après un certain temps vont fleurir et rapporter des fruits parce que tous les oiseaux et les chauves-souris de l'endroit vont pouvoir en bénéficier justement de tout ça. La question qui se pose, c'est que comment on va faire pour pouvoir quand même réhabiliter cet endroit-là à moindre frais que la plantation puisse quand même arriver à bon port. C'est à nous au niveau de la commission, parce qu'on ne peut pas anticiper. C'est vrai, il y aura des pertes, il y aura des plantes qui vont mourir, probablement mais il va de choix, c'est notre devoir sacré au niveau de la commission de s'assurer que les plantations, les plantes qu'on va mettre en terre – mais je dois ici, M. le président, préciser on n'est pas en train de faire un jardin public, on est en train de *reafforest an area*. Ce que me fait dire que nous aurons beaucoup de chance parce que chaque plante aura en quelque mot la responsabilité de protéger l'autre plante qui est à côté et de ce fait la survie va être beaucoup mieux.

Mr Baptiste: I understand that there are still some issues to be resolved there. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether there was any incident between officers of his commission and occupiers of this portion of land on the next day of the opening of the closure of the octopus at the site – between officers of his commission and occupiers?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, à ce stade, je ne suis pas au courant qu'il y ait eu quoi que ce soit comme altération. Vous voulez dire que le *closing of octopus fishing* was le 20.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Miss Roussety.

**OPENING - LATEST NET FISHING SEASON – OFFICIAL EVENT
ORGANISED/TOURISM SECTOR IN RODRIGUES**

(No. B/12) Ms. K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to the opening of the latest net fishing season, he will inform the House on if any official event was organised in connection thereto to boost up the tourism sector in Rodrigues and, if not, why not?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, to this question, the answer is NO. The Member will appreciate that net fishing can be considered as non-environmental friendly due to several damages caused to the marine ecosystems within the lagoon of Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House will appreciate that in the context of our sustainable development objectives, my commission is promoting green tourism development in Rodrigues. Since our tenure of office in March 2022, we are marketing the Rodrigues destination accordingly in all the tourism promotion campaigns at national and international level.

I have therefore considered that it would be inappropriate to organise activities to mark the opening of the net fishing as a marketing tool of our tourism destination as such type of fishing is not compatible and does not comply within the objectives of the sustainable development goals of the international community. However, Mr Chairperson Sir, I am not against the idea that such activity is organised by another relevant authority.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I think the Commissioner is a Member of the Executive Council and he should know the affairs of what is happenings in Rodrigues and, I would like him to explain to the House how he reconciled his policy of sustainability with respect to the opening of net fishing being given that there has been additional net fishing licence given for the opening of this? How does he reconcile these two policies?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you will allow me, I have a point of order.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: This is contradictory policy.

The Chief Commissioner: I understand the qualms of the member in trying to corner the Commissioner. But the member cannot ask a question about policy regarding, he says, he is saying additional...

(Interruptions)

Yes, he is a member of the Executive Council, but it is not his responsibility. If you need the proper Commissioner to ask this question is the Commissioner for Fisheries. And, in any way there has been no new fishing licence. They had their fishing licence. They had it! You cancelled it! You embezzled them.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Chief Commissioner, we get the point.

Mr Wong So: M. le président, la réponse a été simple et claire. Il n'a jamais été de *corder* qui que ce soit, on vous a expliqué clair et net. Je crois que le langage qu'on s'est servi démontre justement la véracité de nos propos. Moi, je vais vous dire une chose. Je ne peux pas

m'embarquer à faire dans les forums national et international que Rodrigues soit décréter un 'Green Destination' et que je m'engage ici comme un *marketing tool* d'aller faire la fête du poisson le 1^{er} mars. Si quelqu'un d'autre du Conseil voudrait le faire, il n'y a pas de souci mais au niveau de ma commission, je me sens mal à l'aise, je vous le dis et que vous savez déjà par rapport à mes propos, je me sens mal à l'aise de pouvoir quand même initier une telle action parce que ça ne cadre pas avec la politique de ma commission.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire du Tourisme, étant donné que c'est un événement hautement culturel et c'est ancré aussi dans la manière de faire des Rodriguais. Etant donné aussi que la décision pour créer un événement autour de la pêche à la seine remonte au moment où l'actuel Chef commissaire était Commissaire du Tourisme et c'était lui qui était venu avec le projet, qu'on a continué parce qu'on a vu, parce qu'il y a des choses qui ont été bien fait. Comment est-ce que le Chef commissaire aujourd'hui peut être d'accord qu'une telle décision soit prise qui va à l'encontre de la décision qu'il avait prise avant.

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong So: M. le président, non la n'est pas la question...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Wong So: Permettez-moi de répondre. M. le président ?

Mr Chairperson: Let the Commissioner answer the question.

Mr Wong So: Je vous l'ai dit que je n'ai pas d'objection à ce qu'au niveau du Conseil d'autre organisation puisse quand même l'organiser. Vous avez compris mon point, mais vous ne voulez pas quand même défendre ce point-là. Dans le sens que pour moi en tant que Commissaire du Tourisme, qui est en train de préconiser d'ici et d'ailleurs la philosophie de ma commission et en même temps de célébrer justement la journée des poissons. Vous avez compris mais seulement vous voulez détourner les propos.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know whether this decision was taken by the Executive Council or by your commission?

Mr Wong So: C'est une décision collective.

Ms. Roussety: M. le président, est-ce que le respecté commissaire est au courant que les opérateurs touristiques étaient mécontents parce qu'il n'y avait pas d'activité ce jour-là ?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, je vois que les membres de l'opposition sont en train de faire un genre de scandale puisque la fête du poisson n'a pas eu lieu. L'ouverture de la seine a été fait comme il se doit. Les prix ont été conséquentes et que tout le monde était satisfait à manger du poisson. La seule chose qui n'a pas été faite, c'était '*maja karo, manzé boire, fer la faya*'. Mais on ne fait plus ça, *sorry* ! Les opérateurs bien souvent ils ne sont pas là le jour de la fête du poisson. C'est que le '*maja karo*', ce n'est plus cette affaire-là. Nous on est consistant. Mais bien sûr.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

Dr. Agathe: Je voudrais dire que je suis étonné...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I feel that all of you want to eat fish!

Dr. Agathe: Je suis étonné de cette qualification de '*maka jaro*' parce que c'est une fête quand même qui est d'une certaine importance, qui a attiré beaucoup de presse, de télévision et que vous parlez de ça comme une '*maka jaro*', je ne sais pas quoi.

Donc, alors que c'est quand même une attraction qui attire des quand même des télévisions, des grosses télévisions qui sont en mesure de créer quand même de la demande touristique pour notre île.

Mr Wong So: *Aller l'année prochaine fer li pou zot.* C'est que les gens sont en train de protester. Je dis dans cette Assemblée, l'ouverture de la pêche le 1^{er} mars a été fait comme il se doit. Simplement on est en train de jouer que c'est simplement la fête pour le célébrer. Le *opening* a été fait. Simplement, on voulait mettre un orchestre, faire des artistes chanter et célébrer. C'est ça que vous voulez ? Mais non, ce n'est pas notre politique à nous. D'où l'appellation de '*maja karo*'.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. No '*karo la*', next question. Mr Baptiste.

**UNSAFE CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED – OFFICERS OF LABOUR OFFICE AT
MHC BUILDING**

(No. B/13) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Labour, Industrial Relations and Others whether he is aware of the unsafe conditions encountered by the officers of the Labour Office at the MHC building as well as the inconvenience caused to the respective users thereat, particularly during rainy seasons and, if so, to state the remedial actions taken to solve the problems?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware of the conditions encountered by the Officers of the Labour Office at the MHC Building, as well as the inconvenience caused to the respective users thereat, particularly during rainy seasons. I have been informed that the Labour, Occupational Safety and Health Services started encountering water leakage problems from the roof in the lobby causing water accumulation in the front entry of the offices since many years ago.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, you would recall that in reply to question B/109 at the Assembly Sitting of 15 November, 2022, I informed that an appropriate space located in the New Administrative Block at Mont Lubin was to be allocated to my Commission to house the Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations Division. Unfortunately, this was not materialised as the space earmarked had to be released to enable the Commission for Health to accommodate the Mont Lubin Area Health Services as a matter of priority

As an alternative, my Commission in collaboration with the Officers concerned, has identified adequate space on the first floor of the DBM Building at Camp du Roi next to CSL Call Centre, to accommodate the Labour and Industrial Relations Division along with the Employment Information Centre. Necessary arrangements are being made to enable their relocation accordingly.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know when the Commissioner took cognizance of this serious issue there? When?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, c'est quelque chose qui dure depuis quand même pas mal de temps. Right ? La bonne et simple raison est qu'ici la Chambre doit être informé que ma commission qui occupe cette espace on n'est pas locataire de ce lieu et on ne paye même pas le loyer. De ce fait, on n'est dans l'obligation de pouvoir rester sur place sans pouvoir quand même s'attaquer au vrai problème du lieu. Parce que nous, on n'est pas décrété, la Commission de l'Emploi et du Labour n'est pas locataire qui paye le loyer. Donc, on n'est pas *tenant*, valeur du jour par rapport à ce lieu. On occupe le lieu mais on n'est pas *tenant*. De ce

fait, on est dans l'obligation moral d'en parler avec le MHC mais on n'est pas tenue de par la loi de pouvoir intervenir de cette manière.

Mr Baptiste: I understand maybe why the Commissioner cannot provide accurate answers because I have been there for 10 years and there has never been any problems since I left office except for the office of the Commissioner and the Secretary of the Commissioner but not at the Health and Safety and Labour Office. This has started afterwards. Anyway, is the Commissioner aware that the new location where he is expecting to move the office is also having issues relating to pigeons' droppings and leakage of water at the entrance which also hazards to health and safety of workers and the general public? Is he aware of that?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, je vois que le *respected Member* et au courant des choses et que c'est bien de pouvoir quand même avoir les renseignements. C'est vrai, on est au courant. On ne peut pas le nier que le site qui a été identifié va devoir être aménagé comme il se doit parce qu'il y a des problèmes sur le nouveau site qui a été identifié. Donc, *matters will be tackled accordingly*, en temps et lieu. Mais on reconnaît, comme vous dites que sur ce lieu il y a des problèmes existentiels, valeur du jour, qu'on va pouvoir *tackle* comme il se doit à travers le projet.

Mr Baptiste: Because I know – I do not think the Commissioner is aware about the mission of the Labour Officer, Health and Safety. They are supposed to be the one to set examples and, it is there one of the commissions where there are more problems in the different commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Would he consider to tackle this problem urgently, not to see when, as and when? Because this has been there for almost one year, it is less than one year the actual problem there.

Mr Wong So: Je vais vous dire une chose, M. le président, que valeur du jour, on est en train de *tackle the problem*. Je vous donne d'ici peu qu'on va pouvoir résoudre et délocaliser la partie concernée vers le DBM Building à Camp du Roi et se sera chose faite d'ici peu.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

REPORTED CASES – CHILDREN BEYOND CONTROL

(No. B/14) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Others whether, in regard to the number of reported cases of children beyond control, she will:

- (a) give a breakdown per sex and per age group for the past three years, and

- (b) state the measures taken by her Commission to mitigate same?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question put by the respected Member, Ms Raffaut, concerned cases of child beyond control. I will therefore suggest that the respected Member addresses the question next time to the Commission responsible for probation and aftercare services. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question of children beyond control, it is in fact, it forms part among the major part of the Child's Act, the new promulgated law in 2022. So, this question should be answered, I suppose, has been correctly written and addressed to the concerned Commissioner.

Mr Chairperson: Minority Leader, but you will understand according to our Standing Order, I cannot force a Commissioner to answer a question. Next question!

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to table.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry, we are already on the next question.

Ms Agathe: Okay.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please! Order, please! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! I am sorry, Chief Commissioner. Order, please. Allow the Chief Commissioner to answer the question.

‘HOT MEAL PROJECT’ – SCHOOLS

(No. B/15) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F. GASPARD PIERRE LOUIS, C.S.K.) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the ‘Hot Meal Project’ for schools, he will state and table the:

- (a) list of caterer/s per school/institution, together with the corresponding number of students for each caterer; and
- (b) mode of selection for the caterer, the cost per student per meal and the payment mode ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, I announced the provision of hot meal to students in the “Discours Programme” 2023 -2027 in March 2022 last year.

The main objectives of providing hot meal to pupils are to:

- (i) provide regular, nutritious food to children who are unable to fully benefit from their education due to a lack of quality food;
- (ii) encourage children’s school attendance and extra-curricular achievement, particularly those from the most disadvantaged background; and
- (iii) educate and support pupils from a young age to embrace the ‘Healthy Food for Life’ guidelines in order to grow and develop into healthy adults and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The project will benefit not only the pupils but also the parents who have to strive hard at times to provide meals for their wards.

The implementation of the project is motivated by a social as well as an economic objective as the project will also help the community (entrepreneurs, caterers) to earn a living through the provision of hot meals to pupils and a market for local products.

The modalities of the implementation of the project have been worked out in collaboration with the Commission for Health particularly with the Public Health Office and the Nutritionist as well as the management of RCA schools.

Subsequently, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 03 January 2023 has approved that the Commission for Education provides a financial grant to the Parent Teacher’s Association of all 17 primary schools in Rodrigues and the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues* for the provision of hot meal to pupils of all primary and pre-primary schools once weekly as from 20 February 2023 on a pilot basis.

However, due to prevailing cyclonic conditions over the island, the launching of the hot meal project was postponed to Monday 27 February 2023.

As regard part (a) and (b) of the question, it was agreed following consultations during the informative and consultative meeting held on 12 January 2023 with Heads of Pre-primary and Primary schools as well as the Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) that the hot meal project will be implemented in collaboration with the PTAs of Primary Schools and the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues*.

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During the meeting, they were advised to select caterers who reside preferably in the catchment area of the school for the supply, delivery and distribution of hot meal and to have recourse to two or more caterers if their school population exceeds 150 pupils so as to ensure the smooth implementation of the project.

As such, the selection of caterers was done by the PTA of each school and the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues* out of the list of 84 registered victuallers including mobile and 16 caterers with a valid licence obtained from the Licensing Unit.

However, I am informed that from the list of victuallers and caterers holding a valid licence, not all of them have responded positively.

As a matter of fact, out of the list of 100 potential victuallers and caterers, only 26 have responded positively to the supply, delivery and distribution of meals at schools.

Consequently, from the list of caterer selected by schools, it can be noted that one caterer may have been selected to provide meals to two or more schools. However, since schools have been grouped in five clusters and meals are being served at schools on different days, this will not impact on the smooth supply, delivery and distribution of meals at schools.

Moreover, caterers that have been selected to provide meals to 150 pupils and above have long experience in the catering services.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an advanced grant is being provided to the PTA and the AEMR for timely payment of claims.

As regards the cost of meal per student, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 13 January 2023 had initially approved the cost of a meal at the rate of Rs 50 per meal for the Pre-primary and Primary pupils of Grade 1 to 3 and Rs 90 per meal for the Primary pupils of Grade 4 to 6.

However, following several complaints received from Caterers that the approved rates of meals were on the low side and that the proposed price did not cover the cost of delivery and serving, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 17 February, has approved the following:

- i) to review the cost of meal for hot meal project for Pre-primary from Rs 50 to Rs 60 and Primary pupils Grade 4 to 6 – Rs 90 to Rs 100;
- ii) to meet delivery cost at the rate of Rs 1250 per day for each caterer;

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iii) to meet serving costs related to the project under the supplementary school feeding project as follows:

- serving for 10 to 50 pupils at Rs 250;
- serving 51 to 100 pupils at Rs 500;
- serving for 101 to 150 pupils at Rs 1000; and
- serving for above 150 pupils at Rs 1250.

I would like to point out that my Commission was dismayed to note that a misinformation was circulated on social media regarding the social meals being served at one school the first day that were served, that is, Monday 27 February. The more so that the matter was not referred to the Commission as established protocol.

As such, the Hot Meal Project Committee met the following day on 28 February to look into the matter and the Nutritionist who visited the said school confirmed that he was present on the day the hot meal was served at the particular school and the food served was according to the standard of the menu proposed. He also reported that only a slight incident occurred in that school whereby one pupil was confused with grated garlic found in his meal and other matter.

However, with a view to ensure that meals served are according to hygienic and quality standards, the Public Health Officer immediately attended to this complaint and visited anew the caterers that were involved with the supply of hot meal on that day and the Nutritionist had had a meeting with all Caterers and they were advised to blend their spices to avoid such situation in the future.

In addition, an evaluation meeting was held with all Headmasters by the hot meal committee on Monday 06 March 2023 at the Commission for Education. Head of Schools have expressed their satisfaction regarding the supply, delivery and serving of hot meal during the first week 27 February to 03 March 2023. Pupils in general were very happy, of course, with the meal provided at schools.

During the meeting, Head Masters were also advised to follow the protocol to report complaint at level of schools to the Commission for immediate action if need be.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I seize this opportunity to thank and congratulate the PTAs of Primary schools, the schools themselves, the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles* and all other

stakeholders for their wonderful collaboration in the implementation of the hot meal project in Rodrigues which indeed has been a challenge.

I want to reassure all parents that the Hot Meal committee remains on the alert and will take necessary corrective action immediately, if need be, in a bid to ensure the safe provision of meals to our children.

I am hereby tabling a copy of the list of caterer/s per school with the corresponding number of students for each caterer as well as the mode of selection for the caterer, the cost per student per meal and the payment mode.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to appeal to one and all politicians, social workers, parents, students and teachers to support the project and to refrain from commenting negatively on things that at times, they do not have information and also inflating rumours. In Rodrigues, it is like this. You go to a marriage and people will say there has been no food where there has been plenty of food. There is always something, negative thing that some people will lay emphasis on but we lay emphasis on this side of this House, on the positive thing and the positive thing has been 99.999% positive.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, on n'a rien contre le projet *Hot Meal*. Au contraire, on avait commencé nous-même dans cinq écoles. Sur une base pilote, on avait construit les cuisines. Donc, est-ce que je peux savoir du Chef commissaire en sus de ce cas qu'il a parlé au niveau des réseaux sociaux, s'il y a eu d'autres cas reportés dans les écoles par rapport aux enfants qui ont été malades par rapport aux repas servis?

The Chief Commissioner: Officiellement, il y a aucun rapport d'enfant malade dans les écoles mais moi, j'ai rencontré des parents qui peut-être disaient la quantité de nourriture qui a été donnée à certain peut-être, on doit augmenter, à d'autres, on a donné plus. Mais c'est des questions subjectives. Dans une classe, vous avez des gros mangeurs. Vous avez aussi des élèves qui ne mangent pas comme... Pas tous les élèves du même âge, même classe mangent pareil. Mais il n'y a pas eu de rapport. Il n'y a pas eu de malade. Personne n'a été rapporté à l'hôpital et c'est une très grande aventure qu'on commence. Maintenant, c'est au *caterers* surtout, ceux qui ont la responsabilité de préparer, de s'améliorer, de moderniser leur cuisine. J'étais à St Joseph récemment. On a pu voir comment eux, ils ont des cuisines centrales et après, la nourriture est cuisinée et transportée dans des récipients hygiéniques qui conserve la nourriture et la chaleur vers les écoles.

The Minority Leader: Puis-je savoir, le Chef commissaire, *what is the reporting line when we have complaints?* Le parent rapporte au responsable de l'école. Après, qu'est-ce qui se passe?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, avant d'arriver aux parents, il y a l'élève lui-même. Si un élève trouve que la nourriture qui lui est servi a des problèmes, ben, l'élève va rapporter à son... *The line of reporting is through the project committee* et il appartient à la direction de l'école de faire remonter au *project committee*. C'est-à-dire, la Commission de l'éducation tout problème éventuel qui peut être constaté dans la livraison, dans la distribution, dans la qualité de la nourriture et nous avons le *Public Health Officer* qui est disponible et qui passe partout dans les écoles ainsi que je crois, deux nutritionnistes qui ont la responsabilité chacun la moitié des écoles, ils sont reparti, le travail et ils passent, ils regardent. Justement à l'école de La Ferme, le nutritionniste était présent. C'est un officier du gouvernement et dans son rapport, il dit qu'il n'y a pas eu ce qui a été publié sur Facebook et que tout était dans l'ordre.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je vais poser une question par rapport au *caterer*. Donc, le Chef commissaire vient de donner des informations par rapport au prix *per meal per student* et je vois qu'il a un moment, parlé de catégorisation des élèves en termes de leur classe. J'ai vu, je crois, qu'il a parlé de Grade 1 à 3 – Rs60 et Grade 4 à 6 – Rs100 *per meal* et par contre, dans le contrat des *caterers*, on parle de l'âge: *less than nine or more than nine*. Et aujourd'hui, un enfant qui est en grade 3, il a neuf ans. Avec la situation qu'on a vu avec COVID, donc, est-ce qu'apparent aussi, M. le Chef commissaire peut-il nous confirmer s'il y a une décision qui a été prise à ce niveau ? Est-ce que désormais, ces enfants qui ont neuf ans et qui sont en grade 3 seront pourvus des repas qui coûtent Rs100 par rapport à leur âge et non pas Rs60? Est-ce que ce détail a été... détail mais très important aussi, a été *brought to your attention*?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, c'est le nutritionniste qui va décider selon l'âge quelle catégorie de prix l'enfant va tomber. Mais je remercie la *Minority Leader* d'avoir attiré notre attention sur le contrat des *caterers* et je prends note pour que la Commission modifie le critère, que ce soit plus l'âge mais la classe effective dans laquelle l'enfant se trouve. Donc, *Grade 1 to Grade 3* et *Grade 4 to Grade 6*. Le paiement et le contrat doivent être d'après ce critère; pas l'âge.

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Mr Chairperson: Time is over. Respected Members, please be informed that PQ B/23, B/24, B/25, B/27, B/28, B/19 and B/20 have been withdrawn.

PATIENTS SENT TO MAURITIUS – SEPTEMBER 2022 TO DATE

(No. B/19) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to patients sent to Mauritius for further treatment since September 2022 to date, he will inform the House about the:

- (a) total number of patients per illness sent together with the total number of accompaniers;
- (b) number of patients and/or accompaniers accommodated at the selected hotel, and
- (c) amount paid and/or due to the selected hotel?

(Withdrawn)

ADMISSION OF PATIENTS – HEALTH INSTITUTIONS – RODRIGUES

(No. B/20) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the admission of patients in the health institutions in Rodrigues, he will state and table a breakdown of the:

- (a) bed capacity of each admitting institution, and
- (b) average occupation rate per institution since January 2023?

(Withdrawn)

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS – SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEME

(No. B/23) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to construction materials procured by his Commission pertaining to the Social Housing Scheme, from July 2022 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) total amount thereof per item, together with the costs incurred respectively;
- (b) number of beneficiaries concerned so far together with the corresponding amount already distributed, and
- (c) number of housing units having already reached the foundation stage and those already completed, respectively?

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(Withdrawn)

CONTRACT AWARDED – LAND SURVEYING AROUND RODRIGUES

(No. B/24) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the contract awarded by his Commission for land surveying around Rodrigues, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) selected contractor indicating the contractual period and contract value, and
- (b) number of lots surveyed per region?

(Withdrawn)

**PARCELLING ON STATE LANDS – RECLAIMED LAND AREA
– BAIE AUX HUÎTRES AND BAIE LASCARS**

(No. B/25) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the parcelling on State lands on the reclaimed land area at Baie aux Huîtres and Baie Lascars, following the recent decision of the Executive Council to resume underdeveloped lots, he will state to the House on the number of lots resumed to date per site and the reasons therefor?

(Withdrawn)

**LAUNCHING OF GIRLS AND WOMEN LEADERSHIP HUB
– WOMEN’S DAY 2021**

(No. B/27) The Second Local Region Member of Baie Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Women’s Affairs and Others whether, in regard to the Girls and Women Leadership Hub launched on the occasion of the Women’s Day 2021, she will state to the House the different activities carried out in connection therewith as at to date?

(Withdrawn)

**RECENT RECRUITMENT OF GENERAL WORKERS
– CONTRACTUAL BASIS**

(No. B/28) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the recent recruitment of General Workers on a contractual basis at the level of his Commission, he will inform the House on:

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- (a) the recruitment procedure preferred therefor;
- (b) the number of recruits, indicating their terms and conditions of employment, and
- (c) table a copy their contract of employment?

(Withdrawn)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioner for Health and Others: Merci, M. le président, de me donner la parole pour un *statement* à l'ajournement.

(i) ACTIVITIES – WORLD CANCER DAY

M. le président, permettez-moi de mettre en lumière certains faits désastreux au sujet du cancer. Environ 10 millions de personne meurent annuellement du cancer dans le monde. Le cancer est la deuxième cause du décès à l'échelle mondiale. 65% des décès dû au cancer se produisent dans les pays à revenu faible et intermédiaire.

M. le président, des millions de vie pourraient être sauvés chaque année grâce à la stratégie et à la ressource appropriée en matière de prévention, de dépistage précoce et de traitement. Les cancers peuvent être causés par de nombreux facteurs différents et les facteurs de risque sur lesquels il est possible de prendre des mesures suivantes, sont les suivantes: l'alcool, le tabac, le surpoids et l'obésité, l'alimentation et la nutrition, l'activité physique, les infections, les risques professionnels. Toutefois, il y a certains facteurs sur lesquels nous ne pouvons pas agir, comme l'âge, la tendance génétique, héréditaire, les substances cancérigènes.

M. le président, plus d'un tiers de cancer peuvent être évités en réduisant l'exposition au facteur de risque, tel que, le tabac, le surpoids, une activité physique, le manque de fruits et de légumes dans notre alimentation et la consommation d'alcool. Les vaccins permettent également à prévenir efficacement certains cancers, tel que le cancer osseux, contre le virus de l'hépatite B, VHB, et le virus de Papillome Humain, GPH, qui protègent respectivement le cancer du foie, les cancers du col de l'utérus.

L'unité de NCD Health Promotion en collaboration avec la Commission de la Santé croit que la détection précoce de nombreux cancers peut accroître les chances de réussite du traitement tout en réduisant fréquemment le coût des soins et les effets secondaires pour le patient. Nos centres de santé offrent des dépistages efficaces pour le cancer colorectal y compris la coloscopie, la gastroscopie, pour la détection du cancer de l'estomac et la

mammographie pour le cancer du sein, le cancer de col de l'utérus, *Pap Smear test* et la détection du cancer de la bouche.

J'ai le plaisir d'informer la Chambre qu'après les nombreuses décisions, le Dr Li Kam Yua, Gastroentérologue est venu volontairement et gratuitement à Rodrigues pour nous aider et cela chaque trois mois.

M. le président, en 2017, 226 décès ont été recensés à Rodrigues dont 13.7% causés par le cancer. 2018 sur 266, 11.3% étaient causés par le cancer. En 2019, le cancer occupait la deuxième place parmi les principales causes de décès. Pour 263 décès par cancer, ce taux s'élevait à 16%. En 2020, parmi les 292 décès recensés, 17.5% étaient dû au cancer. En 2021, les décès liés au cancer se chiffraient à 16.5 % au point total de 284 décès. Après avoir pris connaissance des statistiques, il y avait un besoin urgent d'identifier les piliers pour aider à réaliser une stratégie globale de gestion de cancer.

La Commission de la Santé en collaboration avec le service de promotion de la santé ne ménage aucun effort pour réduire le pourcentage des cas de décès dû au cancer au-dessus de 10% d'ici 2030.

Des dépistages de masse à travers l'île, séance d'information sur le cancer du col de l'utérus et du sein et l'importance des tests précis, sensibilisation au facteur de risque dans les collèges qui accueillent des enfants de Grade 13 ainsi que la communauté des milliers de travail, sensibiliser sur le comportement à risque dès le plus jeune âge, les séances de dépistage dans les hôpitaux, centre de santé de Mont Lubin et de La Ferme seront multipliées, identifier la lutte contre le tabac et la consommation d'alcool qui sont les premiers facteurs de risque du cancer et aussi la cause de beaucoup de décès.

La Journée Mondiale de Cancer est une journée internationale célébrée le 04 février de chaque année afin d'accroître la sensibilisation au cancer et d'encourager la prévention, les dépistages et le traitement.

La journée mondiale 2023 avait pour thème 'Des besoins plus juste'. Et à l'occasion de la journée mondiale contre le cancer, nous avons reconnu qu'il était possible de travailler ensemble. Et, c'est une affaire qui nous préoccupe tous et nous savons que chacun de nous a la capacité de faire une différence et de faire de véritables progrès ensemble. La commission en collaboration avec le *Health Promotion Unit* ont célébré cette journée 03 février 2023 au centre communautaire de Cascade Jean Louis avec l'organisation d'un méga dépistage de cancer de col de l'utérus et de sein. 126 femmes se sont soumises à des tests de dépistage du cancer du

col et du sein et quatre participantes ont effectués uniquement un examen de cancer de sein pour un total de 130 participantes.

Le dépistage du cancer du col de l'utérus et du sein sera réalisé dans tous les villages de Rodrigues, permettant ainsi la détection de la maladie, réduire le nombre de décès liés à ce genre de cancer. Le village de Roche Bon Dieu a également bénéficié de ce service qui a réuni 30 participants.

Pour renforcer davantage notre lutte contre le cancer, nous avons pris les mesures suivantes: réorganiser, restructurer les cliniques d'abandon de tabac – Tobacco Cessation Unit à Mont Lubin, travailler en étroite collaboration avec le ONG CRAC et les psychiatres afin de régler le problème de l'abus d'alcool et d'autres substances abusive. Mettre en place une unité psychiatrique à Mont Lubin qui sera opérationnelle fin mai 2023. L'achat d'un MRI pour la détection précoce de certain type de cancer. L'organisation de plusieurs camps médicaux avec des médecins d'Europe et de Maurice pour des consultations générales, la détection et le traitement de plusieurs maladies dont le cancer le 24 et le 25 février, nous avons organisé le premier et le prochain se fera au mois d'août. Nous accordons une attention particulière, M. le président, pour assurer un retour rapide de dépistage et minimiser le retard dans l'évaluation des cas. Merci, M. le président.

(ii) WORKSHOP – TEACHING EYE SURGERY FOUNDATION (TES FOUNDATION) AND SOCIETE DES MEDECINS ET DENTISTES AYANT ETUDIES EN FRANCE (SMEDEF)

Et le deuxième *statement* que je vais faire. M. le président, le 24 et le 25 février 2023, la Commission de la Santé a organisé un atelier d'une journée pour le personnel de la santé sur la Médecine Préventive, est une journée de dépistage et de sensibilisation pour les Rodriguais au Centre de Loisir de Baladirou.

M. le président, cette activité a été organisée en collaboration avec le TES Foundation et le SMEDEF (Société des Médecins et Dentistes de l'Ecole Française), qui se sont portés volontaires pour faire venir des spécialistes dans différents domaines, tel que, pédiatrie, gastroentérologie, médecine eugéniste et dentisterie. Le 24 février 2023, une conférence a eu lieu en présence des médecins, infirmiers, infirmières des services de santé de Rodrigues et aussi à tous les agents de santé communautaire.

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M. le président, la conférence a été dispensée par le Dr Khalid Jaufeerally, le Dr Damien Stechiok, Dr Francois Leung, le Dr Denis Li Kam Yua, pour en nommer que quelques-uns.

Le 25 février, M. le président, les Rodriguais ont participé à des séances de dépistages et à des discussions, sensibilisation interactive sur la question de santé publique et de la Commission de la Santé a fourni des moyens de transport participant depuis et vers le Centre Récréative de Baladirou et plus d'une centaine de personne y ont participé.

C'est la première fois qu'un tel évènement, M. le président, est organisé sur le sol Rodriguais et depuis la première étape de ce projet, ma commission a ouvert la voie pour permettre au personnel des services de santé et à la population de bénéficier des connaissances et l'expérience des professionnels dans les domaines médicaux.

M. le président, l'évènement fut un énorme succès car toutes les parties prenantes participantes ont été données des conférences à un public très réactif qui de son côté, saisit des connaissances utiles qui seraient appliquées au bénéfice des patients hospitalisés. De plus, compte tenu de l'intérêt du publique et du personnel Rodriguais, ma commission travaille toujours avec la SMEDEF, avec l'objectif d'organiser une deuxième activité sur une plus longue durée et avec plus de professionnels de santé dans le but de renforcer les connaissances et les compétences de notre personnel mais aussi à fournir des informations utiles à la population. Merci, M. le président.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the House be adjourned to Friday 24 March 2023 at 03.30 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.10 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Friday 24 March 2022 at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SCHOOL HOURS – SECONDARY INSTITUTION – RODRIGUES

(No. B/16) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will state and table the school hours for each secondary institution in Rodrigues specifying their respective starting and ending time?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, there are eight private aided secondary schools in Rodrigues out of which one is an ecumenical institution managed by the Catholic and Anglican Church and seven are managed by the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Ltd which falls under the purview of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As such, all colleges in Rodrigues are registered with the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA). The PSEA operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology as the regulating body and enforcement agency for the sector under the Private Secondary Education Authority Act (PSEA Act). The PSEA oversees the standards of Private Secondary Schools and school operations.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the school hours for the Rodrigues College are from 08.00 hours to 14.20 hours and that the school hours for the seven colleges managed by REDCO Ltd are from 08.15 hours to 14.30 hours.

I am further informed that during the registration of schools for 2023, the management of REDCO Ltd has been informed by the PSEA that as per guidelines the school hours should not be for more than six hours on any day inclusive of recreation time and breaks. Thus, it has been decided that classes will start from 08.30 hours to 14.30 hours.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following meeting with the management and Heads of Secondary schools operating under the purview of REDCO, I highlighted the need to have morning Assembly on a daily basis to build a culture of communication and enhance discipline among students.

Subsequently, the management of REDCO schools has decided to maintain the school hours from 08.15 hours to 14.30 hours so as to enable the holding of morning assembly from 08.15 to 08.30 hours. It is noted that Rodrigues College has also maintained its school hours.

As a consequence of holding daily morning assembly, the first period starts at 08.30 hours so that ultimately students are exposed to six hours of teaching time at school including breaks and recreation time as recommended by the PSEA.

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It should also be highlighted that Educators are in attendance on a voluntary basis to ensure the smooth holding of morning assemblies in schools.

According to the management of REDCO Ltd, morning assembly is being held satisfactorily in all seven colleges.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the importance of the morning assembly cannot be undermined. It is believed that daily morning assembly:

- Strengthens the school functioning;
- Develops a feeling of unity and promotes a positive school culture among all the students and teachers;
- Helps creating a disciplined school environment;
- Serves as a platform to facilitate moral and religious development of students; and
- Allows the sharing of information regarding daily activities and programmes as well as important announcements.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I strongly believe that this commendable practice of holding daily morning assembly in secondary schools should be encouraged as it enables schools to be more active.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the school hours for each secondary institution in Rodrigues specifying their respective starting and ending time.

FREE DISTRIBUTION – ANIMAL FEED TO BREEDERS

(No. B/17) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the free distribution of animal feed to breeders as a measure to address the shortage of fodder due to the recent drought, he will inform the House of the:

- (a) starting date thereof;
- (b) procedures followed for the procurement of animal feed; and
- (c) method used to identify the beneficiaries and to distribute the feed thereto?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) **Starting date thereof**

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The feed distribution started on Friday 27 January 2023 at La Ferme Agricultural Extension office.

Additional information:

Feed distribution were made in four distribution centres around the island as detailed below:

- (i) La Ferme for regions Electoral 1 and 2
- (ii) Port Sud Est for electoral regions 3 and 2 (partly mainly South East mostly)
- (iii) Trefles for region 6
- (iv) Citronelle for regions 4, 5 and parts of regions 3 and 6

Owing to the severity of drought in the coastal regions particularly the western region, decision was taken to distribute feed to farmers in coastal zones first. As regions 1 and 2 have the most important population of ruminants, the Commission for Agriculture start the distribution at La Ferme to cover the coastal zones of regions 1 and 2 for the first consignment of feed received in January 2023.

Then distributions were done in the other centres with the same principle that is from coastal zone toward the central ridge of the Island.

(b) Procedures follow for the procurement of the animal feed

As a matter of emergency, the Departmental Bid Committee decided on 27 December 2022 that emergency procurement procedures be initiated for the purchase of four containers of animal feed from Livestock Feed Limited and Meaders Co Ltd to alleviate the problem of lack of fodder faced by farmers due to the severe drought in Rodrigues. It should be noted that only Livestock Feed Limited responded to the invitation to quote for supply of ruminant Supplement Feed. Letter of award was issued on 11 January 2023 in favour of Livestock Feed Ltd.

(c) Method used to identify the beneficiaries and to distribute the feed

All ruminant farmers are eligible for the scheme provided they have at least 2 cows or 4 sheep/goat of 1 cow plus 1 sheep/goat. However, priority was given to breeders whose animals were vaccinated against the Foot and Mouth Disease in the year 2021 and have been recorded on the Vaccination Database of the Veterinary Services.

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For the feed distribution programme, ruminant breeders were informed through radio communiqué (main content detailed below) on a daily basis:

1. In which centre/office feed distribution will be done
2. Breeders of which zone will be covered
3. And at what time corresponding delivery will be done

The documents were needed for verification and feed delivery:

1. National Identity Card
2. List of ear tag number if available

Farmers who were not on the Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccination data base 2021 were requested to fill a complaint sheet (**copy at annex 1**) individually at their respective distribution centre.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE – FRAUD/MALPRACTICE

– SALE OF MEAT

(No. B/18) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Departmental Committee set up to enquire on the alleged case of fraud/malpractice on the sale of meat at subsidised prices, he will state to the House on where matter stands?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that no report has been finalised up to now.

BOTTLED WATER DISTRIBUTION – ELDERLY

(No. B/21) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the bottled water distribution for the elderly in villages around Rodrigues, he will state to the House:

- (a) the mechanism set up therefor;
- (b) the number of beneficiaries and total number of water jars and/or bottles distributed to date, and
- (c) any complaint or incident reported to the police during the distribution in the region of La Ferme/Grand La Fouche Corail and the nature thereof?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is no scheme for distribution of bottle water for the elderly around Rodrigues.

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However, the Chief Commissioner in a water crisis meeting held on 30 November 2022 decided that 10, 000 jars of water of 18 litres be distributed as extreme urgency that will be threatening and to seriously compromise the life of the more vulnerable of our citizens and the quality of life of people falling in the following vulnerable categories; namely

- (i) Basic Pension;
- (ii) Basic Invalid Pension;
- (iii) Widows Pension; and
- (iv) Orphan Pension.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, kindly note that my Commission was responsible for the distribution of bottle jars of 18 litres only.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, my Commission set up a mechanism for the distribution as follows:

- (i) The distribution of water to be done in the presence of one Social Security Officer at each distribution point;
- (ii) Each Social Security Officer will check as per list of beneficiary for the respective region;
- (iii) The beneficiaries are classified as per their address recorded on the system;
- (iv) Those beneficiaries whose name does not appear on the Social Security List were requested to call at Social Security Office of their region to collect their water bottle on working days.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

As regards to part (b) of the question, the number of beneficiaries is based on the register of total number of persons drawing:

- (i) Basic Pension;
- (ii) Basic Invalid Pension;
- (iii) Widows Pension; and
- (iv) Orphan Pension.

As per Rodrigues Paysheet Social Security for December 2022.

The total number of jars distributed is 1, 876.

The total number of packs distributed is 8, 758 (2 packs per beneficiaries).

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the Chief Commissioner's Office was responsible for the procurement side of this decision.

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However, we were informed by the Supplier that the amount of water jars requested were not available as only 1,876 jars were in stock.

A decision was taken by the Chief Commissioner's Office to replace the 18 litres jars by 2 packs of 6 bottles of 1.5 litres.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as for part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Divisional Commander that on 3 February 2023, a case was reported at La Ferme Police Station against Mrs. L. A for having taken a jar of 18 litres of water without authorisation.

I am informed that enquiry has started and pending its completion, it will not be proper to make any further comment on this matter.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson Sir.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PERSONS 2022

(No. B/22) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the International Day for Older Persons 2022, he will state to the House:

- (a) the different activities organised;
- (b) the total costs incurred therefor including a breakdown thereof and tabling same, and
- (c) if all payments in connection thereto have been effected accordingly?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regards to previous year's celebration whereby only a picnic was organised, I consulted the Elderly Association and we all agreed that for the year of 2022, there will be a different approach to celebrate such a memorable day.

This is why there was a series of activities prior to the celebration of the Elderly Day.

The staging of "*Bananin Costé*" was therefore scheduled in the following villages prior to the culminating of the main activity on 1st October 2022 namely:

- (i) 10 September 2022 – Mon Plaisir Leisure Centre
- (ii) 18 September 2022 at Riviere Cocos;
- (iii) 24 September 2022 at Grande Montagne;
- (iv) 25 September 2022 at Manique La Ferme.

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I wish to inform the House that the International Day for Elderly was celebrated on 1st October 2022 at Pointe Coton.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

The different activities organised on 1st October 2022 were:

- (i) Picnic at Pointe Coton;
- (ii) Traditional Culinary Prize contest;
- (iii) Traditional dances; and
- (iv) Staging of “*Bananin Costé*”.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

The cost incurred are as follows:

Activities prior to Elderly Day

Items	Amount (Rs)
Staging of ‘‘Bananin Costé	140,000
Provision of Sound System (45,000 for Pointe Coton)	89,000
Conveyance of chairs & tables + floral arrangement	70,400
Rental of chairs, provision for local juices, renting of pagoda, tents banners, meals, theatre show	106,754
Total	406,154

Activities on the Elderly Day

Items	Amount (Rs)
Refund of Rs 150 for lunch & Rs 100 for transport to 1488 elderly persons who attended the event	372,000.00
Temporary supply of Electricity by CEB	4900.05
Various (Traditional Culinary Prize contest, Dance performance, conveyance of pagoda tend, podium, tables, allowances for moderator, printed t-shirts	49,950.00
Total	426,850.05

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Total: Rs 406,154.00 + Rs 426,850.05 = Rs 833,004.05

Programme: 5106 – Social Protection

Economic Classification: 22900934: Promotion and Welfare of Older Persons

Voted Provision: Rs 900,000

Amount Spent: Rs 833,004.05

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to part (c), I am pleased to inform the House that all claims submitted to my office have been settled.

Any claimed that payment has not been effected is due to the fact that claims/invoices have not been submitted to my Commission.

REPORTED CASES – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(No. B/26) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the reported cases of domestic violence, she will obtain information to state on:

- (a) the number of protection and/or eviction order(s) granted for the last three years;
- (b) when the shelter for victims thereof came into operation together with its monthly running costs;
- (c) the number of women and children housed thereat since its operation, and
- (d) if any decision has been taken to change the management thereof and, if so, as from when and providing the reasons therefor?

Reply:Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one of the mandate of the Family Welfare and Protection Unit (FWPU) of the Commission for Women's Affairs, Child Development and Family Welfare is to address problem of Gender Based Violence including Domestic Violence. Spouses are protected from Domestic Violence under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) 1997 and the act provides for issue of protection order, occupation order and tenancy order.

Types of Domestic Violence dealt under the PDVA 1997 include Physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence and emotional violence. Various strategies are adopted to address Domestic Violence including intervention, prevention, rehabilitation strategies and the

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following services are offered to victims by the Family Welfare and Protection Unit of the Commission for Child Development and Family Welfare:

- Legal and psychological advice to support women victims of domestic violence and their children.
- Assistance to victims of domestic violence with regards to their application for a protection order, occupation order and tenancy order under the protection from domestic violence act.
- Provision of psycho-social support as a follow-up following provision of Court orders under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act 1997.
- Referral to other institutions as appropriate.
- Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaigns as prevention measures to address the issue of domestic violence.

The Commission has also under its aegis a Temporary Emergency Shelter for victims of Domestic Violence which came into operation in December 2019 and is managed by the Mauritius Family Protection and Welfare Association (MFPWA).

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the number of application for protection orders and protection orders granted for the last three years are:

Year	Application for Protection Order	Protection Orders granted
2020	99	70
2021	87	68
2022	67	46
January 2023 to 13 March 2023	20	17

The Family Welfare and Protection Unit does not deal with Eviction Order.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the shelter for victims of domestic violence came into operation in November 2019 and the monthly running costs depends on the number of victims housed thereat and is of an average of Rs 70,000 per month provided as grant to the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (MFPWA) plus security services at the

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shelter to the tune of Rs 45,000.00 per month and rental cost of the building which is being used for the Emergency Shelter for an amount of Rs 40,000 per month.

The number of women and children housed thereat since its operation is 31 women and 38 children.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 10 February 2023, has approved that the Commission for Women's Affairs signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Gender Links, Mauritius for the management of the Emergency Shelter.

The change in management is in line with my new policy for the Emergency Shelter which will be aligned on the Half-way Home managed by Gender links in Mauritius. The Half-way home serves as a secured housing not only for women victims of domestic violence and their children but also for other vulnerable women from the age of 18 such as homeless women, abused young girls, teenage mothers and their children.

For those women victims of domestic violence who require longer period of stay than the 15 days until they receive a protection order to return to their place of residence or move to another place or other vulnerable women who requires longer rehabilitation and psycho-social and social supports, they can opt to stay for a longer period.

Residents in the Half-way home are provided with counselling and psychological support as well as in-house training that enhance their self-esteem, empower them and teach them about personal hygiene. For those with poor academic background, they are given support to restart/renew their academic ventures. Residents are also encouraged to join the labour market in order to be financially independent.

The change of management is scheduled tentatively for the month of April 2023 or by the time all procedures are completed for the change in management whichever the earlier.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

POLYTECHNICS MAURITIUS LTD IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/29) The Fourth Local Region Member for Maréchal (Mr J. P. Spéville) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to courses dispensed by the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd in Rodrigues, he will obtain information and inform the House on:

- (a) the number of students already enrolled in the different programmes;

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- (b) the number of staff and their respective grades; and
- (c) If any new course(s) will be run for academic year 2023 and, if so, to give details?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly represented by the Commission for Vocational Training and Polytechnics Mauritius Limited (PML) on 15 December 2022. The objective of the MoU was to structure programmes around fields which are either poorly being serviced or not being catered for in Rodrigues through PML's learning methodology and philosophy centered around the 4Ps – Practice based, Project-oriented, Peer to Peer and Portfolio learning.

The MoU establishes a framework of cooperation between both parties to use their best endeavours to provide training in technical and vocational fields in Rodrigues.

- (a) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that at present, 143 students of which 83 full-time students and 60 part-time students are enrolled in the following six programmes:

SN	Course	Number of students
1	Diploma in Information Technology (Cybersecurity) (FT)	20
2	Diploma in Interactive & Digital Media (FT)	15
3	Diploma in Interactive & Digital Media (PT)	30
4	Diploma in Industrial Logistics (FT)	24
5	Diploma in Leisure Management (FT)	24
6	Higher Certificate in Coaching Science (PT)	30
TOTAL		143

These programmes are being delivered over a total duration of two and a half years to three years inclusive of a period of internship.

- (b) Mr Chairperson, Sir, in line with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and

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Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd, PML has delegated an officer from Mauritius to act as Project Manager to oversee the operations of the campus in Rodrigues.

The Memorandum of Understanding also provides that PML shall employ local administrative and support staff for the day to day running of the campus in Rodrigues. Hence, technical and academic staff are sourced from staff working at the institution in Mauritius until PML builds a pool of local trained personnel over the next two years.

In addition to the Project Manager, there are currently seven full-time local staff working at the Rodrigues Campus comprising one Administrative Officer, two Associate Officers, one Front Desk Officer and three Attendants/Drivers.

(c) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd intends to run 15 new courses during the academic year 2023 under six main clusters, that is:

(i) Three full-time courses in IT and Emerging Technologies:

- Diploma in Digital Marketing;
- Diploma in Emerging Technologies (Internet of Things); and
- Diploma in Information Systems (Business Computing)

(ii) Two courses in Engineering:

- Diploma in Interior Architecture; and
- Diploma in Industrial Logistics (PT)

(iii) Three courses in Tourism, Leisure and Sports:

- Higher Certificate in Sports, Recreation and Fitness Management;
- Youth Work Essentials (Short Course); and
- HACCP 1 and HACCP 2

(iv) Two courses in Nursing:

- Diploma in Midwifery (PT); and
- National Diploma in Nursing

(v) Three courses in Soft Skills and Languages:

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- Soft Skills Bootcamp/ School Leavers (Short Course);
 - Soft Skills Course/Adult (Short Course); and
 - Mandarin Course for beginners
- (vi) Two courses in Arts and Crafts
- National Certificate in Fashion and Design; and
 - Higher National Diploma in Art and Design/Fashion

UPGRADING WORKS – CASCADE JEAN LOUIS

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/30) The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to upgrading works done at Cascade Jean Louis Community Health Centre, he will inform the House about the works undertaken, the name of successful bidder/s, the total cost of the project and the budget item vote which funded same?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the project for upgrading works at Cascade Jean Louis Community Health Centre was awarded to SDR Construction Ltd. on 21 December 2021 for the sum of Rs 4,588,000.00 Exclusive of VAT.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

The project details are the following scope of works:

Upgrading and Rehabilitation Works at Cascade Jean Louis Centre, Rodrigues consist of the following scope of works:

- Replacement of tiles;
- Painting of whole building; internal and external;
- Replacement of all openings; doors and windows;
- Upgrading of electrical works and plumbing works;
- Upgrading of sewer network;
- Extension of building for additional store, toilets and waiting area;
- New fence and gate;
- Landscaping works;

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- New asphalted entrance area; and
- Rainwater harvesting.

Upon progress of works, additional works were required:

- High level fencing to volley pitch;
- New fence at entrance;
- New RC drain for storm water drainage; and
- Renovation of existing bin.

The Departmental Bid Committee at its meeting of 22 June 2022 approved a variation of 23.52% representing an additional amount of Rs 1, 079, 299.21 (Exclusive VAT) for the additional works to be carried out and the application for additional fees.

The project contract value therefore increased from
MUR 4,588,000.00 (VAT Excl.) to MUR 5,667,299.21 (VAT Excl.).

Project: Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Cascade Jean Louis
Community Health Centre

Contract Price: Rs 7,791,789.00

Programme: 5 – 101 – General

Economic Classification: 31113014 – Health Infrastructure

Voted Provision : Rs 34,953,000

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the project was handed over to the Commission on 1st July 2022 and is under defects liability until 30 June 2023.