

**B/169 The Honourable Third member for Montague Blanche and
Grand River South East (Mr Guinness)**

To ask Dr the Honourable Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries: -

With regards to the missions undertaken by the Chairman and the General Manager Agricultural Marketing Board since their appointment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, a list thereof, indicating in each case (a) the countries visited (b) the purpose of the visit and (c) the expenditure incurred for air fares and *per diem* allowances?

REPLY

Mr Speaker Sir,

I have been informed by the Agricultural Marketing Board that since their appointment, the General Manager and the Chairman of the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) have proceeded on three missions abroad.

- (a) The countries visited are China from 06 to 20 August 2006 and India from 7th to 19th December 2006 and from 22nd to 28th February 2007.
- (b) (i) As regards the purpose of the visit to China, it aimed at strengthening business relationships with the existing three suppliers. The mission also prospected for other new and reliable sources of supplies following which a potential new supplier has been identified. As AMB intends to go into agro processing activities and as such through that mission, a visit has been effected to Jinan Fruit Research Institute All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives. The mission has also looked for alternative sources for supply of potato, onions and potato seeds. However, this has not been materialized in view of stringent sanitary and phytosanitary conditions.

The House may wish to note that AMB has always procured garlic on a monthly basis and since year 2006, procurement of garlic is being effected in a 3-monthly basis and a saving of approximately Rs 2 M on the cost price has been noted. AMB has opened discussions with the existing suppliers for forward buying of garlic at a fixed price. AMB expects a saving of approximately Rs.5 M with this mode of procurement.

(b)(ii) For the December 2006 mission to India, the two-member team visited the Bhabha Irradiation Plant in Mumbai in connection with the possibility of importing irradiated onions with longer shelf life. Following this visit, business ties with existing suppliers have been strengthened and AMB is contemplating imports of irradiated onions from India as from mid December this year. The mission prospected for new and reliable sources of supplies of existing products and also new products like spices and chillies. The team also held discussions with Messrs NAFED, Shree Bhagwati and Glassex, suppliers of potatoes and onions over claims (of Rs.7.3M) against those producers due to poor quality of products supplied in 2005/2006. Discussions have been opened with the latter suppliers and AMB expects to recoup part of those claims as from June 2007.

(b)(iii) The purpose of the February 2007 mission to India was to attend a Buyer-Seller Meet (BSM) on Potato organized by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India at Agra and Uttar Pradesh. This meeting enabled buyers to have direct interaction with the growers and exporters of Agra.

(c) As regards expenditure incurred for airfares and per diem allowances, the information is being tabled.

PQ B/169- Missions undertaken by Chairman and General Manager ,
Agricultural Marketing Board

Period	Country Visited	Costs (Rs)
(i).06 to 20 August 2006	China	Airfares 110,886.00 Per diem: 221,603.58
(ii) 07 to 19 December 2006	India	Airfares: 35,020.00 Per diem: 214,023.80
(iii) 22 to28 February 2007	India	Travel cost and stay for two day sponsored by APEDA. AMB informed that the remaining costs were met by the GM and Chairman.