

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – VIP LOUNGES - FACILITIES

(No. B/148) Mr. P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to access to the VIP facilities at the La Terrasse Lounge and at the State Lounge at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport granted at the discretion of the Prime Minister's Office, he will give a list of the persons who have benefitted therefrom on direct request from the Private Office of the Prime Minister's Office, since July 2005 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) date of travel;
- (b) capacity in which the person was granted the said facilities, and
- (c) name/s of the person/s who have seen off or greeted the person.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to access to VIP facilities at the La Terrasse Lounge and at the State Lounge at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport granted at the discretion of the Prime Minister's Office, I am informed by the Airports of Mauritius Ltd that, according to records, direct requests have been made by the Private Office of the Prime Minister's Office only once since June 2008, and only in respect of access to La Terrasse Lounge.

No direct request has been made by the Private Office for access to VIP facilities at the State Lounge.

All requests which emanated from the Private Office concerned La Terrasse VIP Lounge until 11 September 2013. Thereafter, with the coming into operation of the new passenger terminal in September 2013, all requests for VIP facilities from the Private Office concerned the VIP Departure Lounge and VIP Arrival Lounge at this terminal.

In regard to the information requested by the hon. Member, I am tabling the list of passengers who have benefitted from facilities at the VIP Lounges, with the dates of their travel as well as the names of persons who had seen them off or greeted them.

However, in regard to part (b) of the question, no information is available as to the capacity in which the persons were granted facilities at the VIP Lounges.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister on what ground the officer-in-charge of the Private Office authorised Mrs N. S. to use the Private Office and the VIP lounge?

The Prime Minister: Well, there is no document, there is nothing to indicate the ground. It seems the person who granted the permission only knows on what ground. I am unable to answer that.

Mr Jhugroo: I have a similar question to the hon. Prime Minister. Under what authority the Head of the Private Office made arrangements for Mrs N. S. to use these facilities?

The Prime Minister: I will ask the hon. Member to query from the former Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

POLICE COMPLAINTS BUREAU - CASES

(No. B/149) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Police Complaints Bureau, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of cases reported thereat, since the setting up thereof to date, indicating the number thereof disposed of, and
- (b) who is at the head thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I presume that the hon. Member is making reference to the Police Complaints Division operating under the aegis of the National Human Rights Commission.

In fact, following the proclamation of the Police Complaints Act 2012 in July 2013 and the setting up of the Police Complaints Division within the National Human Rights Commission which is empowered to enquire into cases of complaints against Police, the Complaints Investigation Bureau of the Police Department which was set up in November 1999 ceased its operation in October 2013 and all its pending cases were referred to the National Human Rights Commission.

I am informed by the National Human Rights Commission that, since the setting up of a Police Complaints Division within the National Human Rights Commission in July 2013, it has received 1,509 complaints against Police officers, out of which 893 cases were those transferred by the Complaints Investigation Bureau of the Police Department, which ceased its operation in October 2013. As at 28 February 2015, 930 cases have already been disposed of by the Commission.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Police Complaints Division is led by the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission.

Mr Bérenger: Can I, therefore, again put a question which I put earlier on when we were dealing with the PNQ? We have been reminded that there is a division of the Human Rights Commission - the Human Rights Commission being itself chaired by a former Judge of the Supreme Court - that is dealing in such cases of complaints against the Police and so on and, in the Government Programme of Government, another Commission to be chaired by another Judge has been announced, that is an independent Commission on such Police complaints. At this point in time, does the Government know which way we are heading? Will one absorb the other; will there be two Commissions dealing with the same issue?

The Prime Minister: No, I suppose when we will come with the new one, everything will be dealt with by the new one.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister gave the answer as to the number of cases and I think there are about 1000 cases. Can I ask him, out of the figure that he gave, how many cases are of Police brutality?

The Prime Minister: I do not have the information, I cannot answer that.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Since we heard that there is a substantial number of cases, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister how many staff are there at the Commission and whether the number of staff is sufficient to handle such substantial number of cases?

The Prime Minister: I must enquire about that.

Mr Baloomoody: Madam Speaker, one of the main criticisms with regard to that Police Investigation Commission is that once people make a complaint, they never heard

about the result. They are not informed about the outcome and what enquiry has been carried out. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to look into it because we know that 930 cases have been disposed of, but the complainants are not aware of it? Can the complainants, at least, be communicated about the outcome of their complaints?

The Prime Minister: That has been the case in the past; we will look in the future.

Mr Ganoo: Does the hon. Prime Minister have the figure of how many cases have led to the prosecution of the Police officers in the number of complaints that have been made against them?

The Prime Minister: No, I don't have the figure.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this issue, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: In fact, I was anticipating that a very low number of cases of Police brutality actually end up in conviction. I am going to ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister that, being given that there are so few convictions, whether he does not think that urgent measures have to be taken to speed up the enquiry process because he himself mentioned that there are around 900 cases that were handed over from the Police Complains Bureau to the Human Rights Commission.

The Prime Minister: I must say, Madam Speaker, I am not happy at all with the situation myself. I am not happy that whenever there is a complaint against the Police, the Police itself enquires into it. We must have some other independent institutions to enquire and to say whether there should be prosecution or not.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

LA CAVERNE & PHOENIX – NDU PROJECTS

(No. B/150) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 15, La Caverne and Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit -

(a) information as to the projects being implemented thereat, and

(b) table a list of the future projects earmarked for implementation thereat.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling the list of projects which were carried out in Constituency No 15, during financial year 2014.

Moreover, I am informed that four projects namely -

- (i) construction of Seeboo Lane, Vingta 2 (New), Solferino;
- (ii) construction of Reebye Lane, Vingta (New Road), Solferino;
- (iii) resurfacing and extension of Subway Lane, Solferino, and
- (iv) construction of bridge at Hollyrood.

are presently in abeyance due to absence of necessary clearances such as way leaves and road alignment, and also lack of funds.

As regards part (b) of the question, the NDU is presently working the cost estimates for a list of projects drawn up by the Parliamentary Private Secretary of that Constituency after consultation with the relevant stakeholders. In the absence of a voted Budget, it is premature at this stage, to table a list of future projects.

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider with the PPS, hon. Benydin, to include in the list to come the bridge – they call it River La Caverne - behind l’Eglise Visitation? We visited the place recently and there was flooding there.

The Prime Minister: As I have said, it will depend on the financial situation and whether we have provision in the Budget.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

POLICE OFFICERS – ASSAULT - INQUIRY

(No. B/151) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit Whether, following the case of assault of Police Officers whilst being on duty which occurred in the afternoon of 21 February 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out there into, and
- (b) the measures taken or that will be taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 21 February 2015 there has been no case of assault of Police Officers reported.

However, on 11 February 2015, a case was reported where one Police Officer, who was regulating traffic at the Southern Exit Crossing along Farquhar Street Port-Louis was

assaulted, by a pedestrian, who grew vexed when ordered to wait until the road was clear. Two other Police Officers, who came to his rescue, were also assaulted by two other persons.

One of them was arrested on 20 February 2015 and the two others on 21 February 2015. All three have admitted their guilt and were remanded to police cell.

Police has completed its enquiry and has referred the case to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. On 09 March 2015, the three assailants were released on bail.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the daily Police deployment of the Traffic Unit North based at Fanfaron Police Station has been reinforced and the number of daily patrols increased

Mr Mahomed: I had the opportunity to watch a video that was publicly broadcasted on the Internet wherein I saw that the Police officers appeared defenceless. So, may I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether consideration may be given to the way they are equipped so that they can better defend themselves in such cases?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In this particular case, we heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that those three accused parties were remanded at some stage. Obviously, if they were remanded, there was objection to bail. So, in this particular case, when there is an assault on the Police which is *condamnable*, there was an objection to bail. Could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister take it up with the Commissioner of Police not to have double standards in the approach? In one case where there is an assault against the Police there is objection, but whereas when there is assault causing death on a normal citizen, who was not a Police officer, for that immediately there is no Police objection. This is a clear case of double standard.

The Prime Minister: I have already made that very clear to the Commissioner of Police that there should be no double standard. All citizens before the law must be treated alike.

Mr Mohamed: There is a circular which was issued by the former Commissioner of Police whereby if someone was on bail altogether, systematically the Police must object to bail without getting into the merits of the matter since we are talking here about bail issues. Could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister take it up with the Commissioner of Police or the person in charge of the Police Force that this issue

should be looked into again and revisited in order to give again the discretion to the senior Police officers to decide whether people should be released on bail on their own discretion, based on the merits of the case, not basing themselves on a circular issued by the former Commissioner of Police, that one-size-fits-all policy should stop?

The Prime Minister: I certainly agree with the hon. Member. But, we must remember the case he is talking about. The previous Government should have taken steps and done something about it.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Ganoo!

REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFTS - LEGISLATION

(No. B/152) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the use of drone aircrafts around the country for reconnaissance exercises or for filming purposes, he will state if Government proposes to introduce legislation for the regulation thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) is generally described as an unmanned aircraft which can vary in size, shape, forms and speed.

I am informed that the Civil Aviation Regulations 2007 presently cater for the operation of RPAs weighing between seven and 20 kgs and that smaller RPAs of less than seven kgs are not regulated as they are classified as “Model Aircraft” and used for recreational purposes.

Madam Speaker, however, recent technological developments have led to miniaturisation of the aircraft which can be fitted with cameras and other sensing devices. Such RPAs when fitted with surveillance equipment are known as drones.

Whilst it is recognised that the operation of RPAs are more cost effective to undertake commercial and scientific activities as well as security operations including *reconnaissance* exercises, their use also represents fresh challenges in areas such as privacy, security and aviation safety, and, therefore, needs to be regulated.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that in this regard, draft regulations have already been prepared by the Department of Civil Aviation and will be finalised after consultations with concerned authorities. In the course of the exercise, which is a complex one, due

attention will be given to aligning the regulations with best practices in the European Union and other jurisdictions.

Mr Ganoo: I thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his answer. There was nothing sinister in my question. The purpose was precisely for Government to look at the new issues because this is an evolving legislation like privacy, security. I thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for having highlighted again that this is a complex issue. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has informed the House that the legislation is being prepared now and they will look at the best practices obtained in other jurisdictions. We all know that in the UK, Japan, US, the legislation is already there and is still evolving. Therefore, may I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, when the legislation is ready, whether it will be in the form of regulations or in the form of Bills?

The Prime Minister: So far, from what I have got in the answer, they speak of regulations. Well, we will see when finalising it, if there is need for a Bill, of course, obviously, we will come with a Bill.

Mr Bérenger: In the meantime, obviously new regulations are required and are being prepared. Can I know, in the meantime, is it free for all, as per the existing regulations which are outdated, obviously, *dépasseés*?

The Prime Minister: Well, that is how it was, and that is how it is right now until we do the needful.

Mr Bérenger: In India, for example, they are preparing new regulations, and they have decided no drone flights until the new regulations are ready. I am not saying that we must do the same thing, but the security aspect is such that I understand during the visit of Prime Minister Modi, drones will be banned completely. And there is privacy also, airports security. Therefore, it is a very difficult issue. But are we going to 'free for all' until the new regulations?

The Prime Minister: As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to ban them all.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, having heard all those issues raised by Members of the Opposition, and having heard the Rt. hon Prime Minister just give his views of wishing to ban it all, may I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to ensure that the regulations or Bill,

whatever the shape it will take, does not tend to go towards overregulation, so much so that we create a situation where the use of drones for legitimate purposes, in line with the privacy laws of the country, are totally banned in the process, and the use of it is made so difficult because of permits being required and what have you? Because we have to at least not be overdramatic about this whole situation.

The Prime Minister: I have already answered that, before finalising, everybody concerned will have a say in the matter, and whatever would come must be in the best interest of the country.

CAP MALHEUREUX - POLICE STATION – CONSTRUCTION -

(No. B/153) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration is or will be given for the construction of a Police Station in the vicinity of Cap Malheureux and, if so, indicate -

- (a) if a survey has been carried out in relation thereto, and
- (b) where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the need for the construction of a Police Station in a specific locality is determined by a number of factors, including the population density of that region; the prevailing crime rate; the extent of socio-economic and commercial activities; industrial development and assets, and the geographical area being covered by the nearest Police Stations.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the village of Cap Malheureux falls under the policing jurisdiction of Grand Bay Police Station, and that Cap Malheureux and its adjoining coastal villages such as Péreybère, Calodyne, Anse la Raie, Petit Raffray are being adequately policed by Grand Bay, Grand Gaube and Goodlands Police Stations.

I am also informed that these Stations are re-inforced by the Emergency Response Service, the Divisional Support Unit, CID, ADSU, *Police du Tourisme* and the National Coast Guard, which assist to maintain law and order in that region.

I am accordingly advised by the Commissioner of Police that the construction of a Police Station at Cap Malheureux is not envisaged for the time being.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, may I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister when an appropriate survey was carried out during the last three or four years to determine - the Rt. hon. Prime Minister just mentioned there was a list of criteria that they will take into consideration - whether there is a need for a Police Station? I want to know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if, during the last three to four years, there was such a survey that has been carried out to determine whether there is a need for a Police Station in Cap Malheureux, because in the recent years there has been an increase of the inhabitants.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point!

The Prime Minister: From what I have answered, the information I have from the Commissioner of Police is that there is no need. Therefore, the survey must have shown that there is no need.

Mr Rughoobur: I will still request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - because there is an increasing demand from the inhabitants in the region - to please make a request to the Commissioner of Police to have a look and try to see if they can consider the need.

The Prime Minister: I'll have to ask the Commissioner of Police to have a second look.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Aliphon!

PONZI SCHEMES – INQUIRY

(No. B/154) Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Ponzi Schemes which have allegedly made one thousand nine hundred victims in the recent past, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiries carried out thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Ponzi Scheme came to light following a case of “Embezzlement of funds” reported to the Rose Hill Police Station on 26 March 2013.

Enquiry initiated by the Police revealed that there were several companies involved in Ponzi Schemes. So far, 11 such companies have been identified, and 103 persons have been arrested in connection with this illegal activity.

The status of the enquiries in the cases involving the 11 companies is as follows -

- (i) in one case, the enquiry has been completed, and the case file already forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice;
- (ii) in three cases, the enquiry has been completed, and the case files are being finalised to be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice;
- (iii) in other three cases, the enquiry is nearly completed, and
- (iv) in four cases, the enquiry is in progress.

Madam Speaker, I must also point out that the Asset Recovery Unit is also following the matter insofar as tracing and forfeiture of assets are concerned.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to a PNQ two years ago, the then Prime Minister stated that the Asset Recovery Unit would be going abroad and secure freezing orders for assets that are outside of Mauritius. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has any information whether the Asset Recovery Unit has indeed been able to secure any assets outside Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: No, Madam Speaker, I don't have such information.

Mr Jhugroo: May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, with regard to the Ponzi Scheme, what amount of money has been seized, and whether after the enquiries this money will be refunded to the victims?

The Prime Minister: Which money? I don't know what the hon. Member is talking about. What money? Where is the money? How much money is there? We, ourselves, don't know! And all the money has not been traced out. So, whatever money there will be will legitimately be refunded to those who will be deserving.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/159 addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has been withdrawn. Time is over! Hon. Members the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/172 addressed to the hon. Minister of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security. PQ No. B/180 addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands will now be replied by the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. PQ. No. B/195 addressed to hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and

Lands. PQ. No. B/198 addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

Hon. Ameer Meea!

CATTLE (LIVE) - IMPORTATION

(No. B/162) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to live cattle, beef, goats and muttons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to -

- (a) the number thereof imported in 2014, indicating the -
 - (i) names of the importers thereof, and
 - (ii) measures taken/mechanisms put in place to control the selling price thereof, and
- (b) if the State Trading Corporation -
 - (i) floated tenders for the freighting thereof, and
 - (ii) will be importing same with a view to reducing the selling prices thereof, especially during the *Eid Ul Adha* and end of year festivities.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I must, at the very outset, state that the importation of live cattle, beef, goats and muttons is liberalised and any potential applicant complying with the requirements of an import permit issued by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security is authorised to import these live animals.

As regards part (a)(i) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security that, in 2014, a total of eight thousand three hundred and twenty (8,320) live cattle, beef, goats and muttons was imported by four importers, namely -

- (1) Socovia Belle Vue Ltée;
- (2) Bosmara Cattle Breeders Ltd;
- (3) Mauritius Meat Authority, and
- (4) Medine Ltd.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that on 12 September 2014, the then Government agreed to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection making regulations under the Consumer Protection Act to provide

for a maximum mark-up on the sale of live cattle on the occasion of *Eid Ul Adha* with a view to protecting consumers interest. The retail selling price of imported live cattle *for Eid Ul Adha* 2014 was, therefore, fixed at Rs139.50 per kg, based on the costing submitted by Socovia Ltd at a mark-up of 25% on the CIF value. This was in line with Section 4 of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act.

In addition to this, I am informed that officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit effected checks on the sites where live cattle were sold with a view to controlling any abuse in terms of pricing. The Legal Metrology Services also ensured that the weighing scales being used were properly calibrated in order to avoid any abuse and unfair practices.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that on 19 September 2014, at a meeting held at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection under the chairmanship of the then Minister and where representatives of Mauritius Meat Authority (MMA) and State Trading Corporation (STC) were present, it was decided that STC should launch a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for the importation of live cattle, sheep and goats for slaughter.

The RFQ was launched on 22 September 2014 with closing date on 30 September 2014. I am informed that four offers were received.

The bidders also informed that livestock carriers serving South Africa and Mauritius are very rare and expensive because the market is small and a vessel has to be repositioned from another port to South Africa in case of need.

Subsequently, on 28 October 2014, the STC invited companies for an Expression of Interest (EoI) for transportation services of livestock by sea from South Africa to Mauritius. The livestock vessel was to accommodate up to 500 cattle of average weight of 450 kg each. On the closing date, 21 November 2014, two companies submitted their offers. Both companies could not find livestock vessels that could accommodate up to 500 cattle. Instead, they proposed bigger vessels which could carry in the range of 800 to 2,625 cattle per trip.

Based on the price proposals received from the potential bidders, it was clear that the retail prices of cattle, goats and sheep were found not to be cost-effective in view of the increase in the freight as a result of the number of cattle that was intended to be transported per trip to Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b)(ii) of the question, in accordance with the objectives set out in Section 4 of the State Trading Corporation Act of 1982, the STC sources and imports selected essential strategic commodities, including petroleum products, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), long grain white rice and wheat flour to meet the needs of the domestic market. The import of live animals for slaughter is not envisaged by the STC.

However, I am now informed by the Mauritius Meat Authority that it intends to import live cattle, goats and sheep to regulate the market to control unfair practices. Moreover, I am also informed that a new company has been granted an import permit by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security for the importation of live cattle. Any other importer willing to import live cattle will be granted import permits. The Government will provide all the necessary facilities to ensure that there are new players in this particular field of activity with a view to bringing more competition for the benefit of the consumers.

Madam Speaker, in anticipation of the forthcoming *Eid Ul Adha* festival which, I understand, will be celebrated at around September 2015, I met the main importers of live cattle, beef, goats and muttons with a view to bringing down the prices of these items.

I have to inform the House that the meeting was very positive and they have given me an assurance that they will work towards bringing down further the prices of live animals for the *Eid Ul Adha* and end of year festivities 2015 compared to 2014.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Minister for his reply, but can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that there is a cartel in Mauritius and that this cartel has been on since several years, and that in Mauritius all throughout the year, the prices remained stable for price of live cattle, but when the festivities for *Eid Ul Adha* and end of year festivities approach, you see a sudden rise in the prices? So, despite the hon. Minister saying that he met them...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, come with your question. Don't make a statement, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: ...and he reassured that everything would be done, can I ask him to see to it that these people are taken to task because every year it is the same story and the prices never go down?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am very well aware of the situation that has been prevailing for years. Now that a new Government is here, we are going to take this matter seriously.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the hon. Minister clearly, the STC carried out an in-depth enquiry and found that it was not cost-effective. I take it, it was not financially interesting for the State Trading Corporation to go into this, and yet, we are informed that the Mauritius Meat Authority is going to do the same at a loss. Can I ask the two hon. Ministers concerned, but the hon. Minister replying, is the Mauritius Meat Authority really better equipped to import this cattle to regulate the market, then the State Trading Corporation, and what kind of an importing, trading at a loss are we talking about in the case of the Mauritius Meat Authority?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am informed that from the time when the experience of STC and Mauritius Meat Authority decided to carry out these activities and, as at now, there have been changes in transportation facilities for the cattle.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With a view of trying to ensure that - as hon. Ameer Meea explained - just before the festivities, that the price does not take a hike for the reason that there is a festivity and more people would require to buy live cattle, could the hon. Minister consider, once again, for the second time, as was done last year, that the laws be amended, the regulations be once again brought in in order to ensure that there is a control of price during this festivity in order to stop people from making an abuse of the situation specifically during this period?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, as I said, we are here for less than three months and this matter is going to be given consideration and I am proposing to set up a committee to look into it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. One way of regulating the market is also to encourage local farmers to rear cattle. So, may I know from the hon. Minister - I know it is probably not directly under his Ministry - whether consideration would be given to come up

with schemes and to make State lands available for those who want to rear cattle and muttons?

Mr Gungah: All incentives will be given, Madam Speaker, to these people.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: In the answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's question, the hon. Minister answered that the STC when they did the quotation, the tender process, did not find it *viable* and then after that, things have changed and now it is the Meat Authority – according to the answer of the hon. Minister – which finds it interesting. So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the STC could float new tenders? Because things have changed, prices have gone down; prices of freight, prices of whatever. Could the STC do new tenders so that it is STC which does the importation?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, STC does not have the expertise in this field.

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Ameer Meea!

AGALEGA - - PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/163) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Agalega, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Outer Islands Development Corporation, information as to where matters stand in relation to each of the six projects earmarked in the Programme Based Budget 2012 for implementation.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, regarding the six projects referred to by the hon. Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East for implementation by the Outer Islands Development Corporation, I am informed by the Outer Islands Development Corporation that the status of the projects is as follows –

(i) **Refugee Centre Project**

This project relates to the construction of a Refugee Centre on South Island at Agalega. Initially, the project value was Rs11 m. and started in October 2012 and the expected date of completion was scheduled by the end of 2015. The

project consists of two phases. As per the Engineer report, only 67% of Phase has been completed and Phase II has not yet started. The amount already disbursed for that project represents 48% of the project value, i.e. Rs1.9 m. out of Rs4.1 m.

(ii) **Rehabilitation of Airstrip**

Tenders were launched in December 2011 for the rehabilitation of the airstrip, but the amount tendered was in the range of Rs318-350 m. against Rs120 m. which was the amount earmarked for the project in 2012. The Corporation did not go ahead with the project.

(iii) **Rehabilitation of Coconut Plantation**

Under this project, at the cost of Rs0.6 m., the Corporation purchased two dehusking machines for dehusking of coconuts. In the past, such activities were carried out manually.

(iv) **Fire Fighting Project**

I understand that a fire fighting vehicle was purchased in July 2013 at the cost of Rs15.7 m. I am advised by the Corporation that the vehicle is still awaiting shipment to Agalega. Apparently, the Corporation is having transportation problems as the vehicle cannot be dismantled for shipment. The vehicle is still lying at Coromandel Fire Station and I learnt that the warranty on the vehicle will expire in July 2015.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, allow the hon. Minister to reply, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I am on my feet!

Mr Koonjoo:

(v) **Construction of Houses**

The houses are meant for the inhabitants of Agalega. The project value is Rs2.9 m. Two duplex type quarters have already been constructed and are

currently being occupied by four families comprising of eight members. Each duplex comprises two housing units.

(vi) **Installation of Solar Panel**

The project has never been implemented. The amount of Rs1.5 m. earmarked for the installation of solar panel has been reallocated for the renovation of two houses. The two houses are occupied by the Officer-in-Charge of South Island and the other one by the daughter of the Officer-in-Charge with her family.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. All these projects have been announced since several years, but nothing has been done.

(Interruptions)

In every Budget, every year it is announced and nothing has been done. I know the hon. Minister just assumed office, but can I ask him if he can give a time frame for all these projects to be implemented urgently as the situation there is chaotic?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I can't give a time frame when these projects will start and when they will be completed, but I can assure the hon. Member that I have gone through the files of the Outer Islands and I have contacted the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and also the hon. Minister of Good Governance and I have asked to carry out a forensic audit to find out..

(Interruptions)

...what are the situations financially in the outer islands?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding this specific fire service lorry which cannot be transported to Agalega, can the hon. Minister consider to open an inquiry and, if need be, refer this case to the Police?

Mr Koonjoo: I just answered, Madam Speaker.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Minister will agree with me that there is an urgent need of action there. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is planning to visit Agalega in the meantime?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No cross talking, please! Allow the hon. Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

I will definitely do so after the Budget and I will ask the hon. Member to accompany me.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, did you get the reply of the hon. Minister.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes. A last question! Concerning the lorry for the Fire Station, since it has now been established that the vehicle won't be able to travel to Agalega, can I ask the hon. Minister it would be simple to redeploy such vehicle to a local station, here, in Mauritius because it is a waste of public funds.

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: I will look into it, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours for lunch.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.39 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

FOOTBALL ACADEMY – SETTING UP

(No. B/164) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a Football Academy by an English Premier League team, as stated in the Government Programme 2015-2019, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that the Government Programme 2015-2019 makes reference to the setting up of a high level football Academy in collaboration with an English Premier League Soccer Club.

Madam Speaker, since I took office as Minister, I am having consultations with all the stakeholders on the proposed project of the setting-up of a Football Academy. Discussions are still going on. Once agreement has been reached on the modalities of operation of the proposed Football Academy, the project will be implemented in collaboration with West Ham United or any other football club, as I must add that many foreign football teams have also expressed interest in the project.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, vu que l'honorable ministre a mentionné le nom de West Ham United, peut-on savoir s'il y a eu des correspondances échangées avec le club en question et de bien vouloir, bien sûr, déposer copies sur la Table de l'Assemblée de ces correspondances?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, these are high level meetings and hon. Pravind Jugnauth, on a private visit, went to West Ham himself, and we had discussions there, and definitely, my office is in contact. We are having proposals from other football clubs as well. So, we are looking into all the matters.

Mr Mohamed: Could the hon. Minister inform the House, at some stage, before the elections, there was the issue of Sam Allardyce who was referred to as a very well-known football coach? Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether Sam Allardyce came to Mauritius voluntarily, whether free-of-charge, out of the goodness of his heart or did anyone find it, out of the goodness of their heart, necessary to sponsor such an event, which is important?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I think you should agree with me that we were in the Opposition and football teams like West Ham and Sam Allardyce was never forced to come to Mauritius. He came on his own voluntarily to give his help to improve football in Mauritius.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the project will be funded by Government or will it be a private venture?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, it is at the level of my Ministry, that's why we are discussing with all the stakeholders. The discussion is still going on.

Mr Mohamed: Since I am happy to hear that this gentleman, Sam Allardyce, out of the goodness of his heart, came over voluntarily to Mauritius to help, could the hon. Minister now confirm that his ticket, his hotel, his stay here or consultancy fees were at no point at all charged to any person, be it private or public and it was all free?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, he came on his own on our invitation. At that time, we were not in Government. So, everything was private.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, si je comprends bien la réponse du ministre, est-ce qu'il est en train de dire à la Chambre que, jusqu'à présent, il n'y a eu aucune discussion approfondie avec la direction de West Ham United, il est clair que pour pouvoir concrétiser ce genre de projet, on ne peut pas discuter avec l'entraîneur. Toute décision doit être prise par la direction du club ou des clubs en question. Alors, ma question est la suivante: est-ce que l'honorable ministre est en train de nous dire que tout ceci ressemble à ce qu'on a vu dans le passé avec le bluff de la venue de Liverpool à Maurice ou bien est-ce que c'est effectivement un projet sérieux qui sera concrétisé?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have just answered to the hon. Member that discussions are still going on, but if my colleague has other proposals, I will invite him to do so.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has made mention of other clubs apart from West Ham. Can we have an idea of the names of those clubs which the Minister has contacted?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, we had a request from Celtic and from Bastia.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIÈRE - YOUTH CENTRES – FACILITIES

(No. B/165) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Youth Centres in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will state, in each case, the –

- (a) opening hours thereof;

- (b) staff attached thereto, and
- (c) facilities and equipment available thereat.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, two youth centres namely Barkly and Mont Roches Youth Centres are operational in Constituency No. 20 - Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière.

Like all other youth centres, these two Youth Centres operate up to 18.00 hours from Monday to Saturday. The centres also are made available to youth organisations on request for the conduct of activities for the benefit of the youth at any time beyond normal opening hours.

A Youth Officer is posted at each of the two Youth Centres. They work under the supervision of a Senior Youth Officer and a Principal Youth Officer.

The Barkly Youth Centre comprises a committee room, a Computer Room with free internet facilities and a multi-purpose hall for the practice of boxing, table tennis, dance, music, zumba, fitness activities and indoor games. A learning corner with all necessary equipment and materials will be launched shortly at the Centre. I would like to stress the fact that the Computer Room has been fully refurbished with the assistance of the National Empowerment Foundation and all IT equipment is new. The facility will soon be inaugurated. The Mont Roches Youth Centre, on the other hand, offers free internet indoor games and committee room facilities, and also outdoor activities like *pétanque*, volleyball, basketball and street football.

Madam Speaker, as regards equipment available at Youth Centres, I am circulating the information.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je dois demander au ministre s'il est au courant que le centre de Jeunesse de Mont Roches, actuellement, n'a pas d'officier en charge ; qu'il n'y a aucune activité qui est organisée, et que l'état du centre lui-même demande à être rénové ou il serait préférable, je pense, de doter cette région d'un nouveau centre vu la grosse concentration de jeunes qui s'y trouvent.

Mr Sawmynaden: Okay, I will definitely ask my officers to have a look into it. If need be we will do it.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the Youth Centres over the years, as far back 1983-84, it was the policy of all Governments to have these Youth Centres reserved for sports activities

and political parties have been debarred from having the use of these Youth Centres. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a new policy, whether the same policy will be maintained as far as the use of Youth Centres exclusively for youth activities and none for political activities?

Mr Sawmynaden: Yes, the same policy will be involved.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, avec votre permission, je dois attirer l'attention du ministre du fait que les centres de jeunesse actuellement ferment à 18 heures et je suis persuadé qu'il est bien au courant de cela, et c'est l'heure à laquelle justement les jeunes sont libres pour pouvoir bénéficier des services qui sont offerts dans les centres. Alors, ma question est la suivante: est-ce que le ministre n'envisage-t-il pas de revoir les heures d'ouverture des centres de jeunesse dans la circonscription No. 20 et dans le pays, en général?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member has seen it in our Programme, it is clearly written that all youth centres operation hours will be reviewed.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

MAURITIUS/SOUTH AFRICA - DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT

(No. B/166) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Non-Double Taxation Agreement signed between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of South Africa, he will state where matters stand, indicating if he is in presence of information indicating whether other countries having signed similar agreements with the Republic of South Africa have also had theirs reviewed along the same lines as the one existing between our two countries.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between Mauritius and South Africa was signed in July 1996 and it came into force in June 1997. This Agreement was revised at the request of South Africa which had expressed concerns about the use of the 1996 Treaty in a manner that was not originally intended.

Following consultations between South Africa and Mauritius, a revised agreement was signed on 17 May 2013 but has not yet entered into force. The revised agreement has been ratified by South Africa but is yet to be ratified by Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that concerns were raised by operators of our global business sector principally on the application of the new Article 4 subparagraph (3) which relates as to how a company having a dual residence status would be dealt with under the proposed mutual agreement process to resolve dual residency issues should both countries not agree.

Under the proposed tax treaty, the effective management criterion is substituted with an administrative discretion. Accordingly, South Africa Revenue Service (SARS) and the Mauritian authorities will endeavour to reach mutual agreement on whether a dual resident company should be taxed only in Mauritius or only in South Africa. If SARS does not reach an agreement, the dual resident company will then be subject to double Taxation and this is where the issue lies in the absence of clarity.

Madam Speaker, though certainty regarding the application of the proposed Article 4 of the revised agreement is expected to develop over time, to give immediate comfort to our investors and ensure consistency of the revised Article 4, Mauritius firmly believes it would be appropriate to detail the process and both quantitative and qualitative requirements would be followed by our competent authorities to settle reported cases of dual residence issues.

To that effect, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development together with the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Attorney General's Office and in consultation with industry stakeholders have worked out a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the process and requirements to be followed by the competent authorities to resolve cases of dual residence through the mutual agreement mechanism.

Following consultations, a draft MoU detailing the process to be followed by the competent authorities to settle cases where there are issues of dual residence through a mutual agreement process and also a request that Mauritius benefits from the most favoured nation treatment which is not less favourable than the treatment granted to South Africa's other treaty partners was forwarded to the South African authorities on 26 August 2014.

On 22 October 2014, the Department of International Relations and Co-operation of the Republic of South Africa submitted counter proposals on the mutual agreement requirements to settle issues of dual residency. Furthermore, the South African authorities then informed that they do not propose to extend the scope of the Most Favoured Nation clause with respect to the mutual agreement process in settling dual residency issues.

Discussions are currently ongoing on the draft MoU between the Mauritius and South African authorities and we expect to submit our proposals on the revised MoU soon.

Madam Speaker, as regards the second part of the question, according to information published by the South African Revenue Service (SARS), which is South Africa's tax collecting authority, South Africa has renegotiated or is in the process of renegotiating its Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements with Germany, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Singapore, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, it appears that none of these renegotiated agreements have so far come into force. As such, we do not have any details about the changes that have been made or proposed to be made to that. South Africa is also negotiating the amendment of Protocols with a number of its other treaty partners.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to add that, since the start of my mandate, my Ministry has already engaged in discussions with various stakeholders of the global business sector with respect to the proposed growth strategy of the financial services sector in Mauritius. Consultations also covered potential threats and also identified opportunities in the light of the Proposed Base Erosion and Profit Sharing (BEPS) initiative which is currently taking place in accordance with the directives of the G20.

This, Madam Speaker, is exactly the subject of debate and discussion with the South African authorities as the proposed Article 4 on the determination of the residency status of a contracting state in the case of dual residence through a mutual agreement process is expected to be in line with the proposed OECD Treaty Model under the BEPS initiative. This is something we need to look into because GAAR seems not to be an issue anymore now after the Indian Government has pronounced itself on that.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the challenges facing the industry, I have decided, as I stated before, to reactivate the Financial Services Consultative Council which will be chaired by myself and will include the Governor of the Central Bank, the Financial Secretary, the Chief Executive of the FSC, the Chairman of the FSC and other representatives of the global business sector with the aim to proactively turning such threats facing our industry into opportunities and act upon the identified opportunities in a timely and proactive manner. The FSCC will be meeting by the end of this month, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Does the hon. Minister still have a long statement?

Mr Bhadain: No.

Madam Speaker: If the hon. Minister has a long statement, he better circulates it.

Mr Bhadain: I have got four lines left, Madam Speaker.

Representatives of my Ministry will also be in Johannesburg after April 2015 and we will take the opportunity to take stock of the status of discussions on the treaty between our two countries, in order to conclude on this issue and, of course, establish a clear way forward.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the hon. Minister for his detailed answer.

(Interruptions)

With regard to the Non-Double Taxation Agreement being referred to with the Republic of South Africa, at some stage, this whole process had started out with the hon. Minister Jugnauth and then the hon. Deputy Prime Minister Duval.

According to information there are many other countries, as the hon. Minister has explained, that are in the midst of renegotiating the agreement with the Republic of South Africa. But, they have decided not to proceed with what the Republic of South Africa has proposed and Mauritius happens to be the only country that has signed up to this whole agreement. Does not the hon. Minister believe that there is a danger that Mauritius is placing itself in a situation of uncertainty by having agreed to the new deal as proposed and as negotiated as opposed to other competitors who, in various other jurisdictions, have agreed unanimously - strangely enough - not to themselves deal with the South African authorities and do not want to negotiate? Have we not put ourselves in a situation where our competitors will be at an advantage compared to us?

Mr Bhadain: Yes, of course. I mentioned before, Madam Speaker, that there are issues which have been raised by operators in the global business sector in Mauritius. We are well aware of these issues and this is why the previous Government came up with a draft Memorandum of Understanding which we are now looking into. We are going to take this forward and whatever we will do, of course, will be in the best interest of Mauritius. We will also ensure that the qualms of the operators in the global business sector are well taken into consideration and, at the end of the day, when we go ahead it will be for the interest of our country.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I raised this very same issue in 2013 when the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval was the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance. Would not the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms agree with me that the problem with all this DTA stems from the fact that the officers of the Income Tax Department went ahead and signed a treaty as far back as in May 2013 without consulting stakeholders and now, after *le fait accompli*, we are having to ask the South Africans to go back on what we ourselves had signed and agreed? Would not the hon. Minister agree that going forward before his Ministry takes any decision concerning Double Taxation Treaty there should be wide consultations with the stakeholders?

Mr Bhadain: Yes. That is exactly what we are doing, Madam Speaker. We are holding wide consultations with everybody and we want everybody to come up with their opinion so that we can actually take an informed decision which is in the best interest of all the parties and of course, we want our industry to succeed.

Having said that, this is also why I am setting up the Financial Services Consultative Council because this is the Council which will act as the think tank for this sector of the economy so that we can actually identify those growth opportunities. I cannot be responsible for what has been done before. Certainly, we will take this forward and make it work for the interest of Mauritius.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has given us a lot of details of the consultations and so on taking place here in Mauritius. From what I understand, there are several countries that are refusing to agree to what our South African brothers and sisters - they can be 'tough' to use the diplomatic word. Can I know how many SADC countries we find among those countries that have run into trouble with South Africa on that issue and whether there is any attempt to get those SADC countries together when facing South Africa?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I don't know whether these countries are actually running into all those problems mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. They are renegotiating. This is what is stated by SARS in South Africa and they would know the terms and conditions of the renegotiation. We are not aware of whether they do not want to do business with South Africa on this issue. Having said that, the countries I mentioned, apart from Germany and Singapore, in terms of African nations involved we have Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Of course, we can also consult with them. We will certainly do that.

Having said that, with regard to the consultations which have taken place in Mauritius, the operators in the sector are well aware of all these issues because they are the ones who are going out there in Africa and doing their business. Government is here to facilitate the process for them and we will certainly use all our endeavours to do that. I am answering this question as Minister of Financial Services and as Minister of Good Governance like my hon. friend has been telling. On good governance, I am dealing with other matters.

Mr Mohamed: In the light of all the remarks that have been made by the hon. Minister - which I find very interesting - may I humbly suggest that Government considers the possibility of getting in touch with the Government of South Africa and use all diplomatic channels for that purpose in order to ensure that whatever was agreed upon in 2013 or before is halted, pending to what goes on with other countries and other states that are in negotiations with the Republic of South Africa. That would ensure that we do not put ourselves in a situation where our competitors have this competitive edge or that we lose our competitive edge. To put it simply that we approach the Government of South Africa, use all diplomatic channels, use our friendship with the people of South Africa, to ensure that whatever was agreed upon in 2013 is halted until there is more visibility as far as the negotiations that our competitors are making with the people of South Africa are concerned.

Mr Bhadain: Yes, we will certainly do that, Madam Speaker. As I have stated, we have a team from my Ministry who will be visiting South Africa in April 2015. There is a conference which is being held over there and apart from that, we will be meeting the representatives and our counterparts over there. I am a firm believer, Madam Speaker, that in the face of adversity, always lies the opportunity. We are going to take those opportunities forward.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES - RAISED JUNCTION PLATFORMS

(No. B/167) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Route des Pamplemousses, from the junction of Vallée des Prêtres to the Kadhafi Square, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of raised junction platforms as a new means to enhance road safety and thereby making its use along the said road as a test case to be replicated elsewhere if it produces results, if so required.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed that a raised junction is generally restricted to roads with moderate to low traffic and not to those whose primary function is to deliver traffic from motorways to secondary roads. Such high capacity roads are termed as main arterial roads and Route des Pamplemousses falls in that category. In fact, Route des Pamplemousses is a 900m road which takes traffic from the M2 Dual Carriageway to connect to the city centre at Khadafi Square, through the A2 road, at Abercrombie roundabout.

Construction of raised platforms along Route des Pamplemousses could give rise to a number of problems including reduction in traffic performance, in terms of traffic throughout and travel time and forcing motorists to opt for less appropriate routes. In view thereof, other road safety measures such as pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, parking restrictions and one way schemes have already been implemented in that region.

Madam Speaker, however, as regards raised platform, due consideration can be given to the suggestion and its construction on a trial basis as a pilot basis, on roads with moderate traffic volume. If proven satisfactory it may then be replicated on roads with similar characteristics.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. This is a suggestion that I have made some time back with regard to raised platforms. Are they the same experts at the level of his Ministry who have basically kept on saying that raised platforms are not the solutions for Route des Pamplemousses? Because raised platforms as such do not exist in Mauritius. It seems as though because it is a new method of reducing traffic velocity and reducing the number of accidents and risk of road accidents that people are *réfractaires* to this whole novelty. Could the hon. Minister look into the possibility of it being installed in Route des Pamplemousses again or the adjacent roads? There are no traffic lights and traffic humps there and more and more people from that region are complaining because people have no discipline in the way they drive?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, not everything has a ...

(Interruptions)

I think that the hon. Member has made a good suggestion. In fact, in Reunion island, these raised platforms are being used. There are platforms about 10 cm² and cover the whole road and which can lead to lessen the speed. But the problem is where do we put them? So, we can try some on a pilot basis.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same issue, since the hon. Minister is well aware of the traffic at Route des Pamplémousses and the junction of Vallée des Prêtres which is a very busy one, can I appeal to the hon. Minister whether he can convey to the Commissioner of Police to put policemen in the morning and in the evening especially on Saturday because there is a market fair there and the traffic is a real nightmare?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, we will certainly do that and we will also consider the possibility of traffic lights there.

MBC – LICENCE FEE

(No. B/168) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the payment by households of the monthly fee of Rs150 to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will state if he will consider recommending a revision downwards thereof to Rs100 in the forthcoming budget.

Mr Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, in 2002 when the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) had three (3) analogue TV channels, the TV licence fee was Rs100 per month. Since then, there have been developments and now there are 17 digital TV channels being offered to viewers alongside three analogue TV channels.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member may recall that licence fee was revised upwards from Rs100 to Rs150 per month in August 2013.

When this Government took over in December 2014, we discovered that the financial situation of the MBC was in the red with overdrafts of Rs235 m. and debts of Rs960 m. The immediate priority of the MBC is to reduce its costs which has already started with a cost reduction of Rs2 m. per month. We are also awaiting the conclusion of the enquiry being conducted by the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, which will also look into the financial aspects of the Corporation.

Therefore, in the given circumstances, I am informed that it will not be wise to reduce the licence fee.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I heard the hon. Minister saying the difficult financial situation as clearly described by him. Now, with a view of trying to alleviate the difficult financial situation which the MBC finds itself in; could the Government consider as a means of raising funds or has the Government consider already the possibility of privatising two of the channels there, and if that is the case, has the Government been

informed by interested parties as to who would be interested in such a privatisation process, and if so, who would they be?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I think the hon. Member is jumping the gun because there is a question on privatisation of the two channels that is coming. So, I'll answer that.

SHORT MESSAGE SERVICES - LEVY

(No. B/169) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Short Message Services, he will state if he will consider recommending a waiver of the levy of the 10 cents tax per message in the forthcoming budget.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr S. Luchmeenaraidoo): Madam Speaker, the issue regarding waiver of the levy applicable on Short Message Services would be considered in the context of the forthcoming Budget exercise.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House, at least, of the amount of money collected by means of this levy in the past years?

Mr Luchmeenaraidoo: Yes, revenue from levy was Rs92 m. in 2012, Rs99 m. in 2013 and Rs85 m. in 2014. This is expecting by the fact that more and more people are using mobile applications like *Skype*, *Viber* and *WhatsApp* for the communication with permits which commit them to send free messages via Internet connection.

Dr. Sorefan: Are we to understand from the hon. Minister that Government intends to remove this 10 cents tax on Short Message in the coming Budget?

Mr Luchmeenaraidoo: Well, I have never said that. But what I am saying is that based on statistics, revenue is decreasing because the public is using more and more free Internet facilities through *Viber* and *WhatsApp*.

PRE-PRIMARY & PRIMARY SCHOOLS - FLUORIDE TABLETS - DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/170) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the prevention of tooth decay, he will state if consideration will be given for a reintroduction of the distribution of fluoride tablets in the pre-primary and primary schools of mainland Mauritius, of Rodrigues and of Agalega.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in order to meet the dental needs of the population, my Ministry provides dental care in 58 dental clinics

throughout the island including three mobile dental clinics targeting the school population. There are also three dental clinics in Rodrigues. For Agalega, a dental surgeon visits the island three times a year to provide care to local inhabitants.

With regard to the use of fluoride, my Ministry subscribes to WHO guidelines about the benefits of fluoride in the prevention of dental diseases. However, according to WHO Technical Report of 1994, fluoride tablets have limited application as a public health measure and are recommended only for at-risk children.

My Ministry is also envisaging to seek WHO assistance to conduct a National Oral Health Survey soon in Mauritius, with a view to formulating a National Oral Health Plan of action. The plan will define our future preventive strategies in relation to Oral Health. My Ministry will stand guided with the recommendations of WHO with regard to the use of fluoride tablets for the prevention of tooth decay in school children.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, may we know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that we had several researches and documents since 1950, and that fluoride is the best preventive measure? The hon. Minister has mentioned a lot of clinics; those are curative. To reduce the cost in the long run, prevention is better than cure. I take it that this new Government will go mainly on prevention ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sorefan, what is your question?

Dr. Sorefan: Do not go on WHO requirements, go on Mauritian requirements. From a dental point of view, we find fluoride is the best preventive measure.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sorefan, are you making a statement or are you asking a question?

Mr Gayan: I understand the hon. Member to be asking about the introduction of fluoride. May I say, Madam Speaker, that fluoride is used mainly in toothpaste, which is widely available in Mauritius. We will certainly look into whatever the World Health Organisation says, but at least the world body about this matter.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister on what frequency do dentists go to Agaléga?

(Interruptions)

Mr Gayan: Well, I did say, Madam Speaker. Three times a year.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES - GPS PROJECT

(No. B/171) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)

asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the GPS Project for Local Authorities, he will state -

- (a) who advised the implementation thereof;
- (b) if a prior study was carried out in relation thereto and, if so, indicate
 - (i) by whom;
 - (ii) when and,
 - (iii) the cost thereof and;
- (c) if tenders were called for the supply and installation thereof and, if so, Indicate
 - (i) when;
 - (ii) the name of the successful bidder thereof, and
 - (iii) the cost thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that an analysis of the scavenging services at each local authority was carried out by the Local Authorities Governance Unit of my Ministry in 2012 to assess amongst others, the costs of refuse collection services and the fleet profile, namely the types, conditions, age, capacity utilisation and replacement policy of vehicles. The Local Authorities Governance Unit subsequently recommended, amongst others, the introduction of the Global Positioning System for vehicle tracking with a view to help save on vehicle running cost while making better use of the existing fleet and manpower, with a view to improving quality of service.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a study of waste collection systems in two local authorities was carried by the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Mauritius in 2012.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that, following a procurement exercise carried out on 06 August 2014, the contract was awarded to Navigation and Geocoding Technologies Ltd, the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder for the amount of Rs22,221,834.00 (inclusive of VAT). This price also includes the supply of a Geographical Information System software.

Mr Bhagwan: May the hon. Minister inform the House whether this system is fully operational?

Mr Husnoo: Actually, this contract was awarded on 20 January 2015, and now they are in process of training the users how to use the system. This has started on 09 February this year. Now it is in the training phase, and it is going to be fully operational in October or early November 2015.

BAMBOUS - AGRICULTURAL LAND - LEASE-

(No. B/172) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the plots of agricultural land leased to individuals at Bambous, he will -

- (a) state the number thereof and,
- (b) table a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) extent thereof, and
 - (ii) conditions thereof.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Madam Speaker, I shall, with your permission, reply to this Parliamentary Question. I am advised that State agricultural land at La Ferme Land Settlement and Roches Brunes Seed Production Centre near Bambous is leased to planters and breeders for vegetable cultivation and livestock production.

Regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed that there are 24 lessees at La Ferme Land Settlement and 13 at Roches Brunes Seed Production Centre; that makes a total of 37 lessees.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am tabling the list of beneficiaries. May I add that, regarding the main conditions attached to the leases, the offer is for a period of seven years, renewable, and the rental payable to Rs1,000 per *arpent* annually. The lease may be cancelled at any time and the land retrieved if the lessee does not comply with the conditions of the lease, that is, neglecting the land, subletting the land, using the land for other purpose or not paying the rental.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has inquired if, in the list, the former Minister of Local Government, Mr Hervé Aimée, benefitted a considerable amount of *arpents* of State land in that region?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, if we go through the list, indeed, we have one former Minister who is the beneficiary of land at Roches Brunes Seed Production Centre. He was awarded that lease in March 2008, and the lease expired in February this year.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister at least inquire from his officers whether there has been a case of sub-renting of that land which was awarded to him?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must say that my Ministry is undergoing an internal enquiry with regard to land leased to various planters and breeders. Wherever there has been breach of contract with regard to conditions laid out in those lease agreements, lands are going to be retrieved from those beneficiaries.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has stated that there was a former Minister. Could he please confirm to the House - if my information is correct - that this person referred to as a former Minister was not Minister at the time when he was granted the lease?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, what I can say is that, at the time the lease was awarded to that person, probably he was not a Minister, but since the lease went through the end of February 2015, at one particular time during that period of the lease, he was Minister.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister what extent of land was he granted, and may I know also what was he cultivating there?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, the acres of land awarded to that person amounted to two *arpents*, and the purpose of the lease was for poultry breeding, vegetables and fruit cultivation.

Mr Jhugroo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he considers taking legal action against those planters who have sublet their land?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, all those who have contravened the conditions of the lease are going to answer to that.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister just informed us that the lease has been terminated. May we know whether the lease would be renewed?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I leave it to my Ministry to reconsider if there is request of renewal, and we will deal with that matter as and when the request is made to my Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: It is a case of double employment. At the time when he was not Minister, he was bargaining with the previous party to stay in that party. He was given that as a bribe.

Mr Mohamed: If the hon. Minister could, maybe, enlighten the House and enlighten myself. Normally, at the end of a lease, if there is no request for a renewal or if it does not come to an end as such, there is no notice sent by the lessee to the lessor or vice versa, there is this operation of renewal by tacit *reconduction*. Isn't this included in the lease, therefore, the issue of renewal does not arise, and it has just been renewed automatically for the same period?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I need notice of that question.

**MAURICE ILE DURABLE COMMISSION/UNITED NATION INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS - CONTRACT**

(No. B/173) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the contract signed between the former *Maurice Ile Durable* Commission and the United Nation Industrial Development Organisations for the Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production Programme for the industry, he will state where matters stand as to the -

- (a) implementation thereof, and
- (b) timeframe set for the completion thereof.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, following the signature of the contract between the former Maurice Ile Durable Commission and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation in November 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed between the Maurice Ile Durable Fund and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, to facilitate the implementation of the project.

The Memorandum can only be signed after appropriate amendments would be brought to the Finance and Audit Act to enable the *MID* Fund to operate under the aegis of my Ministry. A timeframe can then be set for the completion of the project.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

SOLAR WATER HEATER PROGRAMME - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/174) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the Solar Water Heater Programme implemented by the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to -

- (a) the number of schemes implemented to date, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) date of implementation thereof;
 - (ii) number of beneficiaries thereof;

- (iii) energy savings in respect thereof to the country;
 - (iv) societal benefit thereof, if any;
 - (v) emission reductions thereof;
 - (vi) economic savings thereof to the country, and
 - (vii) cost to Government and the payback period of the investment, and
- (b) if any additional scheme is still awaiting implementation and, if so, indicate the expected timeframe for implementation set therefor.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, with regard to part(a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed that three schemes have been implemented in respect of the Solar Water Heater Scheme as follows -

	Date of implementation	Number of beneficiaries
Scheme 1	2008	24,000 households
Scheme 2	2012	14,100 households
Scheme 3	2013	19,757 households

With regard to parts (iii) to (vii) of the question, a study was conducted by Green Energy Solutions Centre based in US with the support of the UN Energy in September 2013 for the scheme implemented in 2012 and the findings were as follows -

1. **Energy savings:** LPG savings of 786 tonnes per year and electricity savings of 3,466 MWh/year;
2. **Economic savings:** Rs54.2 m. per year on a total investment of Rs146 m. for 2012 with a simple payback period of 2.7 years;
3. **Emission reductions:** 5,204 tonnes of CO² per year on emissions from electricity generation and combustion of LPG;
4. **Societal Benefits:** out of all the households who benefitted from the schemes, 47% were without existing water heating.
5. However, it was observed that nearly 40% of the systems in place were not operational since a large number of SWHs were either not functional or not properly installed due to the high cost of connections and fittings.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that no additional scheme is awaiting implementation under the *MID* Fund.

However, allocation of Rs100 m. was made in Budget 2014 for a new SWH scheme in the National Habitat Fund under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the National Habitat Fund has set up a Technical Committee comprising representatives of different Ministries and other agencies, including my Ministry, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, Ministry of Housing and Lands, Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, *MID* Fund and DBM to review the scheme in light of the findings of the study undertaken by Green Energy Solutions Centre and to make proposals on the operationalisation of an improved Solar Water Heater Scheme.

A decision on the operationalisation of that improved Solar Water Heater Scheme will be taken in the context of the forthcoming Budget, after discussions with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Mr Bérenger: I am not sure I heard correctly, but if that is the case, will the hon. Minister confirm from what I heard that 40% of the installed solar water heaters are not functional and, if that is not the case, has a calculation been made of all the installed solar water heaters, what percentage thereof indeed is not functioning?

Mr Dayal: This is true, and because it was done before my coming into office, we will be seeing the whole file and come up with whatever remedial action that is required.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister does not have the figures?

Mr Dayal: I don't have the figures as such.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

AIRPORTS OF MAURITIUS LTD - VIP CONSULTANT - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/175) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the post of VIP Consultant at Airports of Mauritius Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Limited, information as to -

- (a) if it was advertised and, if not, indicate the mode of recruitment thereof, and
- (b) the name of the incumbent thereof, indicating -
 - (i) his qualifications;
 - (ii) his salaries and terms and conditions of appointment, and
 - (iii) the make and model of car put at his disposal, together with the date of purchase and cost thereof, and
 - (iv) the duties assigned thereto.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, the Airports of Mauritius Ltd as any Limited Company

is governed by the Companies Act, and its Constitution. Management of the Company is vested in its Board of Directors.

As is the practice, I shall not in future deal in this House with internal or commercial matters of the Company. However, since this question has already been tabled, I shall reply to it.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of Airports of Mauritius Ltd (AML) that on 18 June 2013, AML in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office, the then Prime Minister's Office, decided to retain the services of a VIP Facilitation Officer.

(Interruptions)

The appointment was made by the ex-CEO of AML on the basis of his delegated authority as CEO and without seeking the approval of the AML Board.

This was effected through a letter of offer sent to Ms J. W., on 18 June 2013 and same was renewed after one year by the ex-CEO, again without the approval of the Board.

Madam Speaker, in regard to parts (b)(i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed that AML has no records of the qualifications or C.V. of Ms J. W.

(Interruptions)

'The salary and terms and conditions of appointment were as follows -

- (i) Period of one year starting 17 June 2013, renewed as I mentioned;
- (ii) Rs82,500 per month as salary;
- (iii) Driver's Allowance - Rs8,000 per month;
- (iv) Petrol Allowance - Rs8,470 per month;
- (v) Company car of about 2,000 cc from the car pool of the Company or purchased.
- (vi) A mobile phone for the value not exceeding Rs10,000, and
- (vii) Rs2,000 monthly free calls.

In regard to part (b)(iii) of the question, I am informed that an Audi A4 Auto Petrol 1788 cc was purchased on 23 August 2013 at a price of Rs2,050,000 inclusive of VAT from Allied Motor Company Ltd and put at the disposal of the VIP Facilitation Consultant.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b)(iv) of the question, I am informed that the duties assigned to Ms J.W. were to facilitate the visit of VIP guests and assist in the organisation of official events.

Ms J.W. submitted her resignation on 16 December 2014 just after the General Elections.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirm whether this post was on the organisational chart of AML prior to her recruitment?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I don't know, Madam Speaker, but I believe not.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House on what grounds this lady was recruited and can he inform the House who took the decision for her recruitment, and can we know to whom she was reporting with regard to her duties?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: There are no records at AML, Madam Speaker, but it is mentioned in the reply that she was recruited in consultation with the then Prime Minister's Office.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that she is not a Head of Department of AML, can we know who took the decision to grant her a company car?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, the then CEO took it upon himself with the permission of the PMO to arrange for the recruitment of the lady and the conditions too.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the said lady was transferred from AML and, if so, can we know where and in which capacity and when?

(Interruptions)

And why?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: It does not say in the reply, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, Mr Jhugroo!

AML - ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/176) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the post of Administrative Manager at Airports of Mauritius Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Limited, information as to –

- (a) when it was advertised, indicating the criteria laid down therefor, and
- (b) the name of the incumbent thereof, indicating his -
 - (i) qualifications, and
 - (ii) salaries and terms and conditions of employment.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as stated in the reply to PQ B/175, the Airports of Mauritius Ltd as any Limited Company is governed by the Companies Act, and its Constitution. Management of the Company is vested in its Board of Directors.

As is the practice, I shall not deal in future with internal or commercial matters of the Company. However, since this question has already been tabled, I shall reply.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of Airports of Mauritius Limited (AML) that the post of Administrative Manager was advertised in the local press on 18 to 21 February 2014, closing date for submission of applications was 28 February 2014.

The profile of the post as advertised was as follows -

- (i) HSC or GCE A Level with Business Studies and Mathematics;
- (ii) Degree in Business Administration/Human Resources Management or any related field;
- (iii) minimum 5 years' experience at Senior Management Level in a similar position;
- (iv) excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and
- (v) experience in company secretarial and administrative duties would be an advantage.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that the interviewing panel of the Board has recommended that Mr S. K. be appointed as Administrative Manager at AML. This was approved by the Board on 21 May 2014. He has been nominated with effect from 01 October 2014, with a probation period of 6 months.

The qualifications held by Mr S. K. are as follows -

- (i) BSC (Hons) Management with specialisation in Tourism and Hospitality (1997-2001) – University of Mauritius;
- (ii) Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrative, UK 2014;
- (iii) MBA with specialisation in Finance, University of Southern Queensland, Australia, and
- (iv) Affiliate, Association of Certified and Chartered Accountants (ACCA).

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that in line with the Scheme of Service for the post, Mr S. K. draws a monthly salary of Rs73,300.- plus Rs945.- as salary compensation. He is also paid -

- (i) travelling allowances of Rs16,500 per month;
- (ii) car allowance in lieu of cash grant Rs8,900.-, and
- (iii) welfare and meal subsidy of Rs1800.- in line with AML Terms and Conditions of Employment.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am tabling the terms and conditions of employment of Mr S. K.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House what is the Schedule of Duties of the Administrative Manager?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I mentioned that, I think.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Minister just mentioned that, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that the Administrative Manager who has got no qualification and experience in Human Resources, has been given the responsibilities of the Human Resources Department?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would tend to agree. I understand that in his MBA, one of the papers was Human Resources, but when I look at the Schedule of Duties, a lot of it deals with staff, etc. So, I would tend to agree with that.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that the Administrative Manager, who was recruited on 01 October 2014, has been appointed Director and Secretary of a newly subsidiary private company of AML known as AML Group Corporate Services Ltd which was incorporated on 17 November 2014?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. The AML Group Corporate Services is a dormant company and will probably be closed down.

(Interruptions)

AML Corporate Services, I was informed, was created to provide secretarial services to the group. But now it is going to be restructured, it is no longer needed.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that this private company which is not governed by PoCA and Public Procurement Act, has as objectives –

- (i) to centralise the company secretarial funding functions of AML, MDFP and ATOL, and
- (ii) to centralise the administrative affairs of AML, MDFP and ATOL?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker. As I stated, it was, I understand, meant for secretarial services. It is dormant and will probably not be reinstated.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Selvon!

**WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY - WASTEWATER BILLS -
ARREARS**

(No. B/177) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the poorest sections of the community who are heavily in arrears in relation to their waste water bills, he will state if consideration will be given for them to be allowed to clear the said bills by small instalments with a view to reducing the burden thereon.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that wastewater bills have to be paid within a period of 21 days.

In the case of persons in a hardship situation, the Authority gives consideration, on a case to case basis, to the payment of charges by instalment over a period of 3 to 36 months and waiving of 10% surcharge, depending on the amount owed and the repayment capacity.

Mr Barbier: Is the Vice-Prime Minister aware that in many cases, people have not received their bills for years and now when they have got their bills, they are asked for a huge sum of money which they are unable to pay? This is the situation in so many quarters in our constituency. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister see to it that these special cases could be seen immediately?

Mr Collendavello: Well, in the course of our next conversation, we will raise this case and we will report again.

(Interruptions)

We should deal with this on a case by case basis.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Selvon.

GRNW & PORT LOUIS WEST – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/178) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the inhabitants of Port Louis, particularly of the region of Pailles and of the vicinity thereof, including several other regions of Constituency No. 1, Grand River North West and Port Louis West, who are currently deprived of adequate water supply, he will, for the benefit of

the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to when the target of a 24-hour adequate water supply of potable water will reach thereto?

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, the irregular supply of water to Port Louis and other regions is a matter of concern to the Government. I am aware that the water supply in Port Louis is limited to 10 hours daily during normal period and is reduced to about 4 hours daily during and after heavy rainfall, this being due to clogging of filters at the Pailles Treatment Plant.

I am informed that the water supply will increase to up to 15 hours daily during normal period and consumers will not suffer from the drastic water cuts due to clogging, after upgrading of the Pailles Treatment plant from its present capacity of 58,000 m³ daily to 80,000 m³ daily. This upgraded plant will come into operation by end of April 2015.

It is expected that there will be 24-hour supply in Port Louis after completion of the construction of Bagatelle dam and its downstream works hopefully, by end of 2016. The water supply will further improve with the renewal of old pipelines in Port Louis for which provision will be made in the forthcoming budget.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the question talks about the inhabitants of Port Louis, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether consideration will be given to increasing the number of *camions citernes*, especially in those times of heavy rainfall? Because 4 hours, is creating lots of problems especially for those inhabitants of Port Louis in my constituency, the more so as we are supposed to have reservoirs which are not being filled like in Vallée Pitot.

Mr Collendavello: Provision is going to be made in the next budget for the purchase of additional water tankers and this will alleviate hopefully the supply of water for a certain time.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, each time that there is heavy rainfall, it is the same reason that is given by the CWA, that is, filters are blocked. This has been happening since a long time. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he can commission an

inquiry of experts to find means and ways so that these things be prevented in the future? Because we know that when there will be heavy rainfall, filters will be blocked. What can he do specifically on this issue?

Madam Speaker:Hon. Member, put up your question!

Mr Collendavelloo: From reports that I have, it is the upgrading of the water treatment which will alleviate the clogging. I am afraid, I am not an expert. They tell me this and I have no reason not to believe them.

POINTE-AUX-SABLES – WASTEWATER DISCHARGE

(No. B/179) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW &Port Louis West) asked Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he will state if he is aware of the nuisances caused by the wastewater discharge into the sea at Pointe-aux-Sables, namely an uncovered outlet from which emanates a strong unpleasant smell of which the local residents keep complaining of and that the infrastructure for the discharge of effluents suffers from a structural problem that prevents it to be properly covered where the wastewater reaches its outlet into the sea and, if so, indicate if urgent remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): The Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) has a pumping station at Holly Hook Avenue, Pointe aux Sables, where an electro-mechanical screening system at the cost of Rs10 million has been installed in December 2014. This year, the Authority will implement the next phase of the project which includes the covering of all existing infrastructure associated with the pumping station and the installation of deodorizing units.

Secondly, there is a deep ocean outfall, 800 m off the coastline, at a depth of about 35 m beneath the sea level for the discharge of treated effluents from Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant located at Petit Verger, near Pointe aux Sables. There is no odour emanation at the discharge point, and

Thirdly, further to complaints received in the region of Montagne Jacquot, odour mitigating measures have been implemented at the Treatment Plant in April 2014. All treatment units have been covered and deodorising units installed to capture the gas emanating from these units.

However, I have taken note of the concern raised by the hon. Member and have requested the Authority to investigate further into the matter and take immediate remedial measures.

Mr Baloomoody: In a written reply to a PQ which I put B/142, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister informed us that for Kensington the project is Rs80 m. and will last for 18 months. May we know when the work will start?

Mr Collendavelloo: You are talking of Kensington, I do not know off hand - I had it last week.

BOLLARAM LANE, PAILLES – INHABITANTS – RELOCATION

(No. B/180) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if he is aware that the inhabitants of Bollaram Lane, in Pailles, are currently living in sub-humane conditions and in constant danger of flooding and, if so, indicate if, as a matter of urgency, consideration will be given for the relocation thereof, as already decided by the former Government.

The Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr P. Roopun): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

I wish to inform the House that on the 05 February 2015, the hon. Member made representations to me with regard to the poor living conditions of the inhabitants of Bollaram Lane, Pailles. I thank her for that initiative.

I wish to add that this issue was dealt with at the level of my Ministry since August 2014.

On 12 February, I effected a site visit at Bollaram Lane with the hon. Member together with my colleague, the Minister of Civil Service Affairs; hon. Armanee and hon. Abbas Mamode, Parliament Private Secretary as well as representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the National Development Unit and the City Council of Port Louis.

Madam Speaker, during the site visit, it was noted those twelve families, lessees of corrugated iron sheets housing units situated on a private property were living in deplorable and overcrowded conditions. They were without individual electricity and water connections, and without any proper sanitation. In addition, there were four families owners of land whose

housing units were located near the riverbank. In the absence of drains, all the residents of the said lane are prone to flooding during heavy rainfall.

The representatives of the National Development Unit had recommended the construction of drains to mitigate the impact of flooding. However, in view of the fact that one of the privately owned housing unit was encroaching on the access road leading to the river bank, the construction of drains could not be considered unless the housing unit is relocated.

The owner of that housing unit was informed of this predicament and he was agreeable to be part of the solution. He was, therefore, advised to arrange for his surveyor to liaise with the surveyor of the City Council of Port Louis with regard to the determination of the exact extent of land that would be required to enable the National Development Unit to proceed with the construction of the drains.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that to date, the surveyor of the owner has not contacted the Council.

It is worth mentioning that, out of the twelve families, ten of them are eligible to receive support from the National Empowerment Foundation. However, they cannot be provided with housing units under the existing Schemes since they are not owners of a plot of land.

On the other hand, Madam Speaker, the City Council of Port Louis has been requested to ensure that the lessor abides to all prevailing sanitary regulations insofar as these families are concerned.

I wish to inform the House that insofar as the relocation of those families is concerned, the former Government was agreeable to relocate them subject to the site being listed as a flood prone area. Since the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre had established that Bollaram Lane is not listed as a flood prone area, this option cannot be pursued further.

Mrs Selvon: Madam Speaker, would the hon. Minister agree that, on a humanitarian ground, those families need to be relocated?

Mr Roopun: Madam Speaker, I concede that the families are living in a very difficult situation, but relocation is possible only if those persons are either owners of land or they are

given a lease on a State land which by the way the NEF will be ready and willing to help and support them for another housing unit.

Mr Baloomoody: I heard the hon. Minister mentioning that these people can only be relocated if this area is declared a prone flood area. It is a fact that it is a prone flood area and it is a fact that even if we move these people, other people will come here.

(Interruptions)

Yes, because the owner of these premises is interested in only renting these houses. So, may I invite the hon. Minister, together with the Minister of Environment, to declare this area a prone flood area so that the owner is not tempted to re-rent these premises to other people, especially people coming from Rodrigues?

Mr Roopun: We will consider the option but, according to what the NDU states, if one of the houses could be relocated a drain could be provided.

CARS (SECOND HAND) – IMPORTATION

(No. B/181) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to second hand cars, he will state if consideration will be given for the regulations in relation to the importation thereof to be revisited in order to remove the mandatory element therein, namely, for the proposed imported second hand cars to have been first registered at least 18 months prior to the importation thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry regulates the importation of second-hand motor vehicles in compliance with the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 1999.

According to these Regulations, there are several conditions to be satisfied for the importation of second-hand cars. One of them is that a second-hand car must be between 18 months and 4 years from the date of first registration, at the date of shipment. This condition is, however, not applicable to a certain category of importers who are exempted from such condition. Some of them are: Government bodies, embassies, religious and educational institutions.

Madam Speaker, the present regulations date back as far as 1999, that is, more than 15 years. In the meantime, the landscape of the motorcar business has changed drastically.

In this context, I propose to set up a Technical Committee to look into the whole matter relating to the importation of second-hand motor vehicles and to make recommendations as appropriate.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for his very straightforward answer. The issue therein, if I may be allowed, Madam Speaker, is the following: it is the fact that when someone wants to bring in a car and they have to wait that the car is 18 months old. That very fact - could the hon. Minister look into it that it is coupled with the fact that other bodies are entitled to bring in cars that are less than 18 months old? It is, therefore, discriminatory in the fact that some bodies are allowed, others are not and the fact that 18 months is discriminatory for those who cannot afford to buy a new car, they have to wait for the car to be old enough to 18 months and that is the discriminatory element that I ask the hon. Minister to be able to remove from the regulations.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, this issue will be taken into consideration by the Technical Committee.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: May I ask the hon. Minister, in relation to this Technical Committee, to give consideration to the fact that anyone who import cars should make sure that there is a stock of spareparts available because the number of cars that are imported in Mauritius are outdated and consumers are left without recourse whenever there is a sparepart missing?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, the Technical Committee will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – VISA REQUIREMENT

(No. B/182) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the visa requirement for Mauritian nationals to enter the United Arab Emirates, he will state if he will consider taking up the matter with the Government of the United Arab Emirates to exempt the Mauritian nationals from such a requirement.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that Mauritius is one of the few countries in the world whose nationals do not require visa to enter 106 countries.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to inform the House that I have, in fact, taken up the issue raised by the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East not later than yesterday afternoon with His Excellency Essa Abdullah Al Basha Al Nuaimi, Ambassador for the United Arab Emirates to Mauritius. He is currently here in the context for the National Day celebrations and I met him yesterday in my office.

Mr Mohamed: Once again, I thank this hon. Minister as well for having taken this up with the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates because those are matters that have been taken up with the ambassador many times before. May I humbly suggest that the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs is directly contacted by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and that the representation be made for one good reason - there are many - the number of flights that have increased from Emirates, the landing rights that this Government has allowed Emirates into Mauritius warrants the fact that we be given the special consideration that our nationals should no longer require a visa application, waiting for a passport for them to enter the United Arab Emirates? Since we have given them so much in terms of landing rights, I believe that it would be fit and proper, if not long awaited, that the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs - not this one but the Government - contacts his counterpart so that this matter be taken up not at the level of an ambassador - who is a very nice gentleman and I know him personally - but taken up at high level, at the level of Government and, if need be, even the hon. Prime Minister could be asked to take it up with the Prime Minister, Al Maktoum, of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, as far back as 05 February 2014, a draft visa exemption agreement was submitted to the United Arab Emirates for their consideration. But I do understand that there is a labour problem. There is an apprehension on the part of the authorities there that there might be labour implications. They fear that if no visa is required from citizens from this country that labour problems might arise if people go there and stay and they might not be in a position to trace them and send them back. So, that is why things have delayed but the ambassador has promised that he will look into the matter.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister if the nationals from the United Arab Emirates require visa to enter Mauritius, and if no, can this be used as an argument to reciprocate visa requirements?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, I don't have the answer to this question. The hon. Member can come with a substantive question and I will certainly answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

PLAINE VERTE MEDI-CLINIC - AYURVEDIC HEALTH SERVICES

(No. B/183) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the provision made in the 2012 budget for the dispensing of ayurvedic health services at the Plaine Verte Medi-clinic, he will state when the said services will be provided thereat.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, my Ministry is already providing Ayurvedic services at five health institutions and it is proposing to start these services at Plaine Verte Mediclinic as from May this year.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody!

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – STAFF - REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/184) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether he will state if he has received representations from the staff of Air Mauritius Ltd. regarding their conditions of employment and, if so, indicate the actions he proposes to take in relation thereto, if any.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have not received representations from the staff of Air Mauritius Ltd. However, my office has received a request for a meeting with me from the three unions of Air Mauritius Ltd. commonly known as the Air Mauritius *Intersyndicale*.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that there is a sort of an industrial unrest there due to the fact that the 14th month has not been paid and the role played by the new consultant is, in fact, a more nuisance than somebody who is assisting the casino?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware but, this is a matter for the Board and the management of Air Mauritius Ltd. I am not aware, but people should also be concerned, Madam Speaker, with the competitive situation faced by Air Mauritius Ltd. with the need to maintain cost at a lower level. Of course, we are also concerned with the condition of

employment of the employees but, we must safeguard the employment and at the same time, give the employees a good remuneration.

Mr Bérenger: Recently there was a very tough strike in France because Air France had created another company with less favourable conditions and so on and, I understand that Air Mauritius did that in the recent past. As a policy decision, it created another company Airmate Ltd. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether Government had the opportunity to look at that issue?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we have a new Board of Directors, I will leave it to them for the moment to try and deal with the issue of Airmate Ltd. and the 700 or so employees who work for Airmate Ltd compared to the 2000 or so employees that work for Air Mauritius Ltd. But, we are talking about a lot of livelihoods, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

GRAND'BAIE - SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE - RENT

(No. B/185) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the social security office at Grand Bay, she will state the amount of monthly rental fee payable for the building housing same, indicating the –

- (a) name of the owner thereof;
- (b) duration of the contract therefor, and
- (c) date on which bids were issued in relation thereto, indicating the –
 - (i) name of the bidders therefor;
 - (ii) prices quoted, and
- (d) if copy of the evaluation reports in relation thereto will be tabled.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I wish to inform the House that the previous Grand Bay social security office which was rented from November 2003 to November 2014 was located at Sottise Road, Grand Bay. It occupied an overall space of 1165 square feet at a monthly rent of Rs25,000. However, the officers of the Ministry complained of inadequate office space, non-proper aeration and lack of parking facilities.

The management took the decision of relocating the building. As such, tenders were launched for the renting of office space of an area between 2,700 to 3,000 square feet within Grand Bay area.

With regard to parts (a) and (c) of the said question, I am informed of the following –

- bids were invited from owners for the renting of a building of approximately 2700 to 3000 square feet to cater for the Grand Bay social security office located within the boundaries of Grand Bay giving on a main road;
- tender was launched on 05 July 2012 through open advertised bidding;
- as at the closing date, only one bid was received from Mr I. T. The quoted price for renting of the office space was Rs90,000 per month;
- the Bid Evaluation Committee met to evaluate the only bid and found that the bid was responsive and compliant;
- on 27 November 2012 the Departmental Tender Committee met and agreed to award the contract to Mr I. T. subject to completion of some works and the necessary clearances being obtained from all relevant authorities;
- to that end, a letter of award was issued to Mr I. T. on 05 December 2012 informing him that the Ministry has approved his offer for the renting of the said office for a period of one year renewable thereafter;
- all clearances applied for were obtained. The clearance from Valuation Department had to be reassessed inasmuch as it had found that the area of the building of Mr I. T. to be less than 2000 square feet and that the monthly rent should be Rs76,000 and not Rs90,000.

As such, the Permanent Secretary did not approve the tender. Meanwhile, following the protest of the owner maintaining that the space area amounts to 3000 square feet, a second valuation was carried out and the Valuation Department maintained that the net

usable office space has been measured as per the RIC code of measuring practices and was found to be less than 2000.

Subsequently, a site visit including the valuation officer, the civil engineer and the owner was effected and the Valuation Department concluded then that an additional space of 131.88 square metres has been provided and that the rent of Rs90,000 was fair and reasonable for the said area of 3000 square feet.

On 01 September 2014, a letter of approval for renting of office space for a period of one year was issued to Mr I. T. renewable thereafter at a monthly rent of Rs90,000.

In respect to part (ii) of the question, I am informed that a lease agreement for a period of two years was signed.

As regards part (e) of the question, Madam, a copy of the valuation report is being tabled.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: In respect to part(ii) of the question, I am informed that a lease agreement for a period of two years was signed. As regards part (e) of the question, Madam Speaker, a copy of the evaluation report is being tabled.

Mr Rughoobur: Can I know from the hon. Minister if at the very outset when the tender was launched there was an estimate for the project?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, it seems that the cost estimate is not mandatory in those cases as the final rental fee is determined by the valuation office.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon Rughoobur!

HOTEL INDUSTRY – EXPATRIATES – WORK PERMIT

(No. B/186) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the hotel industry, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of expatriates
 - (i) currently employed therein
 - (ii) eligible for a work permit issued by the Board of Investment and
 - (iii) a local hotel can appoint and
- (b) state if his Ministry has record/statistics on the list of local professionals thereof currently appointed in the same industry abroad.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that permits for the recruitment of expatriates in the hotel industry are delivered by two institutions namely -

- (i) The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training which is responsible for the issue of work permits in areas where local expertise is scarce, and
- (ii) The Board of Investment (BOI) which issues occupation permits to professionals satisfying a set of established criteria including professional qualifications and previous experience in specific fields.

With regard to parts (a) (i) and a (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training that it has issued 222 work permits to expatriates to take up employment in the hotel industry whereas the BOI has delivered 312 Occupation Permits as professionals, as at 05 March 2015.

As regards part (a) (iii) of the question, I am informed that according to current policy, there is no formal limit on the number of expatriates that a hotel may employ provided the applications fall within the approved list of scarcity areas and are subsequently approved by the relevant authorities and the criteria set for an Occupation Permit issued by the BOI.

However, this policy is not applicable to Club Med hotels which fall in the category of Club hotels and where traditionally a quota of 100 has been set on the maximum number of expatriates they can employ, being given that it is the policy for such hotels to send local recruits to work abroad in its different Clubs around the world.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that such information is not available at the level of my Ministry.

Mr Rughoobur: I just wanted to know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he would consider restricting the number of years that an expatriate can be appointed at the senior managerial position in hotels.

The Deputy Prime Minister: What I can say, Madam Speaker, is that some hotels are employing very large number of expatriates. I thank the hon. Member for putting up the question. We will look at the whole matter with my colleague the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training and with the BOI.

Madam Speaker, I like to say for instance, that in relation to these hotels, some people have been abusing and we need to look at it. In fact, one hotel, for instance, Attitude Hotel, which has five or six very successful resort hotels, is working completely with Mauritian

personnel, proving that it is possible if you make the effort to have a successful operation without too many expatriates.

Mr Rughoobur: If the hon. Deputy Prime Minister can consider the possibility of having, at least, among the top positions - I am made understand that you got the General Manager and the Resident Manager - one local professional appointed among one of these two positions.

The Deputy Prime Minister: In fact, Madam Speaker, we will look at the whole question. At the same time, we must remember that hotel promoters have invested billions of rupees in these hotels. In a way, they are entitled to have the Manager, as they choose, because they have put their money where, maybe, we have not put ours.

At the same time, we must find an appropriate balance and I promise I will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Last year, there were several meetings that were held at the Ministry of Tourism and the specific purpose of those meetings were precisely to address those issues raised by the hon. Member and spoken of by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

The issue was about identifying scarcity areas, that is, areas where Mauritians are qualified in order to do those jobs; areas where the Board of Investment also present at the meeting would collaborate with all the Ministries and all the parties concerned in order to draw out a common list with the Ministry of Labour to ensure that Mauritian graduates are given the opportunity of occupying such positions. Could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, therefore, consider tabling that list and report that was carried out by the Ministry of Tourism in a committee where I, myself, at the time was present in order to ensure that all those graduates from Mauritius obtain jobs that they deserve?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, if it was such a good report perhaps the hon. Member himself should have put it into effect. But I will look at it.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT - INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL BOARD - COMPOSITION

(No. B/187) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development Whether, in regard to the Independent Review Panel Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) number of challenges allowed by the Panel over the past five years and
- (b) composition thereof, indicating in respect of each Board member thereof

- (i) his qualifications
- (ii) his experience, and
- (iii) the duration of his contract.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that over the past five years the Independent Review Panel received 193 applications out of which 53 cases have been allowed by the institution and nine are still under consideration.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that action has been initiated under section 44 of the Public Procurement Act, to reconstitute the Independent Review Panel for a period of three years.

Mr Rughoobur: I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he is considering - based on the number of appeals allowed by IRP as well as the number of judicial review that you have following the decision of the IRP - the possibility of having a review of the Public Procurement Act of 2006. Is he considering a revision of the Act?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, Madam Speaker. In fact, the Finance Bill would provide for certain amendments to the Act itself.

Mr Uteem: I heard the hon. Minister of Finance mention that he will be reconstituting the Board after three years. Does that mean that the existing incumbent will be kept into office until that time?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, yes, until the new Board is reconstituted, the old one continues to exist. This means probably one more week.

Madam Speaker: Next question, Hon Uteem!

(EIILM) MAURITIAN BRANCH CAMPUS – FACT-FINDING COMMITTEES

(No. B/188) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning Management (EIILM) Mauritian Branch Campus, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to –

- (a) the outcome of the fact finding committees set up to inquire into alleged irregularities in relation to the operation thereof;
- (b) if it has been allowed to enroll new students and offer new courses for academic year 2015, and
- (c) if the qualifications awarded thereby will be recognised and accredited.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) that there has not been any Fact-Finding Committee set up to enquire on the allegation of irregularities in relation to the operations of the Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning and Management (EILM) University (Mauritius Branch Campus).

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that EILM has, on 03 December 2013, been instructed in writing by the Commission, not to enroll any students and not to offer new courses for the academic years 2014 and 2015.

I am also informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that EILM has not enrolled any students though currently it has on its roll 68 students, out of whom 20 are following Year 2 programmes and 48 following are following Year 3 programmes. These two groups of students will complete their courses in the year 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed by the TEC that a communiqué was issued on 11 June 2014 stating that and I quote –

“As per TEC Board decision taken at its meeting held on 21 May 2014, all academic qualifications awarded by overseas universities relating to courses accredited by the TEC and offered by post-secondary educational institutions duly registered by TEC are fully recognised”.

However, Madam Speaker, strictly speaking, it would appear that this decision should not apply to EILM. This institution cannot be recognised as an overseas university, as it has not been authorised to operate as an off-campus or offshore branch by the UGC.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to a PQ last year, No. B/152, the hon. Prime Minister stated, and I quote –

“Mr Speaker, Sir, let me add that the Tertiary Education Commission has already instituted two Fact-Finding Committees to inquire into, one, the allegations regarding the clinical training of its students at D. Y. Patil Medical College, and also into the alleged irregularities in relation to the operation of EILM University, that is, the Mauritius Branch Campus.”

So, is the hon. Minister telling us that when the Prime Minister answered the PQ, that was not correct?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The information I have, Madam Speaker, is that no such enquiry has been carried out, no Fact-Finding Committee was...

Madam Speaker: Yes hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I am asking the same question to the hon. Minister. Perhaps it is not a Fact-Finding Commission. But, has there been any body set up at that time by the previous Government with the help of British universities? This also we were told at that time. We have heard of certain British universities to make an investigation and to report on the workings of the Commission.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, no Fact-Finding Committee was set up to go into the irregularities of EIILM. However, at a point later in time, the Prime Minister did ask the UK audit agency for higher education to look into all our Mauritian institutions, and to come up with an audit of the standards of the University. But this has nothing to do with the Fact-Finding Committee.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I am very disturbed by the comment made by the hon. Minister who said that, according to her, the degree awarded by EIILM is not to be recognised and, at the same time, the hon. Minister said that there are existing students doing a course - second year, first year - to be completed in 2015-2016. So, is the hon. Minister saying that EIILM is allowed to operate and charge students for a degree that is not going to be recognised?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, this is sadly the case. But this has not been our doing; it has been the doing of the past Government. Yet, our Ministry is right now working out a way to help these students and safeguard their interests. We have been working with the institutions in Mauritius, our public institutions, to see how we can help them. By virtue of the fact that the University of Mauritius had refused to admit the students from EIILM to its postgraduate courses, due to programmatic gaps, as they stated, alternatives will have to be identified. And what we are thinking of, we are trying to work out with the students and with our public institutions that we have, to see how we can compensate for the programmatic gaps and help the students get a degree which would get eventually be recognised.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I have taken note of what the hon. Minister has said regarding the flaws that were allowed at some stage, in the years before, with regard to

EIILM. However, since students, as pointed out correctly by hon. Uteem, are still in second year and third year, the flaw and the wrong is continuing. Therefore, if the wrong is allowed to continue by the TEC vis-à-vis those students, could the hon. Minister consider ways and means of, as soon as possible, one, giving a guarantee to those students, right now, that everything will be done and without any doubt, to ensure that their degrees are recognised?

(Interruptions)

The second option being if that cannot be given, then measures be taken immediately for the courses that they are following to halt immediately, because we cannot continue to allow the courses go on if we cannot ensure that the wrong does not continue.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I would like to stress on the point that this flaw has occurred in the previous Government, and I do agree, by no fault of the students. I have already met the students and their parents, and we are trying to see what we can do. I have no guarantee to give in this House, but I am already working out certain ways to help them out. And it is by no means our doing. What we are trying to do, we are trying to safeguard the interests of the students, taking into consideration certain humane considerations. As far as EIILM Institution is concerned, we have ensured that they are not enrolling new students. Those who are at present in the Institution were allowed by the former Government, and now we are having to come up with measures to help them out.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask one question? Has Government, the hon. Minister, the Attorney General looked at the possibility of claiming damages from those who have been guilty in that whole affair?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are trying, Madam Speaker, to see whether this can be considered.

Mr Ramful: I have heard the hon. Minister stating to the House that there was an Audit Committee that was set up by the previous Government. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the Committee has completed its work, and if so, will she be tabling a copy of the report to the Assembly?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, we are awaiting their final report by the end of March.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, being given that all the students of EILM University had been misguided by the administration of the university, would she refer this case to the Police and legal action be taken against the Directors of this university?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are seriously considering this, Madam Speaker.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister mentioned that she has met the parents of the students. In fact, there is a lot of concern because she has not communicated to them since January. So, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she has a timeline as to when she is going to come with a solution to propose to them?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Madam Speaker, I met the parents and I have asked them, because they were telling me that there are students still going for the courses and still to sit for exams. We are waiting for these students to pass, and then, with their certificate in hand, whatever the worth of that certificate, we can then refer the case to our public institutions and try to see how we can make do with the gaps that exist in their programmes.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me one minute for this last question. Can the hon. Minister inform this House why is it the case that when we were in Opposition, be it MMM or MSM, we questioned even the legality of the promoters of this University - including Minister Bodha and the Minister herself - to set up these universities, and we even quoted from Indian authorities? If the House will bear with me, this is a public notice issued by the UGC on territorial jurisdiction of universities, and I am just going to quote –

“The UGC has not granted any permission to Sikkim Manipal University and EILM University to set up off- campus centre(s), study centre(s) or off-shore campus centre(s). As such, both, these universities cannot run courses in Mauritius through their own campuses or through franchisee agreement”.

This is very clear. Why is it now that the new Government - because this is what are all expecting: put an end to this illegal situation once for all.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I, Madam Speaker, clear out something right away. We have not allowed EILM to pursue its role, however, because of decision taken by the former Government the students were allowed to carry on with their course so that they end

up with a certificate that we can afterwards try to upgrade by seeking equivalents or trying to make do for any shortcomings in the course. However, we could not just stop straightaway right now, because the students would be left with nothing in hand. With the certificate in hand, we can always upgrade and compensate for anything that is missing or lacking.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ. No. B/192 has been withdrawn. Time is over!