INDEPENDENCE ROAD, VACOAS - ROAD ACCIDENT

(No. B/165) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the road accident which caused the death of Mr G. F., on Friday 5 October 2012, at Independence Road, in Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out there into.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police inquiry into all the circumstances relating to the accident which occurred on Friday 05 October 2012, resulting in the death of Mr G. F., has been completed, and the case file has been transmitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that on the day that Mr G.F. passed away, that is, 11 October 2012, the Police arrested Mr S.P., driver of the private car involved in the accident, and a provisional charge for the offence of “Involuntary Homicide by Imprudence” was lodged against him before the District Court of Curepipe. He was bailed out on the same day after furnishing a surety of Rs10,000 and after entering in a recognizance of Rs25,000. His next Court appearance has been fixed for 04 June 2013.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, communications between the Police Department and the widow of Mr G. F. can be established to explain the process to her and to keep her updated on the progress.

The Prime Minister: I tend to agree with the hon. Member. I suppose hon. Member has asked the question because she probably feels that this hasn't been the case. I would tend to agree. We have said in the House and I have said myself in this House, and in fact, I must say that the Commissioner of Police has already put this in the framework of his Police service, but nevertheless it depends on the individual station, the people who are in charge. So, that is precisely why the Bill which is in front of the House, the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, actually makes clear provision to keep victims informed and treats them with considerations.
MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE - ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF POLICE & SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE - VACANCIES

(No. B/166) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of vacancies presently existing in the post of –

(a) Assistant Commissioner of Police, and
(b) Superintendent of Police, indicating when they will be filled.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on many occasions informed the House that promotion in the Police Force falls under the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission.

It is to be highlighted that vacancies in the Civil Service including the Police are not filled automatically but in accordance with the exigencies of the service. Accordingly, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on the 06 December 2011, 13 Assistant Commissioners of Police and 38 Superintendents of Police have been promoted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a result of these promotions respectively to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police and of Superintendent of Police, vacancies have arisen, also consequential vacancies. Apart from that, there is also the retirement of Police Officers who have recently been promoted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I did inform the House in a reply last week, the exercise is ongoing and is nearing its completion.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there are growing frustration among Police Officers of different grades and this is leading to a demotivation?

The Prime Minister: I hope not, but, as I said, this is a quite complicated exercise from what I understand because there is a performance related part in that. That is why it is taking a bit longer but it is nearing completion from what I understand.
Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that many branches and divisions all over are presently being headed by Superintendents of Police instead of ACPs?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker, Sir, but if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will look into it.

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - COMPOSITION

(No. B/167) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the National Disaster Management Committee, he will state the –

(a) composition thereof, indicating the name of the Chairperson, and

(b) number of meetings held, since 01 January 2013 to date, indicating the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee which has been in operation since a long time is a policy organ which defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders before, during and after natural disasters. It is chaired by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

A National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre was set up in 2010, under the command of the Commissioner of Police, as an operational arm of the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee, to ensure timely disaster management response on the ground.

In cases of national emergency/crisis such as cyclones, tsunamis, torrential rains, landslides or whatever, the Centre is activated and initiates all necessary actions to deal with the situation.

I must point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my Office has obtained assistance from the French Authorities from Reunion Island for the consolidation of the activities of the Centre.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and the Commissioner of Police that the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee and the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre
Crisis Committee comprise, among others, representatives of the Prime Minister’s Office; the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping; the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions; the Ministry of Education and Human Resources; the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands; the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life; the Police Department; the Mauritius Meteorological Services Department; the Government Fire Services Department; the National Transport Authority; the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation; the Central Electricity Board; the Central Water Authority and the Mauritius Red Cross Society.

Representatives of other Ministries/Departments/Organisations are co-opted to form part of the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee and the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre Crisis Committee as and when required.

In regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the period of 01 January 2013 to 14 April 2013, the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre Crisis Committee met on eight occasions under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Police with a view to coordinating and monitoring the actions of the Police and the various agencies deployed on the ground to deal with emergencies and disasters.

I am further informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service that the Central Cyclone and Other Disasters Committee met on three occasions.

During these meetings, the Committee discussed mainly flood resilience measures that need to be taken to mitigate the effects of flash floodings. In that respect, decisions were taken to -

(i) devise an enhanced communication strategy among stakeholders involved in disaster response and management;

(ii) review the mechanism of broadcasting weather bulletins to better inform the public;

(iii) prepare a Protocol concerning flash floods;

(iv) finalise the technical aspects of the modalities for alerting the population about eventual disasters through SMS;
(v) update all flood-prone areas in the light of the findings of the reports commissioned by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development;

(vi) examine the advisability of introducing legislation to enforce security measures such as provision for emergency exits, water tight doors and an efficient evacuation system in underground parkings and underpasses. As an immediate measure, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is carrying out a survey of all underground parkings and underpasses to assess the security level and to submit recommendations as appropriate to the Committee, and also

(vii) organise continuous public awareness campaigns which would contribute to a better understanding of the potential risks of flash floods as well as flood resilience measures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service that a meeting of the Central Cyclone and Other Disasters Committee was held in the morning of Saturday 13 April 2013 in the wake of the bad weather associated with cyclone Imelda.

The Committee decided that the alert system by SMS would be made operational, on a pilot basis, on that very day. The Police and the Fire Services Department were requested to mobilize their resources to strategic places to attend to any emergency. The Police was tasked with the responsibility of contacting owners of buildings in flood-prone areas in Port Louis to ensure that underground parkings and underpasses were immediately closed in case of floodings. Finally, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping was requested to closely monitor landslide-prone areas and to liaise with Police and other stakeholders for assistance should the need arise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate to the House that Government is leaving no stone unturned to enhance our emergency response system. In this connection, a Singapore delegation visited Mauritius from 06 to 10 April 2013 to assist Government in understanding the factors thought to have contributed to the flash flood, if any, on 30 March last, analyse if
appropriate actions were taken during the response and develop a Terms of Reference for future disaster risk management strategies.

The Singapore experts have already submitted their preliminary conclusions and these are being examined.

Also, I should like to point out that Ms Bellers, an expert with international experience in emergency preparedness and the management of humanitarian responses has been appointed to advise Government in the setting up of a distinct Disaster Management Centre to be established within a legislative framework for the disaster management in Mauritius.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, le Premier ministre peut-il nous dire, après l’inondation du 13 février, parce que Port Louis était paralysé, combien de fois entre le 13 février et le 30 mars ce comité s’est réuni et, si oui, quelles sont les délibérations? Peut-il lay on the Table the Minutes de ces réunions?

The Prime Minister: I heard the hon. Member say after the 13 of February, but Port Louis was not paralysed on the 13 of February…

(Interuptions)

no, not paralysed.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Le Premier ministre peut-il nous dire combien de fois entre le 13 février et le 30 mars le comité s’est réuni ? Peut-il nous dire le nombre de réunions, peut-il table les Minutes of Proceedings de ces réunions ?

The Prime Minister: I did answer the question – eight and three.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister as to the reasons why the main recommendation of the Fact Finding Committee on ex-Lola Flooding, that is, the establishment of a statutory Centre for Disaster Management by an Act of Parliament has not been implemented until now when we know that here in this House, we have sat 104 times since 2009?
The Prime Minister: First of all, let me just remind the hon. Member that I am the one who appointed Justice Domah. There was no such thing. I appointed so I take the responsibility….

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The second thing…

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course, a lot of actions have been taken. The hon. Member wants to make propaganda for the first committee – he should go ahead and make!

(Interruptions)

Ask him how many measures have been taken!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: As for legislative framework, it takes time. We have to examine other - not just what is said in the report. We have to get advice from others, including …

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member can say what he wants, but, I am telling you, Government does not run like this!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous dire - concernant la réunion qui a eu lieu le 30 mars - à quel moment il a été informé des délibérations de cette réunion?
The Prime Minister: As soon as the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Commissioner of the Police, and the Meteo started saying that there were dangerous floods that were occurring at that time.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Seeruttun!

FLASH FLOODS – SMF – DEPLOYMENT

(No. B/168) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the time at which the members of the Special Mobile Force were deployed in the affected areas, indicating –

(a) the number thereof who were deployed, and
(b) their respective posting.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that not only members of the Special Mobile Force, but also other Units of the Police Force were indeed expeditiously deployed in the affected areas at the material time. However, since the use of operational control of the members of the Police Force falls under the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police under section 71(4) of the Constitution, it is for him to decide on the specific number and places of deployment of members of the Special Mobile Force as well as of other Police Units on the ground.

However, I can assure the House and the hon. Member that there had been active involvement of the various Units of the Police Force, as well as that of the Fire Services, to provide vital assistance to motorists and pedestrians who were in danger.

Furthermore, as the House may be aware, a Judicial Inquiry will, by operation of the law, be held into the causes of death of the victims of 30 March 2013 as the result of the flash floods.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would not be of the view that the whole Police Force, including the Special Mobile Force, should have been placed on national alert, with even off-duty personnel recalled?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I keep saying that these events were unprecedented. There were flash floods; it is not something that you had plenty of warning
about. As soon as the flash floods started and it looked as if that there were going to be continuing rains, the whole operations started. That is what happened.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The hon. Prime Minister stated that the various Units of the Police Force were deployed. How does the hon. Prime Minister reconcile the fact that one Minister of his Government - the Minister of Labour - has publicly stated that he has not seen Police Officers during the whole floods in Port Louis? He publicly made statements.

**The Prime Minister:** I must tell the hon. Member that there were flash floods. I do not know whether he actually said that or not, but…

*(Interruptions)*

No, the Police had to be covered! I have photographs. I can show a photograph. They have to wear different suits because of the weather.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

**The Prime Minister:** They have to protect themselves. Maybe that is the reason, but there were Police Officers there. That is a fact. We have photographs to show this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

Silence!

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please!

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the Police Standing Orders, in particular Standing Order 134, I think, provide for, in cases of floods, what should the Police do and there are provisions which are spelt out in details about the deployment of the different Units of the Police Force in case of floods?
On 30 March, it would seem that the Police had not adhered to the provisions of these Standing Orders. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us why this was not the case?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely why - I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition understands. The point is that these were flash floods and unprecedented. If the Leader of the Opposition sees the Singaporean Preliminary Report, they already said that this was unexpected, unprecedented and could not have been predicted. Even in Singapore - that’s what they said - they have problems in places that they never had floods before. As soon as this event was occurring, and it was clear that this was happening, then they were deployed but, at the minute it happened, they could not, because nobody knew.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous dire pourquoi dans des régions sinistrées, comme Canal Dayot et Pailles, ni le jour du désastre, ni le lendemain, il n’y avait aucun membre de la SMF sur place pour déblayer la région?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is actually untrue. I have been there and I have seen them.

(Interruptions)

It is untrue. The hon. Member is lying!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please!

MAURITIAN KREOL – PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION - FORMAL USE

(No. B/169) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritian Kreol, he will state if, further to the findings of the
2011 Population Census, Government will authorize and facilitate the formal use thereof in public administration, including in Parliament, local authorities, courts of law and for the application procedures having regard to social benefits and housing.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will note that it is this Government - please note, it is this Government - which has given official recognition to Mauritian Kreol and approved its introduction in schools.

It is also this Government which has set up a Creole-Speaking Union by virtue of the Creole-Speaking Union Act, one of the objectives of which is precisely to promote the Creole language in its spoken and written forms.

(Interruptions)

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Health, do not interrupt!

**The Prime Minister:** Besides, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has recently commended Mauritius for the establishment of language unions and the inclusion of *Kreol Morisien* and Bhojpuri as heritage languages and mother tongues in the primary school curricula.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the use of Mauritian Kreol in our Courts of Law, I am informed by the Master and Registrar that Kreol is already widely used and the usual process is that evidence is habitually adduced in Creole in all cases, except where foreigners are called to depone or are litigants. In fact, the law provides that any person may give his evidence in the language with which he is best acquainted. All Courts in Mauritius have always admitted depositions in Mauritian Kreol by parties and witnesses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in my reply to previous Parliamentary Questions on this subject matter, there are a number of implications that would need to be addressed before one can even contemplate the formal use of Creole language in the National Assembly.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since we do now have an agreed standardised spelling and grammar for Mauritian Kreol, would the hon. Prime Minister not agree that it is a basic human rights issue that whereas statements are recorded by the Police from individuals in Creole, but without any training of the Police Officers, in Courts the statements are produced as evidence, but oral evidence given in Creole is translated into English to form part of the official
record by a Magistrate who is untrained and that transcript does not have to be approved by the witness?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know why the hon. Member said the Magistrate is untrained. Untrained in what?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** In Creole.

**The Prime Minister:** In Creole! So, the Magistrate cannot speak Creole?

*Interruptions*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** No, spelling and grammar.

**The Prime Minister:** Not just the Magistrate, there are lots of people! So, that is why I said there are implications, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards our Parliament…

*Interruptions*

Mr Speaker is looking at the time! Does that mean that I am not allowed two more questions, Sir?

**Mr Speaker:** Have I said anything?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** No, no. Fine!

*Interruptions*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

*Interruptions*

Please, no adverse comments!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2011, two years ago, in answer to a question from hon. Bhagwan, the hon. Prime Minister stated that once we have agreed spelling and grammar for Mauritian Creole, the desirability and advisability of allowing the use of Creole in the National Assembly will be considered - two years on. Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us what his stand now is?
**The Prime Minister:** Two years on, two years since, we have seen what kind of unruly behaviour and language is being used! We become wiser with events.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Seeruttun!

*(Interruptions)*

Well, if hon. Members are going to make noise, we will not be able to proceed.

*(Interruptions)*

Some silence now! Hon. Seeruttun!

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! I was just putting a question to the hon. Prime Minister and he treated me a liar and I consider it inappropriate. I would request that you ask him to withdraw that word.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** I said it, yes; but it was a lie, because they were there.

*(Interruptions)*

It was a lie!

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I…

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Seeruttun:** I do maintain that…

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I said last question!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Seeruttun:** I am insisting on the fact that he has to withdraw the word ‘liar’!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member is insisting on the question.

*(Interruptions)*
I look at the hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Prime Minister answering? Yes, please proceed.

**The Prime Minister**: I would gladly withdraw if the hon. Member agrees that they were there.

(Interruptions)

He cannot say the SMF was not there when they were there!

(Interruptions)

How can I accept, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the hon. Member misleads the press and the people like this?

(Interruptions)

They were there!

(Interruptions)

No, they were there!

(Interruptions)

**Mr Speaker**: Okay, now I have to make an announcement. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/210 and B/211 have been withdrawn. Dr. S. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Okay, one last question to hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

**Mr Obeegadoo**: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note that the improper language in the House does not depend on Creole.

(Interruptions)

The word ‘shit’ was not uttered in Creole and that word was withdrawn for being improper!

**Mr Speaker**: Is this a question?
Mr Obeegadoo: So, if I may put my question.

Mr Speaker: Is this a question?

(Interruptions)

Is this a question?

Mr Obeegadoo: It was the preamble.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: It is irrelevant to the question put, okay? If the hon. Member has a supplementary, he may put his supplementary question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, so my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is: given that we now have standardised Creole, will the hon. Prime Minister consider having public notices in places like dangerous beaches, hospitals and Social Security Offices placed also in Creole?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we must be careful…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: We must be careful not to do as if people in Mauritius do not understand French and English. But the point about beaches is probably something that we – I do not know whether there are implications in this, I will have to look into it.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SEPT CASCADES – SMF OFFICERS - DEATH

(No. B/170) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case of late L. S. N. and N. K. B., Officers of the Special Mobile Force, who died during training at Sept Cascades, on 29 September 2012, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if financial compensation has been paid to the dependants thereof and if so, indicate the quantum thereof and, if not, why not.
WEATHER RADAR - ACQUISITION

(No. B/171) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state the reasons why the acquisition of a radar, announced in the 2010-2015 Government Programme, was not included in the 2012-2015 Government Programme.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services that the weather radar at Trou aux Cerfs was installed in 1977 through funding from the UNDP. The equipment functioned until the year 2000. By that time, the quality of the pictures was poor and could not be used for reliable meteorological analysis. The radar system failed completely by the year 2002.

In February 2003, the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services informed the Prime Minister’s Office that, following consultation with the Japan Weather Association, the latter had indicated that a soft loan might be made available by the Government of Japan for financing the procurement of a new weather radar system.

In March 2003, the Prime Minister’s Office sought the views of the Ministry of Finance on the proposal for the acquisition of a new radar through a soft loan from the Government of Japan.

In its reply, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development expressed the view that, and I quote -

“The acquisition of the weather radar system should be made through a proper tendering exercise, in respect of the equipment itself as well as the financing, to ensure that value for money is obtained”.

In view of the reply made by the Ministry of Finance, the matter was not pursued any further with the Japanese authorities.

(Interjections)

And...
Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: And, Mr Speaker, Sir, no further action was taken for the procurement of a new radar at all.

Finish! Dead!

Mr Speaker, Sir, since my Government assumed office in 2005, efforts have been made for the replacement of the existing weather radar.

In August 2006, during the official visit of the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Authorities were approached to provide assistance to Mauritius for the setting-up of an Early Warning System for natural disasters. In that respect, a request was made to the People’s Republic of China for the provision of a weather radar.

However, there was no response from the Chinese side.

In August 2007, my Office deputed the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services to Réunion Island to discuss the possibility of France installing a weather radar at Trou aux Cerfs. Because that radar could have catered for both Mauritius and for that part of Réunion Island which is not covered by the existing radar system there. Subsequently, France decided to install a second radar in the South East of Réunion Island itself.

I am further informed by the Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services that new initiatives undertaken at the level of the Indian Ocean Commission in July 2008, for the provision of a regional radar network, with the assistance of the European Union, did not also materialise.

In February 2009, the Mauritius Meteorological Services sought the assistance of the UNDP to carry out a feasibility study for the provision of a new weather radar system as the project required specialised skills not available in Mauritius or at the Mauritius Meteorological Services. This request for assistance also did not go through.
Mr Speaker, Sir, in July 2009, the Mauritius Meteorological Services submitted a formal application to the Japan International Cooperation Agency for financing both a feasibility study and subsequently the procurement of a new radar. The request was positively considered by the Japanese authorities and in September 2009, a team of experts visited the Mauritius Meteorological Services for further discussions regarding the feasibility of the project.

A second team of Japanese Experts came to Mauritius in May 2010 to conduct the preparatory mission to further look at the technical aspects of the project.

In parallel, following my visit to Réunion Island in January 2011, we made a request to the French Authorities to –

(i) advise the Mauritius Meteorological Services on the specifications of a new weather radar to be purchased, and

(ii) carry out a site visit at Trou aux Cerfs and advise on the suitability or otherwise of the present location to accommodate the new radar.

The French Authorities responded positively to the request and designated an expert to carry out the exercise in Mauritius on 29 and 30 August 2011.

The expert submitted his Report in September 2011 and recommended, *inter alia*, that an S-band Doppler Radar would be appropriate for Mauritius.

The recommendations of the French Expert formed the basis of discussions with the Japanese Experts who subsequently visited Mauritius to finalise the project for the provision of a meteorological radar system.

The cost of the radar, Mr Speaker, Sir, and its installation is nearly Rs500 m. and I am thankful to the Government of Japan to have given us a grant under the Japanese International Cooperation Agency Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the work programme established by the Japanese authorities, the new meteorological radar system would be operational by 2015.

The House would appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a weather radar is a very sophisticated piece of equipment which is not available off the shelf as some people seem to think. The choice of a radar, its specifications, its technology it requires, its performance as well as its installation
and commissioning call for the services of experts which are not available locally. But thanks to
the technical assistance from Japan we shall have the radar by 2015.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as for the Government Programme, mention was made in the
Government Programme 2010-2015 about the acquisition of a weather radar for the Mauritius
Meteorological Services.

This measure was not included in the 2012-2015 Government Programme for the very
simple reason that the project had been finalised and had received a positive consideration for
financing from the Japanese authorities.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the former Director of the
Meteorological Services had stated publicly that should the Meteorological Services have been in
possession of a working radar, they would have been in a better position to give a more precise ...

(Interruptions)

...prediction for the weather?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, well, if we had taken the radar at that time, he
would not have said this. But let me say, I do not quite understand why he said that because in
his own report, he said exactly the opposite. The other former Directors of the Meteorological
Services, Mr Sok Appadu and the others, all said that the radar would have made no difference.
It is good perhaps that I tell the hon. Member that the Singaporean experts are also of the same
view.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: From what the hon. Prime Minister has said, has he been able to find out
how long does it take to have this kind of radar to be manufactured?

The Prime Minister: I did say it is not as easy as perhaps some people think.

First of all, when the Japanese experts came for the first time, it was a question of
whether the site itself, Trou aux Cerfs, would be the right site. So, that is why they came and
they had a look. They decided then that the site was right. They had to take all sorts of
measurements and all these things. Then, they have to decide on the technicalities. That is why
we asked the French Authorities if they could give us some advice because we did not know. They said that we should have this S-Band Doppler radar, which we forwarded to the Japanese. They came to discuss it. Now, they also said that the whole building has to be completely pulled down and that a new building - because there are different specifications - has to be put in place. That is why they said that they will be ready. They have a complicated system; they did not want us to say that we have talked to them at the beginning because they have a different system there, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since it is out, I am saying it. They said that by 2015, it would be ready.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hour.

At 1.12 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

CHAMAREL - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/181) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the construction of the pre-primary school of Chamarel, he will state the -

(a) expected start and completion dates thereof respectively, indicating when it is scheduled to be operational, and

(b) cost thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, works started on 15 June 2012 and were expected to be completed by end of December 2012. However, implementation of the project has been delayed due to, firstly, the nature of the site which I am informed, warranted additional external site works and also due to bad weather conditions. Works are now expected to be completed in the second week of May 2013. The Pre-primary Unit will consequently be operational in the third week of May 2013, that is, in two to three weeks’ time.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the cost of the project is Rs5.3 m.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, please allow me to make reference to two PQs that I asked the hon. Minister on 03 May 2011 and 15 November 2011, where we were informed that the construction of the pre-primary school was initiated since 2009. We
understand that there have been two circumstances: nature of the site or bad weather conditions. But the project was scheduled to be completed in January 2012, and thereafter, delayed to January 2013 and until now being affected by considerable delays. In view of this, can the hon. Minister tell us as to whether the Construction Manager and the Project Manager have not recognised that the project was unlikely to achieve the target for completion, and if so, why measures have not been taken to drive the project forward to the earliest possible completion?

Dr. Bunwaree: I said, earlier, in my reply to my PQs, the reasons that were behind the delay of the project. Last time, when I answered the question, I talked about the long and laborious exercise for tendering procedures which lasted eight months and at the close of which, it was found that none of the bidders was found to be compliant. We had to start the exercise altogether. This is our system as we know. The hon. Member must also realise that I did mention and how much I was interested in having this project done because the idea was to get rid of that school over there. In fact, I did all I could to maintain the school. We are going to have a beautiful school in that region which will be ready in two or three weeks’ time. Well, we did talk to the Project Managers, of course, but, first of all, we were told that when the contractor started the job that he saw that there was a slope which was very difficult and that could be dangerous for children. Then, the site of the building had to be relocated on the land. That took some time but, fortunately, we are coming to the end of it.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us if the sum of Rs5.3 m. is the total value of the project as budgeted or it includes extra cost between the start of the project and the projected extension and, if so, give details to how much was the project estimated and the cost increase?

Dr. Bunwaree: A sum of Rs6 m. was earmarked for this. In fact - after tendering procedure - it cost Rs5.2 m. and I must also say that this is only for the construction cost of the building, but the land is something different. It cost Rs1.2 m. and it was bought previous to this procedure for the building itself.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, from my information the contractor has underpaid his employees and worked on many contracts. May the Minister check the information, please?
Dr. Bunwaree: This is something that happens; we have so many schools concerned. Not only schools, but the contractors have other contracts at the same time. In fact, this contractor has done all his best, but he has not charged anything extra for the slight delay where he was responsible.

FARMERS - RAIN WATER HARVESTING SCHEME

(No. B/182) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Rain Water Harvesting Scheme, he will state the -

(a) number of farmers who have submitted applications therefor, indicating the number thereof who have benefited therefrom, and

(b) amount of money disbursed.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, The Rainwater Harvesting Scheme was launched in March 2012 with a view to alleviating the water scarcity problem faced by farmers during the dry season.

As per this Scheme, farmers registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund are eligible for a grant of 40% of the cost of the rainwater harvest facility up to a maximum of Rs80,000.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by AREU that as at date 23 applications have been received from farmers, of which 13 have been approved. One application has been rejected as the applicant did not meet the criteria established for eligibility under the Scheme. Nine applications are under process and those nine applicants have been requested to submit some missing documents.

As far as part (b) is concerned, I am informed that as at date Rs582,261 have been disbursed under the Scheme.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the time frame and budget plan for this project?

Mr Faugoo: There is no particular time frame, it is an open scheme. The processing also is done on a fast track basis, there is no time frame.
Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, from my information I will table a copy, allow me to read, I quote –

“The Mauritian Government has announced that a Rain Water Harvesting Scheme will be implemented and summaries Rs12 m. or 419,480 USD over three years will be spent to circumvent the problems of water precipitation that has persisted since 2006 coupled with irregular agricultural infrastructure”.

Mr Speaker: You need not table this paper.

CHILD MENTORING PROGRAMME – SET UP

(No. B/183) Ms L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Child Mentoring Programme, she will state when it was set up, indicating since then, the number of -

(a) children concerned therewith, indicating their respective age, and

(b) mentors concerned therewith, indicating the training given thereto.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Child Mentoring Scheme was incorporated in the Child Protection (Amendment) Act in 2008. The Child Mentoring Programme was initiated in June 2009. The objectives of the scheme are to help children between the ages of 10 to 16 years who suffer from mild behavioural problems -

i. to have the care and guidance from a role model, and

ii. to improve their relationship with their parents.

Concerning part (a) of the question, the Programme was launched on a pilot basis in June 2012 when the first mentoring order was obtained at the level of the District Court. As at date, there are 10 child mentees in the age range of 11 to 16 years who are being assisted by eight child mentors. Procedures are underway to assist additional five child mentees who will be supported by four child mentors.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that as regards part (b) of the question, following a press advert on 28 July 2009, 40 candidates responded positively. They were given training to act as mentors. However, after the training, only 15 agreed to act as mentors. Out of
the 15 mentors, one left and two requested for leave and they will resume in January and August 2014 respectively.

Two NGOs, namely, Terre de Paix and CEDEM provided a three month on-the-job-training to the mentors in two different batches from February to April 2012 and from June to September 2012.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether a certificate of morality is required of the mentors before they are recruited?

Mrs Martin: I am informed that this is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: So may I ask the hon. Minister whether a psychological profile is being drawn for the mentors and by whom?

Mrs Martin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, they are, in fact, assessed by the psychologist of the Ministry before they start with the mentoring process.

Mr Assirvaden: Est-ce qu’on peut savoir du ministre qui donne ce training aux mentors?

Mr Speaker: Well I think … you are … at this stage … Withdraw your question. Not yet.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please!

Mrs Ribot: Bien essayé! I would like to know from the hon. Minister for how long the mentees remain under the care and guidance of the mentors?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that normally the period of time through which the mentoring process takes place depends on the magistrate, but it varies from six months to a year.
Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the name of the Chairperson and members of the Child Mentoring Committee, the date of their appointment and the date of their last meeting?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can circulate the answer, but the name of the Chairperson is Mrs Narainsamy.

Mrs Ribot: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister the fees paid to the mentors and the cost of the programme since it has been set up.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Member to come with a substantive question with regard to the total sum of the fees, but I am informed that it is a stipend of Rs1500 which is paid monthly to the mentors.

GRNW - RESIDENTIAL CARE DROP-IN-CENTRE

(No. B/184) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the shelter at Grand River North West, she will state if it is presently operational and, if so, indicate -

(a) the name of the Non-Governmental Organisation entrusted with the management thereof, and

(b) if there are inmates thereat, and if so, indicate their respective age and, if not, why not.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the Residential Care Drop-In Centre for the protection and rehabilitation of children from any forms of sexual abuse and exploitation at Grand River North West. I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made in this House on 09 April 2013 in light thereof replies to part (a) and (b) do not arise.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Minister’s reply at PQ No. B/590 in October 2012, the hon. Minister declared that the Ministry had engaged into discussion with the MACOSS to see what was preventing the NGOs to go for the bidding exercise. I would like to know if such a meeting had taken place and what was the finding of the Ministry?
Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, several findings were, in fact, outlined. One of them was about the difficulties of the procedure requirements and we had tried, in fact, to open tender this time to international bidding in order to give more opportunities to potential bidders.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, we understand that the new international bidding exercise had been launched and the closing date was supposed to be yesterday. Can we know from the hon. Minister if she has got information about the number of bidders received, and can we also know whether the same guidelines and conditions were attached to the international bid as they were to the national one?

Mrs Martin: I am not really aware of the details of the same guidelines or not, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I am informed that, at the closing of 22 April, one bid had been received.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ms Anquetil!

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/185) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of an across-the-board national minimum wage and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the meeting of the Tripartite Committee on salary compensation held in September 2012 and chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, representatives of the workers’ organisations made a request for consideration to be given to the introduction of a national minimum wage.

Following that request, the issue is being taken up at the level of the Technical Committee on Labour and Industrial Relations Issues set under of the National Tripartite Forum.

It is to be noted that -

- the National Tripartite Forum has been set up administratively in October 2010 to act as a permanent forum for discussion among social partners, and it is an apex body comprising representatives of Government, employers and workers, and operates under my chairpersonship with two vice-chairpersons, one from the employers’ organisations and one from the workers’ organisations, and
- The Technical Committee on Labour and Industrial Relations Issues consists of two representatives each from Government’s, employers’ and workers’ sides and is presided by the Director, Labour and Industrial Relations.

The said Technical Committee have so far met on two occasions on this specific issue raised by the hon. Member on 24 January 2013 and 21 February 2013 to discuss the issue of national minimum wage and, in view of the implications and complexities of the subject, there has been consensus among the members to seek expertise and guidance from the ILO as well as from local resource persons who have conducted studies on that issue. There are certain issues that will have to be considered, Mr Speaker, Sir. For instance, there are some documents and experts that say that a national minimum wage is good because it sorts out and brings a solution to poverty alleviation. There are certain other experts that say that a national minimum wage would be very bad since it really destroys job creation. So, it is a complex issue, and there are various opinions from various quarters. That is why this matter needs to be discussed further at subsequent meetings of the Technical Committee.

The hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir, may also wish to note that my Ministry has already, on 26 March of this year, forwarded an official request to the ILO for them to send technical assistance to help us on this particular issue. I also personally met the Director-General of the ILO in March of this year where he has promised to send expertise to help us in this particular subject as soon as possible.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very happy that the hon. Minister is a supporter of the minimum wage. Can the hon. Minister state the time frame for the implementation of an across-the-board minimum wage in our country?

Mr Mohamed: As I have said, we have to listen to experts in the field, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to listen to experts who will have to advise us - in addition to what I have just said - on what are the issues that have to be placed in such an equation; what are the issues that have to be removed from the equation; what is the quantum that they would recommend; whether it would be good for job creation; must it live side by side with the National Remuneration Board or must we do away with the National Remuneration Board; is it good for the country, and whether we must have a specific system created for Mauritius or not. So, all these issues will have to be
discussed at the level of the said National Tripartite Forum Technical Committee and, obviously, once we receive expert advice, we will be in a better position to establish a time frame.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Since the hon. Minister is talking about experts, can I ask him to consider families earning a minimum wage in our country? Today, they may be still living below the minimum poverty income level, 6.2 as set by the NEF, the National Empowerment Fund, if we calculate it right. Can he also consider the real value of the minimum wage which over time has been eroded by inflation? Many times, in this House, we heard discussions about inflation and the minimum wage.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, the precise reason why we have been positive to listen to trade unionists, workers’ representatives, the call they made to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development last year, is precisely because we believe that there are certain systems that are set up in our country such as the National Remuneration Board, that precisely takes into account, in certain specific sectors, what a minimum wage and minimum conditions shall be. Must they be reviewed or must they not be reviewed? And if they are to be reviewed, in what way will they be reviewed? We are a Government that believes that we should always be listening, and also we are ready to review if it is for the good of the country. I can assure the hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir, that if it has to be reviewed, as usual, whenever there is anything to be reviewed in favour of workers, it will be this Government that will do it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions. The first question is the minimum wage which, of course, is relevant for those not covered by remuneration orders. Would the hon. Minister kindly indicate to the House, as of now, how many workers, how many persons in employment, what percentage of the labour force is not covered by a remuneration order?

Mr Mohamed: I don’t have the exact figures; what percentage of workers. However, if the hon. Member wishes to know what sectors are covered by remuneration orders, I invite him to go to the website of the Ministry and he will find out all the recent remuneration orders and changes that have been thereon. There have been a lot of recent remuneration orders that have been proposed and approved by myself as Minister. As far as the number that is not covered by the remuneration orders, I do not have the exact figures. Should the hon. Member require an exact answer, a substantive question can be sent to me, and I shall reply to it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!
Mr Ganoo: Did I understand the hon. Minister to be saying that the introduction of a national minimum wage tantamount to the doing away of the National Remuneration Board?

Mr Mohamed: No. Let me be clearer for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am saying that we are in a situation where we have had a request from group of workers to look into the possibility of introducing a national minimum wage. That has been a call from workers for many, many years now. So, we need to be advised by experts as to whether or not we should come ahead with the national minimum wage. Now, if we do come ahead, if we are advised to do it, what form will it take? We want to listen from the experts as to whether it can live or stand side by side with the National Remuneration Board, or maybe we have to do away with it and come up with a new system altogether in the interest of the country and the workers. We are all ears, and we are ready to listen to experts. That’s what I am saying.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, talking about minimum wage and the NRB, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is aware that in schools we have women cleaning schools at a salary of, I think, Rs2,000 per month - cleaning of whole school just by themselves - and whether these kinds of workers would be taken into…

(Interruptions)

Can I please ask my question in peace?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Ms Deerpalsing: Shut up! Shut up!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please! Silence!

Ms Deerpalsing: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether these women would be taken into consideration either under the NRB or under a possible eventual minimum wage salary?
**Mr Mohamed:** In actual fact, the hon. Member is right. There are, Mr Speaker, Sir, not only women but people who are employed - in this particular case, not by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, but if I am not mistaken, by the Parent-Teacher Association - part-time, on a shift system or somehow. So, they take advantage of loopholes to pay less to workers who are doing a very important and very difficult job for our children in our educational system. But, with the amendments that I have brought in with structuring of the shift work system and the recent Remuneration Order that has been approved with regard to domestic workers as well as in the cleaning industry, those issues will be taken into account and will be sorted out.

I am also aware - last point - that the Ministry of Education has been working with the Ministry of Labour in order to see to it that everywhere that such abuse is going on, it is going to be sorted out and that contractual workers no longer exist and such precarious works are things of the past.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question, hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, listening to the hon. Minister, do I take it that Government is agreeable, in principle, to an across-the-board national minimum wage and that will be, of course, pending to experts and technical committees that will be set up to advise Government?

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me once again clarify for the hon. Member. Government has had calls whereby we have been asked to look into the possibility of setting-up a national minimum wage across-the-board. Before doing so we have to analyse whether it is good for the country, where we are at that particular stage. What we are doing right now is, saying that we are totally agreeable to listening to what is good for the country. That is what we are doing right now.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**BAGATELLE DAM - CONTRACT**

(No. B/186) **Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam, he will state if –
(a) additional claims have been filed by the contractor therefor and if so, indicate the amount paid;
(b) prior geological investigations had been carried out thereat and, if so, by whom, and
(c) the works are scheduled to be completed within the contractual time.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Conditions of Contract provide for the contractor to give Notice to the Consultant for any claim for Extension of Time and/or additional cost that may arise during the implementation of the contract. All such claims are examined by the Consultant on the basis of supporting particulars and payment is made solely as determined and recommended by the Consultant.

In that respect, I am informed that the Contractor has, so far, filed ten claims which are still being examined by the Consultants Coyne and Bellier.

Regarding part (b), the consultancy contract for Detailed Design and Construction Supervision was awarded to Coyne and Bellier in association with Servansing Jadav & Partners on 20 January 2009. Prior to carrying out the detailed design, the Consultant was required to study/review available information and collect, among others, geological and geotechnical data through field and laboratory tests.

Accordingly, geological and geotechnical investigations were carried out from July to October 2009 by a local firm, namely, Water Research Company Limited on the instructions and supervision of the Consultant.

I am further informed that, after the start of works and clearing of site, the Consultant, as provided under the contract, instructed the contractor to carry out additional geological investigations from January to May 2012.

The additional geological investigations during the construction revealed the presence of weathered basalt along the dam axis which, according to the Consultant, was unforeseeable at the detailed design stage.

In view of the unsuitability of the soil, the Consultant has recommended two (2) design changes, namely -
(i) the replacement of the massive concrete “Ogee” type spillway by a lighter “Morning Glory” type, and

(ii) the grouting of the foundation be replaced by a concrete cut-off wall of 80 cm thick and to a maximum depth of 35 metres along the entire length of the dam.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that in view of the two (2) changes in the design of the dam, the original construction programme will extend beyond the scheduled completion date of December 2014 and it is expected that the dam will be ready for impoundment by last quarter of 2015.

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister has mentioned ten claims. Can he inform the House to what tune these ten claims come to?

The Deputy Prime Minister: These ten claims are still being looked into. It would be premature at this stage but, certainly, when the time comes, I will provide the information.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Out of those ten claims, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many of them have been paid so far?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already replied to that, Mr Speaker, Sir, none.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether the propriety of this additional claim - now cropping up because of the geological specificities of the site - has been looked into and whether the geological investigations should not have been carried out before the bid and the contract made?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the geological investigations were carried out at detailed design stage and were further carried out at the very beginning of the construction after clearing of site by contractor.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House who was appointed as Consultant to look into the detailed design in the construction supervision of the dam and the contract value?
The Deputy Prime Minister: I do not have the contract value, but I have already mentioned the name of the Consultant. It is Coyne and Bellier.

BAGATELLE WATER TREATMENT PLANT - BIDDERS

(NO. B/187) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard the project for the construction of the Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant, he will –

(a) give a list of the bidders therefor, indicating the -
   (i) respective bid value thereof, and
   (ii) name of the successful bidder and
(b) if works have started.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2006, a prequalification exercise was initiated in July 2012 by the Central Procurement Board to shortlist prospective bidders for this project. Sixteen applications were received and the Central Procurement Board shortlisted nine firms and I will submit the names of the nine firms - unless the hon. Member wants me to read them.

I am further advised that the CWA has invited the nine shortlisted firms to submit their bids. The closing date for the submission of bids at the CPB has been fixed for 04 June 2013 at 13 30 hours.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that works are expected to start in October 2013 and will be for a duration of 20 months.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the Water Treatment Plant that is being scheduled to be done is very near the Terre Rouge River and away from contamination of the sludge?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Precautions have been taken. There is no problem regarding that issue.
(No. B/188) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Sports Federations, he will give a list of the regional committees in respect of each of them, indicating in each case –

(a) the composition thereof and

(b) if they comply with the existing legislation in relation thereto.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 44 Sports Federations and the number of regional committees runs into hundreds. The information regarding regional committees in respect of its Sports Federations is being compiled and on completion of this exercise, same will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Regarding part (b) of the question, it is a known fact that many sports federations are non-compliant with the Sports Act, mainly with respect to the number of regions and number of clubs. I will be in a better position to give up to date information after the completion of this exercise.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le 22 février de cette année, le ministère des Sports avait émis un communiqué pour indiquer la liste des fédérations qui sont reconnues et, de ce fait, l’honorable ministre peut-il nous dire s’il a pris en considération la section 9(3) du Sports Act par rapport au fonctionnement des comités régionaux comme un des critères pour reconnaître ces fédérations et en même temps pour allouer les grants annuels de son ministère ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I indicated that since I took the post of Minister, I have been having extensive consultations with all stakeholders, particularly with the Sports Federations with a view to coming up with a new Sports Amendment Bill - which I indicated two weeks back - that will be presented at the next session of the Assembly. However, I can assure the hon. Member that the issues have been taken care of in the proposed amendments.

(No. B/189) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Judo Ju-Jitsu Federation
and associated disciplines, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of a complaint emanating from the former General Secretary thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that on 26 February 2013, the then General Secretary of the Mauritius Judo Federation and Associated Disciplines submitted a complaint to my Ministry. It relates to (i) non-compliance issues and (ii) issues pertaining to internal affairs of the Federation.

My Ministry is inquiring into the matter. The Registrar of Associations has also been requested to conduct an enquiry and report the outcome to my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, si je comprends bien la réponse de l’honorable ministre, il donne la garantie à la Chambre qu’une enquête sera effectuée pour faire toute la lumière sur les graves allégations qui ont été formulées par l’ancien secrétaire de la fédération. Je profite, M. le président, pour déposer une copie de la lettre. C’est bon pour les honorables membres, avec votre permission.

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member may communicate it to the hon. Minister!

Mr Quirin: C’est une lettre adressée par le secrétaire sortant et aussi une déposition qu’il a faite en date du 18 février de cette année par rapport justement aux allégations qu’il a formulées. M. le président, je dépose une copie de ces deux documents.

**BUREAU D’ÉDUCATION CATHOLIQUE - OPEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

(No. B/190) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the adults, he will state if he is aware that the Bureau d’Éducation Catholique runs an Open Community School therefor, and, if so, indicate if his Ministry will consider incorporating a similar project in the Second Chance Programme.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that the Open Community School had been established by the Bureau d’Éducation Catholique for adults within the Corporate Social Responsibility Scheme and has been implemented from Year 2010 to December 2012. It offered a literacy and support programme to adults who wished to resume their secondary school studies, and prepare them to sit or re-sit for their ‘O’ level and ‘A’ level examinations.
The Second Chance Programme, on the other hand, being implemented by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) since 2009 is meant for persons in the age group of 16 to 21 years who are not in full time education or full time employment and has different objectives as compared to the Open Community School.

While the Open Community School provides an opportunity to adults to complete their academic qualifications at ‘O’ and ‘A’ Levels, the Second Chance Programme lays emphasis on vocational and technical education along with the development of life skills for youngsters in the age group of 16-21 years who are, as I said, neither in employment nor undergoing schooling. Candidates who successfully complete the programme are awarded a Basic Certificate in Literacy and Numeracy by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES). Any person wishing to join the Second Chance Programme can apply to the MITD.

The Second Chance Programme is therefore meant for adults wishing to also have basic literacy and numeracy skills at a level comparable to end of primary cycle studies. Hence, it is not considered appropriate to incorporate into the Second Chance Programme, the Open Community School Project which prepares adults for academic studies at a higher level (‘O’ and ‘A’ levels).

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is a great demand for this project and that the BEC has just frozen its project for 2013 because of lack of fund. BEC can't go on with this project and there is a big demand. May I ask the hon. Minister, whether he will consider giving a second chance to those who for one reason or another have dropped out of secondary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we have very many options for these children who drop out from secondary schools. This is an interesting project, of course, I do admit. Unfortunately, it could not continue due to lack of funds. We are trying to look into the reasons why and what can be done to allow those who want to do ‘O’ level and ‘A’ level studies and who have difficulties to find a solution for them.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just given us details of the Second Chance Programme. Is it not a sort of repetition of what is already being given, because we are talking about vocational and technical education? This is being given under other programmes at
the MITD. So, is it not a sort of repetition and how can we enhance the Second Chance Programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: No, it is not a repetition; in fact, it is a system which allows them to catch up on where they stopped. In fact, it is giving very good results at the MITD. About 250 students are taking this programme and this one is going on. But the MITD, of course, has got other programmes for technical and vocational training. This is something different, but the Second Chance Programme is meant to allow those who have not been able to pass successfully the CPE, for example, to catch up on where they have left and to continue, and many of them go into the other training programmes of the MITD once they get this. In fact, I said the MES gives a basic certificate for the Second Chance Programme.

SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOOLAM STREET, PORT LOUIS – COVERED DRAINS - UPGRAADING

(No. B/191) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the covered drains, situated along the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to when the upgrading thereof was carried out, indicating the -

(a) cost thereof, and

(b) name of the contractor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the covered drains along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street in Port Louis were upgraded in 2011 by Messrs General Construction Co. Ltd at the cost of Rs9,101,043. Works which started in February 2011 were completed in December 2011.

I am further informed that the drains were last cleaned in June 2012 before the end of the defects liability period by the contractor and that the junction of the lateral roads joining SSR Street are being regularly maintained by the direct labour of the Road Development Authority.
Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the drains along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, in Port Louis, has been wrongly designed, since they are at the same level of the road surface and that has resulted of an overflow of water on 30 March this year thus causing material damages to shops surrounding SSR Street?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed there has not been over flooding in that area firstly, and, secondly, from all the information which is available, I am satisfied that the drains, which have been constructed along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, are properly maintained. They are used by the public and even in the past, even the design - I can assure the House - is of good quality, it has been acceptable. We cannot raise the platform. We cannot raise the footpath because it is also utilised for parking proposes. If we had raised that, it would have been impossible for so many cars to be parked for the whole day and even in the morning and afternoon. So, it is used for dual purpose. This has always been the case in the past, and it is so now. I am fully satisfied with the way the drains are working. My only regret is that the lateral drains are not properly maintained, and I remember last year, we had written a letter to the municipality as far back as March 2012 to see to it that the lateral drains are properly maintained.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the point is not to make the drain higher; the point is to lower slightly the drain so that when it rains, the water overflow will go to the drain because the drain will be lower than the surface of the road. Is the hon. Minister aware…

Mr Speaker: Put your question, hon. Member!

Mr Ameer Meea: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a lack of water exits of those drains? It is built in with heavy concrete block and with no metal outlets. And when it pauses heavily, there is no place for the water drainage on that Street. And since it is a classified road which falls under the purview of MPI, can I ask the hon. Minister to look into what I am saying?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had myself conducted site visits in the company of the hon. Minister of Labour. I had conducted site visits myself during construction and I am satisfied with the number of opening that we have. We couldn't have lowered it more than what it is. I am not myself an engineer. It had been properly designed. I will have a look over again.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!
Mr Bachoo: I will have a look over again at those drains, at the footpaths and if any corrective measure needs to be taken, I don't have any problem.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister stated to the House that the drain was last cleaned in June last year. Can I ask him if he is satisfied that nine months have elapsed since the drain was last cleaned?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned the junctions are being repeatedly – and, at the same time, I have got the photos, I have seen the photos. I would like to present copies of the photos for the lateral roads, but as far as the main drain is concerned, I am satisfied. Repeated checks have been carried out; we do not have any débris inside the drain. No garbage!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister said that he has done checks to see that there is no débris on the drain, can I know from him when was it the last time he checked because we are talking about concrete slabs? There is no way you can see what falls beneath these slabs.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are openings and I do have a photo. This was checked even after 30 March; visits were conducted and I can lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly where we can clearly see that at least we can go inside and clean. So, the photos have been taken. We don’t have any such débris.

(Interruptions)

I can show. The slabs can be removed.

(Interruptions)

Photos have been taken. We don’t have any such debris. The slabs can be removed.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, have you taken the photos yourself?

Mr Bachoo: Not me, my officers have submitted.

Mr Speaker: Not admissible.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, well the technicians of my Ministry have submitted me the photos, that is all.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Mrs Labelle!
NATIONAL HERITAGE TRUST FUND – DIRECTOR

(No. B/192) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the National Heritage Trust Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to if the Director thereof was suspended from duty in 2011 and, if so, indicate –

(a) the reasons therefor;

(b) if an inquiry has been carried out in relation to the circumstances that have led to her suspension, and

(c) if she has been re-instated in her post and, if so, when

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Heritage Fund (NHF) that the Director was interdicted from office by the Board on the 04 August 2011 on reasons of alleged discrepancies following an internal control exercise.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that -

(i) at its meeting of 22 August 2011, the National Heritage Fund Board agreed that an independent Committee of Enquiry chaired by a Permanent Secretary and assisted by two Senior Officers be set up to enquire into the alleged discrepancies.

(ii) the Committee started its enquiry on 20 October 2011 and six (6) meetings were held.

(iii) During the course of the enquiry, the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) started another enquiry regarding alleged malpractices by the Director of National Heritage Fund (NHF).

(iv) in light of the enquiry started by ICAC, the Board decided, as at 29 March 2012, that the Committee of Enquiry should be discontinued.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at 25 March 2013, the Commissioner of Police has informed my Ministry that the ICAC, following enquiry it had conducted, had referred the matter to the office
of the Director of Public Prosecutions who has advised that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge in the matter. The Director of Public Prosecutions has, however, advised that disciplinary proceedings be preferred against the Director.

Regarding part (c) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that-

(i) The Board, at its meeting of 28 March 2013, decided that the Director be re-instated with effect from 01 April 2013 and that disciplinary proceedings be initiated against the latter. However, the continued suspension is not necessary for the purpose of disciplinary proceedings.

(ii) The Director resumed duty on the 02 April 2013 as 01 April was proclaimed a public holiday.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of cases of abuse of power by the Director as indicated in the Audit Report. With your permission, for example, Mr Speaker, Sir, the case of when the Director was supposed to attend a course in Birmingham and, according to the Audit Report she didn’t; in the case of the training course she was supposed to attend in Delhi, which course was cancelled previous to her supposedly departure and the case of curtains being paid to herself. There are so many cases of abuse of power in this report. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of these cases of abuse of power?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned in my reply, because of allegations – these are allegations, that’s why the Committee was set up to enquire and following the enquiry, we are having a letter from the DPP which states clearly that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge in the matter and it stops there.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, following the recommendation of the auditor that undue payment which was effected in favour of the Director be refunded, the internal auditor has stated clearly in his report that undue payments effected to the Director be refunded whether any action has been taken in this case?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a Board which is responsible for the NHF. The Board will look into the matter and then definitely take the necessary action.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!
Mr Soodhun: can the hon. Minister inform the House who is the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee?

Mr Choonee: of the Disciplinary Committee.

Mr Speaker: Board or Committee?

Mr Choonee: The Board of NHF or the Committee?

Mr Soodhun: The Committee.

Mr Choonee: For the Committee, it was the former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, Mr Duva Pentiah.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister has just mentioned in his reply that, as a result of an internal control, there were discrepancies that were found out. Can the hon. Minister tell the House what those discrepancies are?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t want to prejudice any enquiry that is being undertaken.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Li Kwong Wing. This issue has been aired enough.

BOI - RESIDENCE PERMITS & INVESTMENT PROJECTS -

(No. B/193) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Board of Investment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number and nature of residence permits and investment project clearances issued respectively, allegedly upon bribery, indicating the number of staff under investigation in relation thereto and where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Board of Investment (BOI) that 12,900 Occupation Permits, and Residence Permits have been issued since its introduction in 2006. Of these, 11 permits processed by BOI are subject to Police enquiries involving cases of bribery. Out of these 11 permits, 8 are Occupation Permits relating to Investors and 3 are Residence Permits to Retired Non-Citizens.
With regard to processing of investment projects, I am informed that there is presently no alleged case of bribery.

I am further informed that a provisional charge was retained against two BOI staff. In addition, a retired employee of the BOI is also subject to Police enquiry and a provisional charge has been retained against him.

Police has completed its enquiry and has referred the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to enhance the present system at the Board of Investment, the Office of the Public Sector Governance (OPSG) was requested to carry out an audit of the actual process. This exercise has enabled OPSG to assess the existing system, identify bottlenecks and propose feasible recommendations to further streamline the processing of applications and eliminate opportunities for any malpractice.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is the first time ever since its establishment that there are Police prosecutions instituted against senior officers at the BOI and whether this has not spoiled the image of the BOI as a promoting agency of Government and this is what has caused the reduction of the number of residents and occupation permits issued during the last year which the Minister, himself, estimated to be by more than 10% lately.

Mr Duval: Not at all Mr Speaker. I don’t know if it is the first time, but if there are things that are wrong they must be taken care of and not swept under the carpet. Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t know about the senior officials. There were two administrative assistants. Both read up to form V so I cannot imagine they would be senior. There is no need to exaggerate all the time that they are senior. Now there is a retired also…

(Interruptions)

No they are administrative assistants from what I can see. That’s one thing. The other one, the third person has already retired. So, in fact, it is good that we take actions against people who don’t act properly and the Police are doing their work. That can only reinforce the reputation of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a good jurisdiction. Thank you.
Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the spoilt image now of the BOI, will the Minister inform the House whether there were not more than 50 employees recruited since he took over as Minister of Finance in the BOI without any qualification and without any due diligence just like cleaners have been recruited at the MTPA which, therefore, is wrecking the reputation of the BOI in the international circles.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no clue…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: …what the BOI has recruited. You may find it difficult to imagine, but I do not meddle in their recruitment. As far as their reputation being spoiled, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member himself is acting as a spoiled child.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

I say silence!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just mentioned that there are only 11 cases on the Police investigation. May I know what is the nature of charges against the two staff and how many files did they handle?

Mr Duval: I do not have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know that the file is with the DPP. I know that these people are suspended and have been prosecuted, but if you’ll ask for additional information, I will be happy to provide it.

Mr Bhagwan: In view of the numerous cases – we have heard the public who has reported about bribery and corruption – may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has recommended to Government a complete reorganisation of the BOI in the light of what has happened for the replacement of the actual Chairperson and having two Chairpersons at the head of the BOI, one for Africa and one for the rest of the world?
Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not recommended the removal of the Chairperson. As far as the changes are concerned regarding the procedures, I replied in this House some time ago as to the report of the OPSG and the House was informed of the measures recommended and taken. Also, I seem to remember the firm Ernst & Young did a complete audit of the situation at the BOI.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! I heard the hon. Minister saying that the hon. Member is acting like a spoiled child. I am not a fils à papa. Can I ask that he withdraw these words?

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interjections)

Silence!

(Interjections)

Silence! I want some silence now! Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

GRNW – MATERIALS - DUMPING

(No. B/194) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the case of dumping of materials within the reserve of river Grand River North West on its left bank, at Morcellement Hermitage, Coromandel, by one Mr R. B., he will state if the latter has complied with the request of his Ministry dated 02 October 2012 for the removal of material and the restoration of the river bank and, if so, when and, if not, if legal actions have been initiated against him.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a site visit was carried out by the Forestry Service of my Ministry on 14 January 2013 and it was found that 80% of the materials deposited within the river reserve had been removed. According to the promoter, the remaining removal works were completed in the beginning of March and this has been confirmed from the last site visit effected by the Forestry Service. The site is now clear of all the materials, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister…
(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, please! Hon. Bhagwan, proceed!

(Interruptions)

I say no interruptions now!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the promoter, a well-known recidivist who has been asked to replant fruit and forest trees whether he has done so?

Mr Faugoo: This is true, Mr Speaker, Sir. He has been asked to plant fruit and forest trees within the reserve and he has asked for a delay. He has undertaken to do the needful by the end of May. Because of weather conditions, he was not able to do so, but he has undertaken to plant those trees by the end of May.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the status of the project there is in a very bad state, not only the associated works are being done by that contractor. Can the hon. Minister give us the information as to what action the Ministry will take in case the promoter does not do the needful for the planting of trees? He has been given so many extensions and knowing the reputation of that contractor, I am sure that he will do nothing.

Mr Faugoo: He has been instructed to do so. If he fails within the delay which has been granted, he will be booked for a contravention, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Jugnauth!

POSTE DE FLACQ - PRIDE BRIDGE CO. LTD. – STATE LAND

(No. B/195) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if Pride Bridge Co. Ltd. has been granted a plot of land at Mare aux Lubines, Poste de Flacq and, if so, indicate the nature of the project which the company proposes to implement thereat.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, in December 2008, Pride Bridge Company Ltd has indeed been granted a reservation over a plot of State land of an approximate extent of 30 arpents at Pas Géométriques Mare aux Lubines, Poste de Flacq for the implementation of a Mixed Development Project comprising, inter alia, 100-bedroom, all-suite, eco-resort, a
rejuvenation centre, bungalows and equestrian sports. The letter of reservation was issued on 09 December 2008.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, the company was getting difficulty in obtaining all the necessary permits as well as the access issue and they decided in April 2012 to withdraw from the project and returned the land to the State.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister whether according to the condition that the company should deposit a cash amount of Rs4.5 m., the money has been deposited initially on the date of the reservation of the land?

Dr. Kasenally: The money was deposited and has been returned with the return of the land.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister if the company has been asking for extension of the terms and conditions of that reservation letter and, if so, when and on how many occasions?

Dr. Kasenally: I do not recall exactly whether they asked for extension, but no extension was granted to anybody.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister if his Ministry did issue a letter on 02 October 2009, in fact, granting an extension of three months with regard to a request that was made by the promoter?

Dr. Kasenally: It may well be, but actually I do not have the information. To my knowledge, I have consistently refused to give extension to any project and I wanted all projects to be on time.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Minister whether the 30 arpents that was given to Pride Bridge Co. Ltd. was, at a certain stage, transferred to Lobin Holdings, if yes, who are the shareholders?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not aware of shares being moved around. I think this is a public company and if you want to have the information, you can get it all at the Registrar of Companies.

Mr Speaker: Last question!
Mr Jugnauth: First of all, may I table copy of a letter emanating from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, a signed letter…

(Interruptions)

…an official letter, stating that the Ministry is agreeable to extending this request by three months - that is one? Secondly, the Minister is saying that they have returned the land. May we know whether this land has been again granted to a different entity or individual or whoever?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, they have returned it and it has not been so far given to anybody. As far as the letter is concerned, I am a bit concerned that a confidential letter from my Ministry is floating around. But certainly I may not be aware of all the correspondence going through my Ministry and I think I would look into it and make an enquiry as how this has come out.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

SCHOLARSHIPS – CRITERIA

(No. B/196) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the scholarships offered on social grounds to students having completed their Higher School Certificate, he will state the number of applications received by his Ministry therefor, indicating the number thereof which satisfied the eligibility criteria therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, as from this year, 24 additional scholarships will be awarded on the combined basis of merit and social criteria to two categories of students as follows -

(a) CATEGORY A

16 candidates who are ranked among the first 500 of the Cambridge International Examination Scholarship Rank Orders 2012 and whose family income does not exceed, in the aggregate, Rs 12,000 per month, and

(b) CATEGORY B

8 students based on their results at the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination 2012 and whose family income does not exceed in the aggregate, Rs6,200 per month.
The 24 Scholarships were advertised by way of Press Communiqué on 06 February 2013 and as at 28 February 2013 a total of 257 applications (112 for Category A and 145 for Category B) was received at the Scholarships Section of my Ministry.

The allocation of scholarships under these two categories will be made by the High Powered Scholarships Committee of my Ministry in which a representative of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has been co-opted given the social criteria dimension.

The High Powered Scholarships Committee has already screened the 257 applications and has drawn up a list of 104 candidates eligible for scholarship under Category A and 135 candidates eligible under Category B on procedural and academic grounds. On 08 April 2013, the two lists of candidates have been submitted to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions for social enquiry to establish their eligibility or otherwise.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the other candidates who were receiving scholarship from his Ministry regarding tertiary studies are still on board because we already know that there are some students who were receiving social aid, who were being provided with a form of scholarship for their tertiary education on a year to year basis, whether these children are also receiving their scholarship this year?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are other schemes, but not from this scheme. This is specific for what I have mentioned. They must be ranked among the 500 for the 16 candidates. But, for the 08 candidates where the social criteria is important, the Rs6,200 per month, there it is a question of passing the examination and not necessarily being in the 500 first.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not sure whether we are speaking of the same scholarship. Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a Student Scholarship Scheme which was launched on the regulations made under section 24 of the Finance and Audit Act - this is Government Notice 98 of 2008 –

I am quoting

“Whereby a full scholarship is provided for students attending or admitted on courses at post secondary institutions whose household income do not exceed Rs7,500 per month and who face severe hardship”
If we are talking of this same scheme, is the hon. Minister aware that there are several hundred young people out there who started a degree programme on the basis of the scholarship and at the point of embarking on the third year of their degree programme, have been told that their application, since it is renewed yearly, has been rejected and they are to await until a new scheme comes into effect?

**Dr. Bunwaree**: No. I am not aware that they have been rejected. In fact, when they have started they have to go to the end. I am taking this commitment here. There is no question of ending the scholarship before the end of the studies.

**Mr Obeegadoo**: At least will the hon. Minister please act decisively to put an end to the anguish that those hundreds of students are presently experiencing by communicating immediately with each and everyone who has applied at his Ministry for the scholarship?

**Dr. Bunwaree**: I said it here very openly! I cannot understand how this could have been otherwise. I am going to look into the matter.

**Mr Speaker**: Last question!

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun**: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that this will not be the case and that all these students will receive their scholarship, even today on the papers the *attaché de presse* of the Minister mentioned that there were no funds available in the Human Resource Knowledge and Development Fund. There are no resources left and therefore these students should show some patience until “we come up with a new scheme.” So, I am asking the hon. Minister if, as he has just mentioned, this will not be the case, as my colleague has just mentioned that diligently and very quickly we should make it clear to the students concerned?

**Dr. Bunwaree**: The Fund is no longer there, it has been transferred to the Consolidated Fund. This has already been done. But, I am mentioning for those who have already started studies and have already been given scholarship. If it was given for three years, it has to go through the three years.

**Mr Obeegadoo**: One last point, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker**: Okay, last question!
Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister intervene at the level of the private tertiary education institutions concerned so that they allow these students to pursue their studies until the Ministry comes up with the appropriate solution?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will look into this matter very urgently

FLASH FLOODS - LORD MAYOR– MISSION OVERSEAS

(No. B/197) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will state if the Lord Mayor of Port Louis was absent from the country during the week following the flash floods which occurred on Saturday 30 March 2013.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this question. The Municipal City Council of Port Louis in its capacity as a member of the “Association Internationale des Maires et Responsables des Capitales et Métropoles partiellement ou entièrement francophones”, was invited by the latter to participate in the 75th Executive meeting of the Association scheduled on 01 April 2013 in Vientiane, Laos, followed by a seminar on 02 and 03 April 2013 on the theme ‘le patrimoine urbain, sa protection et sa mise en valeur’.

The Council, at its sitting of 21 February 2013, approved the participation of the Lord Mayor, Mr Aslam Adam Hossenally and another representative in these meetings and sought the approval of the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands in line with established policy directives issued to Local Authorities. He conveyed approval for the participation of the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive in these meetings.

The delegation left Mauritius on Friday 29 March 2013 at 20.50 hours and returned on Saturday 06 April 2013 at 19.37 hours, as originally planned.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Lord Mayor was therefore absent…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Virahsawmy: from the country during the six days following the flash flood.
Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, est-ce que le ministre pourrait confirmer à la Chambre qu’au moment où le Lord Maire a été informé des flash floods de Port Louis, il se trouvait à Kuala Lumpur et que s’il voulait rentrer, il aurait pu rebrousser chemin immédiatement après avoir appris le désastre de Port Louis ?

I am putting my question, I am not giving way!

I am not giving way!

I am not giving way!

I am not giving way!

I am not giving way!

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet! Okay. Quiet!

I am on my feet!

Silence!

I say silence!

I am going to suspend the sitting, okay!

If you continue I will suspend the sitting!
Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Hon. Jhugroo!

Hon. Jhugroo, keep quiet!

Yes, what is your point of order?

Mr Ganoo: I am…

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Hon. Assirvaden!

Hon. Jhugroo!

Hon. Jhugroo, I warn you!

Hon. Jhugroo it is my second warning! Yes.

Mr Ganoo: I am rising on a point of order!

Mr Speaker: Silence, there is a point of order!
Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, our Standing Orders say clearly under the paragraph ‘contents of question’ that a hypothetical question cannot be put. So the contents of the question of the hon. Member are purely hypothetical.

If he had known he would have returned.

A question shall not be asked for an expression of …

Mr Speaker: Do not interrupt, please!

Mr Ganoo: I am quoting the Standing Orders, Mr Speaker, Sir,

“A question shall not ask for an expression of opinion or for the solution of an abstract legal question or of a hypothetical proposition;”

Mr Speaker: Well…

Who is going to give the ruling now? The Speaker or somebody else?

Therefore, you have to listen hon. Members!

I have to check…

I have to check the recordings and find out whether the question put is hypothetical or not. So, I reserve my ruling.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir,…
Mr Speaker: No hypothetical question will be allowed, however.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question I asked was a factual one. What I asked is whether the hon. Minister …

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, interruption!

Ms Deerpalsing: … is aware that …

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Ms Deerpalsing: … the moment the Lord Mayor was informed of the disaster of Port Louis, he was in Kuala Lumpur. That is a question; not a hypothetical one.

(Interruptions)

It’s yes or no!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Hon. Members are wasting time and shouting for nothing!

(Interruptions)

Well, hon. Members are making a lot of noise for nothing! There is a point of order. I want to listen to the point of order.

Mr Roopun: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member should ask a question and not provide information. The hon. Member is providing information, and it is against the Standing Orders.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The question is proper, is in order, and the hon. Minister may answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed …

(Interruptions)
Mr Speaker: Silence, hon. Roopun!

Mr Virahsawmy: … that the Lord Mayor broke his journey in Kuala Lumpur on 31 March 2013 and he was informed of the flash floods. So, if he was a responsible person, he should have returned to Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

I say order! Let us proceed!

(Interruptions)

Well, I repeat. I am going to suspend the sitting! Please, quiet now! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

Ms Deerpalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. M. le président, je voudrais savoir du ministre s’il pourrait confirmer si le Lord Mayor, étant membre du bureau de l’IMF, a présenté une motion d’urgence pour solliciter de l’aide pour la ville de Port Louis qui avait été sinistrée.

(Interruptions)

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that nothing was presented to get anything. Finally, the Municipality of Port Louis did not get anything from that mission, except a cost of Rs172,000, as compared to Rs122,000 which was spent by the Municipality on the construction of drains from 09 December to 07 April.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I am going to suspend the sitting if you continue!

(Interruptions)

Well, hon. Members …

(Interruptions)

Next question hon. Ms Deerpalsing!
(Interruptions)

We have to move to the next question!

(Interruptions)

Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea, please sit down! I am not going to listen to you!

(Interruptions)

Proceed with the next question!

(Interruptions)

I have the discretion whether to allow you or not! Proceed with the next question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea! Silence! Please, I do not want to hear anything from this side! Hon. Ameer Meea, you withdraw the word - ‘unfair!’

(Interruptions)

Silence! The hon. Member has used the word ‘partisan’.

Mr Ameer Meea: I have used the word ‘partisan’, but it was not addressed to you!

Mr Speaker: It was addressed to whom?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: To the hon. Minister! Of course, to the hon. Minister!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have a ruling to give. I am going to check the records.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden, please! I am going to check the records; then, we will know the truth. So, what’s the use of shouting? I don’t see any reason for shouting from both sides of the House. Let us proceed with the next question, please.

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute! Silence please!
Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I seek some guidance? I am just seeking some guidance before the hon. Member puts her question. From my understanding of parliamentary practice, and I have been in the House for a good many years, when somebody from this side of the House puts a question, supplementary questions from backbenchers of the majority are allowed. I would like to know whether the reverse does not apply, that is, when a question is put by a backbencher of the majority, nobody on this side of the House - the Opposition - is entitled to a supplementary question.

Mr Speaker: No, this is not correct. When a question is put, any hon. Member of this House is entitled to put supplementary questions, irrespective of the majority or the Opposition. This is my ruling. If there is any question that the hon. Member wants to put next time, he raises his hand.

[Interruptions]

Hon. Members, please!

[Interruptions]

I will not allow the hon. Member! I am on my feet!

[Interruptions]

I’ll consider the remark of the hon. Member. Don’t you worry about it. What I remember is that I have already asked hon. Ms Deerpalsing to move to the next question. Then, I saw hon. Ameer Meea …

[Interruptions]

Hon. Ameer Meea, if you are not happy, there is a procedure. Now, we move to the next question. Hon. Ameer Meea, I have taken note of your remarks.

QUATRE BORNES, TULIPES AVENUE - WIDENING

(No. B/198) Ms Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed widening of the Avenue Tulipes, in Quatre Bornes, he will state where matters stand.
The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract for the widening of Tulipes Avenue has been awarded to Sinohydro Corporation (Mauritius) Limited, with an order to commence works on 12 December, 2012. The project is scheduled for completion on 11 December, 2013. The progress of the works on site has reached 80%, and the project is on target.

Ms Deerpalsing: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he can inform the House as to the width of land that has been acquired on the left hand side in the widening of Avenue Tulipes, what is the width of land that has been acquired from St Jean up to Hillcrest?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the road itself will be of 10 metres inclusive of footpath on both sides. This is the information which I have been given.

Dr. Sorefan: My question relates to Avenue Tulipes, but there is a roundabout that is going to have access to the M1. May we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether there has been a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) and, if so, is he aware that joining the M1, within 500 metres, there will be two cross lanes to join the flyover at the bus stop and, secondly, from the roundabout, this may cause loss of lives very soon?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, all these things are being taken care of. In fact, I have already constituted a committee of technicians - top technicians - of my Ministry who are working on that. The TIA has already been worked out in-house.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware that my original request together with the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was that the Avenue Tulipes be widened …

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member has to put a question.

Ms Deerpalsing: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said that there will be two footpaths on either side, but can he inform the House whether there will be, as requested, a ….

(Interruptions)

… walking path together with trees planted all along from St. Jean Avenue – shut up!

(Interruptions)
Mr Speaker: Silence! Silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, will you listen?

(Interruptions)

I will request you to apologise.

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: I do withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Apologise!

Ms Deerpalsing: I apologise. I withdraw - if that pleases the gentlemen. Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is, whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will inform the House whether trees will be planted all along from St Jean Avenue all the way to Hillcrest on the left hand side so that people can exercise and walk along?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I still remember the original decision but, in fact, many proprietors dragged me to court. The matter was in court because they did not - under Land Acquisition Act when section 8 was being published. We had to go to Court and, in fact, the proprietors were hesitant and after many months of negotiation and discussions we were able to get part of the land. So, whatever land is available we will try to see to it that the maximum utilisation will be made for the planting of trees but, unfortunately, the initial idea of enlarging it and then to provide additional footpaths, we could not go ahead because of scarcity of land. Had I insisted, the Court would have taken years and years in order to deal with the case. We preferred an out of court settlement. In fact, we got it and that is why I will request the hon. Member to bear with us. We are doing our maximum with the amount of land which is available.

Dr. Sorefan: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that the roundabout that will join the M1 and recently we have spent a lot of money doing the third lane with drain …

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! Put your question!
Dr. Sorefan: Is the Vice-Prime Minister aware that today they are removing all the drain along the M1 which was recently done two or three years ago?

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware of any removal of drain along M1 but this is a specific question regarding the roundabout. Mr Speaker, Sir, why we are doing it is because we want to allow the fluidity of the vehicular flow along not only the St Jean Avenue but rather the Hillcrest Avenue, because there have been repeated requests from the inhabitants of that region that they always get stuck in the mornings and evenings. So, to facilitate the traffic vehicular flow we are trying to find an outlet but before opening we will try to see to it that all necessary precautions are taken.

Mr Speaker: One observation, the question is about Avenue Tulipes.

Mr Obeegadoo: For the sake of clarity, the hon. Minister said ‘widened to 10 metres’. Is the intention to have two double lanes, that is, four lanes in all, two in each direction and will this widened road have drains designed otherwise than as Desforges Street?

Mr Bachoo: No, this is not the dual carriage way. The 10-metre means inclusive of one and a half metres on both sides of the drains as well as footpath will be included. I maintain, I am neither an engineer nor a technician but instructions have been given …

(Interruptions)

Let me complete. Instructions have been given to the designers to see to it that the flow of the water in that region has to be captivated by the two drains on both sides of the road.

QUATRE BORNES - WOMEN’S CENTRE

(No. B/199) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Quatre Bornes, he will state if a plot of State land is available thereat for the setting up of a Women’s Centre.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is not in presence of any request for the setting up of a women’s centre at Quatre Bornes. In case such a request is received and subject to funds being available, my Ministry will most certainly look into the availability of State land.

Ms Deerpalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware - and this concerns you, Mr Speaker, Sir - that the piece of land where the Speaker’s House is in a derelict situation and that women in my
Constituency have expressed the wish to be able to use the building to have a women’s centre so that they can have various activities there?

**Dr. Kasenally:** After consultation with Mr Speaker and the authorities, the Prime Minister’s Office will most certainly look into the matter but we must also have the financial clearance, because this building will require a fair amount of refurbishment which will cost quite a bit of money.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the plot of land just facing Mr Speaker’s house is also State land?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I have to verify that.

**Mr Speaker:** I have to inform the House that with regard to the building in question it has been returned to the Ministry of MPI.

### MOTORWAY – MAHEBOURG-NORTH - LANDSCAPING WORKS

(No. B/200) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the motorway starting from Mahebourg to the North, he will state if any contract has been allocated for landscaping works to be carried out along the sides thereof.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, no contract for landscaping works along Motorways M1 and M2 has been awarded by Road Development Authority (RDA).

However, last year, the RDA contracted out the plantation of 4,000 plants on both sides of the motorways from Plaisance to Forbach. Ornamental plants have also been grown in-house jointly by the RDA and the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security along the road reserves on the central verge.

**Mr Soodhun:** Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether after the landscaping work now drainage work is being carried out?
Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just explained there is no landscaping work. There have been the plantations of small plants or trees on both sides of the road. No landscaping work has been done. I have to inform the House that we are planting the ornamental plants in the middle, that is all, in the central verge and that too we are doing in association with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Soodhun: Is the Vice-Prime Minister confirming that there have been no drainage work in the middle being carried out now?

Mr Bachoo: In the middle, that is, the central verge is being done in the vicinity of Montagne Ory, but there we have not yet planted anything. That is not the drain work. In fact, it is the installation of light and as a result of the *agrandissement* of that road, the third lane, but there is no landscaping work as such.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether the RDA has not subcontracted the landscaping work?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there has not been landscaping work last year, but they contracted out the plantation of 4,000 plants not in the central verge but on both sides towards the south, that is, from Plaisance and upwards and then in the north from Grand’Baie downwards. That was last year on both sides and through tenders; the proper procedures have been followed but there has not been any landscaping work.

Mr Soodhun: Could the hon. Vice Prime-Minister inform the House who was the tenderer?

Mr Bachoo: There are two tenders. I am going to submit a copy of both. One bid was for Rs885,500 and another one for Rs954,500. The company was called ‘We Grow Enterprise Ltd.’

**TOURISM AUTHORITY - POSTER BOARDS**

(No. B/201) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the poster boards, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to if it had put up temporary ones in December 2012, and if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that in December 2012, some 300 temporary panels were installed in the city of Port Louis and in the
four towns, with a view to providing a dedicated space for affixing of posters in the context of the Municipal Elections.

The House would appreciate that this measure was taken so as to prevent the proliferation of fly-posting which has a negative impact on the image of Mauritius, which is being promoted on the international scene as a clean, environment-friendly and up-market tourist destination.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been a tender procedure before allocating this contract?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. There were, in fact, two tender exercises. The first one was non-responsive and we had to go through a second exercise.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House who was the successful tenderer who has got the bid?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** The name of the supplier is Harvest Enterprises Ltd.

**Mr Soodhun:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether they have been able to put up the 300 posters?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the report that I have, 298 posters panel were placed.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the tender was issued by the Tourism Authority or by the Central Tender Board?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** It was done by the Tourism Authority, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the total amount of the poster boards?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** The amount was 687 and 700. So, the average price was Rs2,000 and something.

**Mr Speaker:** The Deputy Speaker will take the Chair.

*At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next question! Hon. Lesjongard!
Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Solar PV Project submitted by SARAKO PVP Co. Ltd., to the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to -

(a) the date thereof, indicating when -
   (i) the Board decided to negotiate with the promoter thereof, and
   (ii) when land was allocated to the promoter, indicating the conditions of the lease;

(b) the conditions attached to the letter of intent issued to SARAKO PVP Co. Ltd., and

(c) if a Power Purchase Agreement has been signed between SARAKO PVP Co. Ltd., and the Board and if so, if copy thereof will be tabled.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that a 15MW solar farm project was submitted by the promoter, Sarako PVP Co. Ltd, on 25 June 2012 and negotiations started on 01 March 2013.

As regard part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that a plot of land of an approximate extent of 80 arpents has been reserved in the name of the promoter as from 03 April 2013 for a period of one year. The reservation is subject to the usual terms and conditions applicable to industrial leases. No lease has yet been granted to the company.

Concerning part (b), I am informed by the CEB that the letter of intent issued to the promoter on 01 March 2013, is subject to the following conditions -

(i) submission by the promoter of a proposal security of Rs15 m. in favour of the CEB;

(ii) submission by the promoter of a Certificate of Incorporation and Shareholding structure of the Sarako PVP Co. Ltd;
(iii) adherence to the confidentiality clause by both parties, during the negotiations;

(iv) each party shall have to bear its own costs and expenses to be incurred for the finalisation of the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement, and

(v) both parties to endeavour to finalise all the discussions within 6 months of the issue of the first draft of the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement.

As regards part (c), I am informed by the CEB that the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement is still under negotiation.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I understand from the Deputy Prime Minister, Sarako PVP Co. Ltd has been allocated 80 arpents of land for that project. Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that for such a project per MW will require 2 arpents since the project is a 15 MW project, the total surface area required is 30 arpents, why is it that in this case Sarako has been allocated 80 arpents and also, the ESPA is for a period of 20 years, can we know whether the land will be allocated for a period of 60 years?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is still under negotiations. So, let us wait for the end of the negotiations. As to the area, it will be decided according to the project. They have asked for 80 arpents, it does not mean that 80 arpents would be given. The land will be given as needed.

Mr Lesjongard: May I also ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he can confirm or whether he is aware that neither Mrs Shyam Seetaram or the German company TS Almeria have any experience in PV installation systems?

(Interjections)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will leave it to the CEB to sort out all the technicalities. I am not a technician. They will decide whether the project is valid or not and so far it has proved to be valid. So, let’s not substitute ourselves to technicians.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interjections)

So, I will give him the last question.
Please, go ahead with your question, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last time I asked the Deputy Prime Minister one question; I am asking the question again; whether the decision of Government to allocate land to Seetaram family forms part of a deal for one Member to cross the floor?

('Asize toi! Asizé!')

Let me ask my question!

I am asking a simple question, the Government can say yes or no. I am asking whether the allocation of 80 arpents of land to Seetaram family of Sarako forms part of the deal for one hon. Member to cross the floor from the MSM to Government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please! Silence! Hon. Bhagwan! This question is not allowed. I’ll ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put his question.

Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Seetaram!

This question is not allowed! I’ll invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the next question!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give an undertaking to the House that the PPA will be made public as it has been made recently in all the other cases with the PPPs?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Yes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the conditions for starting discussion with the promoter was that they had to align their price with regard to the lowest bidder that stated its price in the tender that occurred at the CEB. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that negotiations are ongoing at the CEB and that the price of the KW hour will be reduced? Will
then the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that if the price is reduced, that ESP that is being negotiated with the CEB will have to be started fresh again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I have said the negotiations are not over. So, how are we going to start again?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that the policy of the CEB with regard to the request for proposal to split all the providers around the island is so that the interconnecting feeder does not originate from one substation? That is why, in fact, they came with a request for proposal for 10 MW to be spread throughout the island. Is it not in contradiction with the policy of CEB now to allocate one provider of 15 MW from one part of the island?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project of 10 MW split into 1 or 2 MW units was taken on two counts. One is to spread it round and give the chance to as many as possible to get into the competition and second, to be able to get on the grid easier. In this particular case, the site where it is, it can accommodate up to 15 and no more. The request was for a much higher figure, but it was scaled down to 15 on technical grounds.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether it was in order for the Board of the CEB to issue a letter to the promoter for starting discussions when the Central Electricity Board was still analysing tenders with regard to similar projects at the Central Electricity Board?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** May I ask what similar projects the hon. Member is talking about?

**Mr Lesjongard:** The similar projects are the tender procedures that were ongoing, that is, the tenders were being analysed for the installation of other PV installations.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** We are talking of the 1 or 2 MW up to 10. It took so much time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The submission was in June and the negotiations started in March and this is the reason. We waited for the evaluation of the other submissions to be able to have a reference figure.
Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister why is it that the Board did not launch a tender for the installation of 50MW solar PV instead of dealing with an unsolicited bid?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a long history of people coming to submit proposals and most of them - we discussed it last week or the week before - on a page of glossy paper saying that they have projects when they do not have. This is very important. But we realise that we are wasting a lot of time with people coming with projects.

(Interruptions)

One minute! We discussed last week.

(Interruptions)

Last week, the hon. Member talked about Alutec, Aqua Energy and Abhijeet Group. Two of them dropped out. They never showed any interest after that. The third one, he did not even show an interest for the request for proposal. So, it shows you the track record of those who come.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Deputy prime Minister made mention of 80 arpents of land in Bambous. Can the House be informed about where in Bambous will the 80 arpents of land be made available? The hon. Deputy Prime Minister said that as much land as needed will be granted to the promoter. If le compte de 30 arpents est bon according to the computation of hon. Lesjongard, why not grant only 30 arpents and keep the 50 arpents for a housing project for other poor people in Bambous?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: I think we must look at the specificity of the land, the nature of the land, where the land is and I think this fast rule of 2 arpents per MW does not stand. The hon. Member may have specialised knowledge, but it does not stand.

(Interruptions)

We have this problem also with Wind Farms and with other projects as well.
Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an element of subsidy in that project. Last week, I stated that that promoter will benefit, over a period of 20 years, Rs748m. of subsidy...

(Interruptions)

...at a price of Rs1.56 per KW. One of the conditions to start negotiations was that the promoter had to match its price with the lowest bidder for the 1 or 2 MW tender which was being analysed by the CEB. Now, since discussions are ongoing and nothing has been finalised, how is it that we have already reached a stage where we have accepted the price match from SARAKO PVP Co. Ltd.?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the Deputy Prime Minister to answer the question!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish the hon. Member would listen to my answer. It is in two lines. I read it again -

“As regard part (c), I am informed by the CEB that the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement is still under negotiation.”

I said that. Our aim, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to get the lowest price possible, but it must also be comparable. We can’t compare like and unlike.

(Interruptions)

We cannot compare like and unlike!

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister saying that to justify the unsolicited bid, there were companies that make proposals and they are only on glossy papers. Is he aware that with regard to the recent request for proposals there were many companies that had made proposals, there was an evaluation committee that had looked into all the aspects and the details of all the bids and in fact, there were 5 companies that were selected and having scored a total mark of 100? How can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister now justify that he is going to set this aside and accept an unsolicited bid when there are very serious, technically proven companies who have scored 100% of the marks?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not certain. Which exercise are we alluding to?
Mr Jugnauth: For the evaluation done by CEB. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is asking me a question, I am answering.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is going to give the answer. The hon. Member has asked the question; allow the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to give the reply now.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We had the same confusion from the Opposition last time. They talked about different projects. The hon. Member talked about different projects. We are talking about 1 MW, 2 MW units up to 10. Is it comparable?

Mr Baloomoody: We are talking about an energy project. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Baloomoody:… whether this project has been referred to the National Energy Commission chaired by Mr Manraj and if not, whether he intends to do so?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, the NEC knows all about it.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his reply last time, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that a Letter of Intent was issued on 01 March 2013 to SARAKO and he stated that there is a security of Rs15 m. which will be provided by SARAKO. Is he aware that in the tender documents with regard to the installation of 1 or 2 MW solar plant it is stated that in the case of a Letter of Intent being issued to a successful bidder, a development security amounting to Mauritian Rs5 m. per MW shall have to be payable? If we multiply 5 by 15 MW, it does not amount to Rs15 m. but to Rs75 m.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are comparing like and unlike. It is not the same.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Nagalingum!
MONTAGNE ORY ROAD – WORKS

(No. B/203) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Montagne Ory road, he will state since when it has been closed to vehicular traffic, indicating-

(a) where matters stand as to the works being carried out thereat, and
(b) when will it be re-opened.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, following the heavy rainfall recorded on 13 February 2013 …

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I am requesting you to remain silent, please! Allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to answer his question!

Mr Bachoo: … immediate action has had to be taken by the Road Development Authority (RDA) to close the Montagne Ory Road for public safety in view of the fact that part of the vertical escarpment bordering Montagne Ory road eroded and collapsed rendering a section of that road unsafe. Furthermore, it was observed that a private building had been constructed close to the edge of the cliff. A diversion scheme was concurrently put in place.

On 20 February 2013, the RDA issued a Works Order to the Colas (Maurice) Ltée, zonal contractor, for urgent remedial works.

The works are progressing satisfactorily and have reached 30% completion.

The whole of the works are expected to be completed by the end of June 2013, after which the diversion scheme will be cancelled and the Montagne Ory road will be reopened to the public.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister if he is aware that with regard to the …
The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question hon. Jugnauth?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes. Whether he is aware that with regard to the free transport operation that is being done, the inhabitants are encountering some problems, especially at the later times of the day, the irregular service? So, if he is aware of same and if he can look into that?

Mr Bachoo: Well, the matter was not brought to my attention. I will look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL - INPATIENTS

(No. B/204) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the inpatients of the Brown Sequard Hospital, he will state the number thereof who are -

(a) on active psychiatric treatment, and

(b) long stay and who do not require internment and may benefit from outpatient care.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker Sir, concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed that as at 18 April 2013, the total number of inpatients at Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre was 570. Of these, 132 inpatients are in acute wards, 431 inpatients are in long stay wards and seven adolescents (4 males & 3 females) are in the Male Adolescent and Female Adolescent Wards respectively.

With regard to part (b) of the question, there are 158 long stay patients who are well stabilised on medication and probably no longer need inpatient medical treatment, but may benefit from outpatient care. They have been in the hospital for long periods of time varying from five to 40 years as their relatives do not want to take them back home.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, considering the forgotten patients of Brown Sequard Hospital, the figure given by the hon. Minister is 439 occupying an active bed, which is far more expensive than if these patients - whether the hon. Minister would agree - along the lines the kids who are removed from Brown Sequard Hospital would benefit from leaving this institution to make way for, maybe, another unit to be set up within the hospital compound?
Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am totally in agreement with the hon. Member. It is precisely why in the Presidential Address, provision is made for the setting up of a midway home. I can assure the hon. Member, as far back as mid-2011, the first expression of interest was issued, which has to be cancelled because there was not enough interest - I mean companies or whatever it is - only one and the second bid was re-launched in August 2011. Again there was not enough interest shown with regard to this.

(Interruptions)
Can I? Can I?

The third one was after seeking views from the Procurement Policy Office on the way forward, we had issued it again and successfully we had five and on 07 May 2011, proposals were made to repeat the expression, as I said earlier. On 11 May, we had five and on 22 June, last year, 2012, new EIA was invited. Since 28 November 2012, a technical team was appointed to work out details of the terms of reference an evaluation criteria for request of proposal. We have set up a team - composed of the DHS, representatives of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, someone from my Ministry, the Principal Health Economist and a representative of the Health Engineering Unit - which is looking at it. On 12 December 2012, the MPI was requested to designate their representatives and it was done. Two technical committees were held on 22 January and 05 March 2013 and I must say I am impressed on the officers of my Ministry. I have liaised with the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister so as to do whatever is possible to accelerate the issue with regard to the midway home in order - as you said rightly, as it was in the Government Programme - to move the people, long stay people, from where they are at the Brown Sequard Hospital to these places, where they can be coached better, they would be more independent and, of course, as you said, it would be less expensive for Government.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Uteem!

BPML - EBÈNE & ROSE BELLE - LEASES

(No. B/205) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard
to Ebène and Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited, information, in each case, as to the number of -

(a) leases that have been assigned, indicating in each case, the

(i) names of the lessee and of the assignee and

(ii) extent and value of the land

(b) cases where the lessee is in breach of the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, indicating the actions, if any, taken against them

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited that assignment of lease is provided for in the lease agreement itself for land at Ebène and is in accordance with the “Bail à construction” of the Mauritian Civil Code. The number of leases assigned so far is 12 and details thereof as requested at part (a) of the Question are being tabled.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the BPML that two lessees are in breach of the terms and conditions of the lease agreement and legal action has been taken against them for the recovery of the land.

Insofar as Rose Belle Business Park is concerned, the land is divided in 30 plots varying between one to four acres each and is not meant for leasing, but rather for sale. Only two plots of an area of around four acres have been sold. I am advised that the demand for land at Rose Belle Business Park is not as high as at Ebène Cybercity.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware if at the BPML there has been any file relating to lease agreement which has been lost?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at a certain time this issue was raised in a ministerial committee, but up to now, I am not aware what has been the outcome of the findings.

**Mr Uteem:** Have these cases been reported to the Police?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** I will have to look into it with BPML Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!
Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria used by BPML for the agreeing to the assignment of leases or to the issue of new leases?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Member that in the contract itself, which was drawn up at the time he was in Government, it is clearly spelt out in the contract itself at paragraph 6(1), that the lessee may sublet or assign the whole or part of the land lease provided the lessor has given prior notice under the activities of the sublease or assignee and within the ICT field of business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I must say that we, ourselves we were not comfortable with that clause and even advice has been applied for and obtained from SLO, which says that BPML will be unable in law to refuse, to give its consent, as this is a legal right that cannot by contract be restricted.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today’s Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.