

SMF QUARTERS – RELOCATION

(No. B/519) 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 the Special Mobile Force quarters in Vacoas/Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the relocation thereof is being envisaged to allow for the development of the prime land on which the said quarters stand.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it is not presently envisaged to relocate any of the Special Mobile Force (SMF) quarters situated in the region of Vacoas/Phoenix, to allow for other development of the land on which stand these quarters.

However, out of the 180 SMF quarters, 39 which are situated at Abercromby, Vacoas, are vacant and in a very bad state. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport has recommended that these quarters be pulled down.

The land, on which these 39 quarters stand, has been earmarked for the construction of a swimming pool, a modern gymnasium and allied facilities for the Mauritius Police Force. As a matter of fact, provision for these projects has already been made in the Public Sector Investment Programme 2015/2016.

SLAVES & INDENTURED LABOURERS – LAND RESTITUTION RIGHTS BILL

(No. B/520) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second 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 descendants of slaves and of indentured labourers in Mauritius, he will state if Government proposes to introduce a Land Restitution Rights Bill in order to bring justice thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: In fact, Madam Speaker, I'll be replying, with your permission, to both PQ No. B/520 and No. B/521 as they relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker, the Truth and Justice Commission has, in its report, recommended the setting up of a Land Research and Monitoring Unit to carry out research into cases of dispossession of land and cater for the obstacles to recovering same.

Madam Speaker, Cabinet has, at its meeting of 6 February 2015, agreed to the setting up of a Ministerial Committee under my Chairmanship to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Ministerial Committee had, at its meeting on 6 August 2015, taken cognizance of the Interim Report of the Land Research and Mediation Commission submitted, in April 2015, by Mr Mandary on the 224 cases of dispossession of land as highlighted in the Truth and Justice Commission Report.

The Interim Report mentioned that there are 42 cases, that is, 27 in Mauritius and 15 in Rodrigues, where there are sufficient evidence of land dispossession. In 91 cases, there is no evidence of dispossession. The remaining cases require further investigation by the Land Research and Mediation Commission.

There is, also, an additional 131 cases, that is, 121 in Mauritius and 10 in Rodrigues, which have not been investigated by the defunct Truth and Justice Commission on account of late submission of requests, and which should be looked into by the Land Research and Mediation Unit.

The Ministerial Committee has also recommended that the 42 cases of alleged dispossession identified in the Mandary Report be submitted to the Attorney-General's Office for advice on the way forward.

I am informed that, upon receipt of the Report on 07 August 2015, the Solicitor-General has designated two law officers to study same and tender legal advice.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that many of the cases of alleged dispossession of land date back to more than 100 years and, in many cases, legal challenge to the title of the current owners, whether acquired by prescription or by other means may be difficult. Legal advice on these and other issues will be sought prior to a policy decision being taken on the way forward. Moreover, it could be a lengthy and complicated process to trace out all the heirs.

The House will note that the Ministerial Committee has recommended the setting up of a Land Research and Mediation Unit as opposed to the Land Research and Monitoring Unit recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission. This Unit will be headed by Mr Mandary and will comprise of a land surveyor from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, a retired officer of the Registrar-General and an Attorney, under contract. This Unit would be called upon to carry out in-depth investigations into complaints to advise the applicants after investigation.

The Committee considers that it would be advisable that the Land Research and Mediation Unit, in the first instance, attempts to resolve the dispute through mediation.

A Land Restitution Bill would, in the circumstances, entail various legal and constitutional implications which have to be carefully looked into. It could, also, entail major financial implications for the State if the approach to be taken in matters of responsibility for restitution follows, for instance, the South African model.

Madam Speaker, in regard to the setting up of a Land Division at the Supreme Court, consultations were held with the former Chief Justice who expressed the view that he was not in favour of creating such a Division. On 17 September 2015, the Master and Registrar has been consulted anew on the setting up of a Land Division of the Supreme Court. Whilst the Judiciary is currently not contemplating the setting up of a Land Division, it would welcome the setting up of a dedicated Land Tribunal dealing with land disputes and which would also deal with cases of compulsory acquisition of land by Government in order to avoid the clogging of courts.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The acting Prime Minister, in his reply, stated that the Ministerial Committee had recommended the reconstitution of a Land Research and Mediation Commission, but, in a reply in this House last week, the Prime Minister stated that the Ministerial Committee has recommended the reconstitution of the Land Research and Monitoring Unit and later, in that same reply, it is stated that there are 87 cases which should be followed by the Land Research and Mediation Unit. May we know what is the exact decision that has been taken by the Ministerial Committee?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes. The exact title of the Unit, Madam Speaker, is Land, Research and Mediation Unit. The report of the Truth and Justice Commission mentions a Land, Research and Monitoring Unit, but it is just a question of change of name, because there is obviously the possibility, especially with these 42 cases of what has been identified as dispossession of taking this to Court, but, in all likelihood, this could be a difficult venture given the time that has occurred, given the issue of tracing back all the heirs on both sides of the court case and given also that prescription has occurred, etc and the 30 years have gone by. So, in fact, in a first instance, the Committee feels that let us try and do some mediation, let us try and get people to voluntarily compensate or retribute/restore the land and if that is not possible also at the same time, as I mentioned, the report has gone to the Solicitor-General to advise on legal action. So, the two paths are being followed.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. acting Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, whether the whole problem about this question of dispossession and restitution of land finally boils down to a question of finance and money, the monetary resources available to the claimants, especially in view of the executive summary of the Truth and Justice Commission said and I quote –

“There is no justice in Mauritius for those who cannot afford lawyers, notaries, land surveyors and attorneys. The Commission’s request for funds already earmarked since 2009 to help a few deponents survey their land was turned down by the authorities.”

So, can I ask the hon. acting Prime Minister to see to it, whatever new set-up is now being envisaged, the Mediation Unit replacing the other unit which was decided upon in the past that the authorities/Government see to it that all the resources should be made available to the claimants.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam, I think all of us who deal with the public know how complex these cases are, because they date from a long time, it is a lot of complex issues. So, Government, in fact, is going the extra mile. We are appointing and paying a full-time retired Chief Surveyor now to come and work on this issue. There will be also a retired person from the Registrar General’s Department, an Attorney on contract. So, money is being put to provide legal and other expertise in all these cases. Obviously this is all free-of-charge to the persons and, in addition, Madam Speaker, the Solicitor-General has put these two law officers at the disposal of the Unit. So, it is a question of money, it is a question of complexity, but it is also a legal issue, because of the time that these dispossessions have occurred so long ago. So, we are putting the resources, financial and humane behind this structure and this is the first time that this is being done on that scale.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I understand from the Ag. Prime Minister that there are 42 cases where there is sufficient evidence of land dispossession. Madam Speaker, we have wasted a lot of time. We have raised expectation. The Acting Prime Minister himself chaired a committee to look into these issues. Today, those families are in a very desperate situation.

Madam Speaker: Please ask your question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister what guarantee do we have now that these 42 cases will be looked into immediately because those families are waiting, Madam Speaker?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there are lawyers also on the other side; they can put their time at the disposal of these people also to take this to Court!

(Interruptions)

On the other side, Madam Speaker, we have not wasted any time at all because we have to realise, Madam Speaker, that the Committee, headed by Mr Mandaree, had to look into 224 cases and another 131 cases that have come up after. There are lots of cases and he only submitted his report in April and in August the report was dealt with and sent to the Solicitor-General for advice and we are now reconstituting the whole committee. So, no time has been wasted. If the hon. Member has any time, he can, please, put himself at the disposition of these people and help them!

LAND TRIBUNAL - SETTING UP

(No. B/521) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second 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 proposed setting up of a land tribunal to expedite matters of land disputes, he will state where matters stand, especially having regard to the alleged numerous cases of misappropriation of land by the sugar estates.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/520)

Madam Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

But you have got another question on the same issue, hon. Lesjongard. It is PQ No. B/522, please!

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION – RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/522) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will state if he is aware of the request

made by the *Association Justice et Vérité* to delegate the responsibility of the dossier concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission to another Minister and, if so, indicate the actions he proposes to take, if any, in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, a request has, in fact, been received from the *Association Justice et Vérité*. The request will not be acceded to.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the letter that was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister and referred to him whereby it is stated and I quote, if I may be allowed Madam Speaker, -

“Vu que M. Duval est très occupé, nous vous supplions de confier la responsabilité de cette tâche à quelqu’un de la trempe de M. Soodhun...”

(Interruptions)

...qui nous a impressionné par son courage, sa détermination et sa vitesse d’exécution...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Lesjongard: ... *à aller jusqu’au bout.*”

(Interruptions)

Mais oui !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please, hon. Henry!

Mr Lesjongard: *Eta ale guetter ki famille ki pe roder do couillon, amerde dimoune!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please withdraw this! Because you have used an unparliamentary word, please withdraw!

Mr Lesjongard: I withdraw, but the hon. Member should not make comment from a sitting position, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the question is very specific and I have responded to it.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: The Ag. Prime Minister says he has responded. May I know whether he has written to those people who have written the letter to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have responded to the question, Madam.

(Interruptions)

INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION – SETTING UP

(No. B/523) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Independent Police Complaints Commission, as mentioned in the Presidential Address, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – LEGISLATION - AMENDMENT

(No. B/524) Mr R. Uteem (First 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, in regard to the Human Rights Commission, he will state if consideration will be given for the law in relation thereto to be amended to increase the powers thereof to investigate into alleged cases of miscarriage of justice.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

POLICE– BARRISTERS - SERVICES

(No. B/525) 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 barristers of the private practice whose services have been retained by the Police Department, since January 2015 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the names thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) mode of selection thereof and the criteria used therefor;
- (b) terms and conditions of retention of services thereof, and
- (c) cases in respect of which the services thereof have been retained.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to barristers of the private practice whose services have been retained by the Police Department, since January 2015, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police have solicited the services of private barristers on only one occasion, namely in the second leg in the matter S.B., against the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

I am further informed that the Police usually enlist the services of State Counsels for legal advice and to represent the Commissioner of Police in matters before Courts. In the first leg of the matter mentioned earlier, the Assistant Solicitor General and the Assistant Parliamentary Counsel from the Attorney General's Office represented the Commissioner of Police before the Supreme Court.

However, in the second leg of the matter regarding the application made by the Commissioner of Police for an Order to review the injunction granted by Justice Mrs Ah Foon Chui Yew Cheong in the same matter, subsequent to a meeting with the Solicitor General and officers of the State Law Office, the Police exceptionally decided that they would retain Counsel from private practice. Accordingly, when the matter was called before

the Judge on 17 July 2015, Counsel Mr S.K.T. instructed by Attorney Mr P.C., after the motion for withdrawal by the State Law Office was granted, appeared for the Police.

Madam Speaker, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the services of Messrs S.K.T. and P.C. were enlisted on the grounds of their track record and experience. They have offered their services on similar terms and conditions as for their other private clients.

No fees have been paid as at date.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister what criteria has been used by the Commissioner of Police to retain the services of Counsel and Attorney in this case?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, it is stated here that it was on the grounds of their track record and excellent experience.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to enquire from the Commissioner of Police or the relevant authorities whether these barristers or attorneys, who have been chosen by the Police, have themselves very bad Police records and let the House know accordingly?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not at all aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Maybe the hon. Ag. Prime Minister may ask the Commissioner of Police whether for this attorney P.C. in particular there was not a Police case which was withdrawn only after this Government took office? There was a Police case before the Court and that was withdrawn.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, but I am sure, Madam Speaker, if the Commissioner of Police was aware of anything adverse he would not have chosen those persons.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The Ag. Prime Minister just said because of the track record. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the services of a Senior Counsel was sought in this particular case especially to assist our Police Force?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he could enquire and inform the House as to whether the services of these Barristers were directives coming from the Prime Minister's Office, through the Secretary for Home Affairs?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware at all about that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The practice of seeking legal advice from outside the State Law Office; does the hon. Ag. Prime Minister not feel that this will undermine legal officers that we have at the State Law Office?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, it is for the exceptional situation in a case which involved two divisions of the Attorney General's Office. Therefore, this is why this exceptional step was taken. So, it is exceptional and that is why it was taken.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramful!

MAHEBOURG & PLAINE MAGNIEN – PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/526) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state the future projects earmarked for implementation thereat.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am tabling a list of future projects for Constituency No 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, which has been approved for implementation by the National Development Unit during Financial Year 2015-2016.

In addition to these, new projects will also be considered under the forthcoming Framework Agreement for the construction and upgrading of roads and associated works.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May I request the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to consider the possibility of making provision for the dredging of the river which flows in the village of Mare Tabac because this has been the serious cause of flooding recently?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will pass it on to the NDU.

POLICE STATIONS, DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS & DETENTION CENTRES – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/527) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed construction of Police Stations, Divisional Headquarters and Detention Centres, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list thereof, indicating where matters stand in each case, including –

(a) the cost of the project, indicating the amount of money budgeted therefor and the amount thereof already spent in relation thereto, and

(b) when construction works are expected to start.

(Withdrawn)

NDU & CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX - VACANCIES

(No. B/528) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the vacancies which presently exist at the National Development Unit, including the Citizens Advice Bureaux, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case -

(a) the grade thereof;

(b) since when, and

(c) when they will be filled.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/532, B/541, B/564, B/565 and B/546 have been withdrawn.

Parliamentary Question No. B/533 in regard to the Fishing Port/Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Ag. Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and External Communications.

With regard to the Fishing Port, Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Ag. Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and External Communications. PQ No. B/539 in regard to the number of patients suffering from autism will be replied by the hon. Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity.

SPORTS ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL - SETTING UP

(No. B/529) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if a Sports Arbitration Tribunal has been set up and, if so, when and if not, why not.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that the Sports Arbitration Tribunal has been set up since November 2014. I am circulating the composition of the Tribunal which was constituted as required under Section 41 of the Sports Act 2013.

I am also circulating a copy of a “*Press Communiqué*” which was issued following the setting up of the Tribunal inviting stakeholders and members of the public who feel aggrieved by the decision of any sports organisation to make representations to the Tribunal.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, malgré le fait que le ministre vient de nous dire qu’il va circuler la composition du tribunal, peut-il informer la chambre qui est le *Chairperson* et qui sont les assesseurs ?

Mr Sawmynaden: As I have said the Tribunal was set up in November 2014, the Chairperson is Mr Raj Seebaluck Magistrate at the Intermediate Court, designated by the Chief Justice, Mr Mahendur Purbhoo a retired Senior Sports Officer and Mr Louis Clency Lee Khun Sing Sam-Soon, Barrister at Law.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir depuis la mise sur pied de ce tribunal, combien de cas ont été référés et peut-on savoir lesquels?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, no case has been referred to and, as I have said, there was a *press communiqué* and no one did come with any case.

10TH EDITION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS GAMES

(No. B/530) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Jeux des Iles de l’Océan Indien, he will state if Mauritius still stands as candidate for the organization of the 2019 edition thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that according to the Charter of the Indian Ocean Island Games, the country to host the following edition of the games is designated six years prior to the holding of the games so that the flag of the games is handed over to the next organising country at the closing ceremony of the current edition.

The decision to entrust the organisation of the 2019 games was, therefore, taken in a meeting of the “*Conseil International des Jeux*” (CIJ) held in Seychelles in February 2012. However, at the CIJ meeting held in April 2015 in Reunion Island, Comoros did not submit the required documents regarding its capacity to organise the 2019 games. CIJ expressed its concern to that situation at the meeting and invited another member country to consider hosting the games. Consequently, Mauritius bid to host the 10th Edition of the Indian Ocean Islands Games in 2019. Mauritius officially submitted its bids documents to the CIJ Secretariat within the prescribed delay.

During meetings held in August 2015 in Reunion Island, CIJ finally decided to entrust the hosting of the 2019 Games to Comoros Islands despite the issues raised by my officers regarding les Village des Jeux, the medical facilities available and availability of sports infrastructures. At the closing ceremony of the Games in Reunion Island, the flag of the Games was officially handed over to Comoros Island. Therefore, the candidature of Mauritius no longer holds good and is automatically lapsed.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, malgré la réponse du ministre, j’aimerais qu’il nous dise si le représentant de Maurice, au sein du CIJ, a retiré la candidature mauricienne lors de la réunion du 08 Aout de cette année à l’île de la Réunion?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, when the CIJ Committee, the majority of the votes voted for Comoros Island, that means that the candidature of Mauritius is out. So it is clear.

Mr Quirin: Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, d'être en désaccord avec le ministre car nous pouvons revenir en arrière. Après les jeux de 1998 à la Réunion, on avait confié l'organisation aux Comores, mais vu l'impossibilité des Comores d'aller de l'avant, on avait confié l'organisation à Maurice. Donc, le fait de maintenir la candidature - parce que nous savons très bien comment cela se passe - j'ai avec moi Madame la présidente...

Madam Speaker: Yes, ask your question please! Ask your question.

Mr Quirin: C'est important, il faut que je dise ce que j'ai à dire. J'ai une copie de ...

Madam Speaker: You should ask your question, you should be brief and ask your question.

Mr Quirin: J'ai un article dans un journal en ligne Madame la présidente, où le responsable du comité olympique des Comores, lui-même, est dans l'attente d'une réponse de son gouvernement pour débloquer les fonds de façon à procéder à construire les nouvelles installations sportives. Ce qui fait qu'il y aura une réunion du CIJ, donc je demande au ministre le fait d'avoir retiré la candidature de Maurice, est-ce que cela ne va pas nous empêcher d'être candidat au cas où les Comores n'arrivent pas à aller de l'avant avec l'organisation pour les Jeux 2019 ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, it is clear, the CIJ is the one who decides, who organises the game. The majority of the Members of the CIJ have decided to give the games to Comoros despite they know that they don't have the infrastructure. They are the ones who take the decision, let them assume their responsibility. We are not the spare wheel. So, we have bid to organize the game, we have the structure, if they don't want to give it to us what can we do!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, Maurice a retiré sa candidature. La candidature n'est pas tombée par elle-même. Si on consulte le procès-verbal de la réunion du CIJ en date du 8 aout ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, please! The hon. Minister has already replied to this question, you can't insist on this. Please proceed with the next question.

TABLE TENNIS - ADVISER/COACH - CONTRACT

(No. B/531) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr G. D., Adviser Coach of table tennis, he will state the reasons why his contract of employment has not been renewed.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, Mr G. D. was employed as Adviser/Coach (Table Tennis) by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on a yearly renewable contract with effect as from August 2003.

At the expiry of the contract of employment of Mr Denis on 31 December 2014, the Ministry decided to retain his services on a month to month basis, as it was the case for the other Advisers/Coaches in order to assess their performance during the tenure of office.

I have to inform the House that I was surprised to learn that Mr Denis, despite being employed as Adviser/Coach in Table Tennis, was working at Harry Latour Stadium and Pte Jérôme Residential Youth Centre where he had not been performing the duties for which his services had been hired.

Consequently, a decision was taken to terminate his employment with effect from 28 February 2015. Mr Denis was given one month's notice prior to the termination of his contract as per the terms and conditions of the contract.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire pendant combien de temps Monsieur Denis a été au service du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, actually it is in my reply, since August 2003 and until February.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, Monsieur Denis a été quelqu'un qui a été assidu à son travail. Il s'est occupé du centre d'entraînement à Rose Belle, du centre d'entraînement à Pointe Jérôme, il s'est aussi occupé à promouvoir le tennis de table dans les écoles. Ceci dit, Madame la présidente, je demanderai au ministre si ce n'est pas surprenant que quelqu'un qui a été régulièrement à son travail pendant 12 années, faisant la promotion du tennis de table et que, subitement, dès que le ministre entre en fonction, un mois après on ne renouvelle pas le contrat de Monsieur Denis, on le licencie. J'aimerais que le ministre nous dise quelle est la vraie raison derrière le non-renouvellement du contrat de Monsieur Denis?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, he is under contract, he was on a month to month basis and, furthermore, he was employed as an adviser/coach for table tennis and what was he doing at Pointe Jérôme Residential Youth Centre where we don't even have a tennis table!

CASINOS DE MAURICE - FINANCIAL, STAFFING & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SITUATIONS

(No. B/532) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the casinos, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Casinos de Maurice, information as to the financial, staffing and industrial relations situations thereof, indicating if –

- (a) losses are being incurred thereat;
- (b) they are overstaffed;
- (c) a mutually agreed retirement scheme and a 14th Month Bonus Scheme for the employees thereof are implemented thereat;
- (d) there are arrears disputes thereat, and
- (e) where matters stand concerning the Grand' Baie and Flic-en-Flac casinos and an eventual strategic partner therefor.

(Withdrawn)

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT/FISH PROCESSING PROJECT

(No. B/533) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Fishing Port/Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames, he will give the details of the -

- (a) Chinese investment and;
- (b) project thereof, indicating;
 - (i) who will finance the quays and other infrastructure in relation thereto;
 - (ii) the fish species concerned therewith;

(iii) if all permits required therefor have been sought and obtained, and

(iv) the start and completion dates thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. During my official mission to China, in June 2013, I met the Chairperson of the LHF Group of Companies and invited them to invest in the port sector in Mauritius. The LHF Group of Companies which are based in China are internationally renowned in the fishing and seafood sectors. The development of the ocean economy will need the emergence of a dynamic port to attract investment.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Ports Authority that on 17 August 2015, the company LHF Marine Development Ltd, a subsidiary of LHF Group of Companies, has submitted an application for land in the port for the setting up of a fishing port and other ancillary facilities. The proposed development will be implemented in two phases. The first phase includes the construction of quays and cold storage facilities at an estimated cost of USD 100 million. The second phase comprises the construction of a trade centre, a seafood market and a floating restaurant. The estimated cost is USD 400 million.

The Quay proposed under LHF Marine Project will include a total length of 650 metres together with an access of 350 metres.

The promoter will meet the cost for the proposed development.

Madam Speaker, the fish species concerned are tuna (skipjack, yellow fin, big eye tuna) and allied species (dorado and wahoo).

However, the project being at the initial stage, the promoter is now carrying out the full feasibility study and detailed project plan to be in a position to apply for all relevant permits, namely:

- EIA licence,
- Building and land use permit
- Port licence
- Health, sanitary licence
- Safety and security clearances

The Mauritius Ports Authority has issued a letter of intent to the Company for a plot of land of 4.5 hectares to enable them to work on the feasibility study, detailed project plans and seek the necessary clearances. Depending on the receipt of all necessary permits, the first phase of the project is expected to start in the second quarter of 2016.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether during the course of the discussion, a social component with regard to the inhabitants of the region has been discussed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I know, Madam Speaker, that a social component including particularly the fishermen of the region is being discussed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister - I missed it, if he answered - who will finance the quays and other infrastructure?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The whole cost of the project is being financed by the promoter.

Mr Baloomoody: The Ag. Prime Minister just mentioned that there is consultation with the fishermen in the region. May I know the last time they met and what have been proposed to those fishermen?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I did not say there were consultations. I said that during the discussions with the promoters there is a social plan which is being considered for the fishermen of the region. Now, we are not yet at a stage where, in fact, development is about to start. We are still at the initial stage and it will be premature to start negotiations before the whole project is firmed up.

Mr Baloomoody: Exactly, this is why! Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that, whilst talking about compensation to the fishermen we have given them the false hope that they will be employed soon by these Chinese promoters?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware of this, Madam Speaker. I know that there was compensation relating to the current work and previous work being done at the quay at the Mauritius Container Terminal, but I am not aware of this.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether he can enquire whether his colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, met with the Legal Adviser of the fishermen, Mr Valayden, and they nearly came to a sort of agreement which was made public?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am sorry, I am not aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours!

At 1.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

SMALL PLANTERS - SUGAR - PRICE

(No. B/534) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the 2015 sugar crop, he will state if the likely price of sugar for the small planters has been estimated so as to relieve the economic difficulties thereof, indicating if the bagasse transfer price of these small planters will be increased, as recommended in one report submitted to him, the more so, as the Central Electricity Board has made massive windfall gains recently.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the price of sugar for the Crop 2015 has been estimated as at to date by the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate at Rs13,000 per tonne, as compared to Rs12,693 for Crop 2014.

For the Crop 2014, Government had, through the Sugar Insurance Fund, come to the rescue of the sugar industry by waiving the insurance premium for the Crop 2014 and a special assistance of Rs2,000 per tonne of sugar accrued to the planters as recommended in the actuarial report commissioned by the Sugar Insurance Fund. This Government, conscious of the vulnerability of the small planters, made provision for an additional compensation of Rs1,400 per tonne of sugar accruing to them. Thus, the small planters producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar were eligible for a cash compensation of Rs3,400 per tonne as compared to Rs2,000 to other planters.

The actuarial report commissioned by the Sugar Insurance Fund also recommended that should the year 2015 be a non-event year and the price of sugar remains inferior to Rs15,800, then Government may have resort to a similar approach as for Crop 2014.

It is understood that the Sugar Insurance Fund (SIF) will need to proceed with the new actuarial exercise within the shortest delay given the exceptional circumstances still prevailing. The new actuarial exercise will define the new contours of the SIF system for the period post-2015.

Madam Speaker, regarding the price of bagasse, it has remained unchanged since it was first formulated back in the early 80s. As you are aware, Madam Speaker, I have set up a High Level Implementation Committee to review the recommendations proposed in the Landell Mills Commodities Report which include, among others, the review of the bagasse transfer price. This Committee which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry has had several working sessions with all the stakeholders of the Sugar Industry and will come up shortly with measures to address the problems facing the Industry, including the review of the bagasse transfer price. I can reassure the House that the price of bagasse accruing to the growers would need to be fair and reasonable.

Madam Speaker, it is relevant to point out that the previous Government had commissioned a study by Hunton and Williams to, *inter alia*, review payment of bagasse price to planters. I understand that the Report was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and, once again, we hear the same old story – the report is untraceable.

Contrary to the previous Government, this Government is giving serious consideration to review the bagasse price to ensure that growers are adequately compensated to increase their revenue stream and keep the sugar industry viable.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister informed us that he has set up a committee to review all this, but while going through the report, it recommends that negotiations with the IPPs could result in the IPP re-increasing their part of bagasse transfer price to the benefit of small planters. Being given the urgency of the situation and the problems planters are facing, especially these days and the price of bagasse has remained the same, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Minister, can the hon. Minister inform the House, in the interest of planters themselves, whether he could initiate urgent action to see to it that this issue of the increase of the price of bagasse for the small planters be treated urgently?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, since I have received that report which is Landell Mills Commodities Report, I have set up this Committee to look into all the measures, all the recommendations made in that report and one of the measures recommended with regard to the price of bagasse, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member, is with regard to reviewing that price. But we are looking at all the other issues as well and since we had to talk to all the stakeholders of the sugar industry, the Committee has, like I said, been meeting all those people and we feel that in the probably coming weeks, we will be in a position to come up with the final recommendations as to be proposed by that Committee which will have to go to Cabinet and then probably make it public for the whole industry to be aware of the measures that we are going to propose. But rest assured that I will make whatever necessary to ensure that the price that is being paid to planters at the moment with regard to bagasse which is only Rs100 will have to be reviewed and it has to be fair and reasonable. I can assure the House of that.

Mr Bhagwan: Do I understand from the hon. Minister when he said “fair and reasonable” that there is a substantial increase which is coming in the pipeline from what he is doing with regard to the planters?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I just mentioned that this Committee is looking at it, it won't be elegant for me now to comment on the substantiality of that amount, but I am sure it is going to reflect the real value that the bagasse is bringing to that sector.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, one last question. Can I ask the hon. Minister apart from what he has said about financial assistance to the planters and I hope it is forthcoming with the increase in the bagasse of the planters, can the hon. Minister inform the House and the planters in general, what other incentives, apart from financial incentives, that Government, his Ministry is trying to find out to give to the planters in these difficult days?

Mr Seeruttun: Apart from bagasse, Madam Speaker, we also, like I said, waived the insurance premium that is claimed to all growers and that insurance premium has been waived for the Crop 2014 and as mentioned in that actuarial report, it is recommended that for the Year 2015 as well that premium be waived, should the Crop Year be a non-event Crop Year. Apart from that, Government, in the last Budget that was presented in this House, has also made provision to provide assistance to small planters to make them go more towards Fairtrade label for the sugar that they produce which brings an additional USD60 per tonne of sugar that they produce under that Fairtrade label. And also with regard to the FORIP

Scheme, an additional sum of Rs500 m. has been provided in the Budget 2015-2016, such that planters who need their land to be upgraded are provided with the necessary facilities to have their land upgraded.

Madam Speaker: One last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, thank you. We all know the *situation d'angoisse que sont en train de vivre les planteurs. L'honorable ministre doit le savoir.* From what we are hearing from the hon. Minister about the different incentives that are forthcoming, can the hon. Minister at least inform the House whether all that is being done and will be done for the planters whether these are being transmitted to the planters? According to me, there is a problem of communication. The planters feel that they are left aside despite what is being done. So, can the hon. Minister at least inform the House whether he contemplates to meet the planters at least to inform them what is being done, what is forthcoming?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I have been meeting all the stakeholders ever since I have been appointed Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and like I said also, we have that committee which will be set up to really talk to all the stakeholders including the planters, small planters especially, and to have their views being taken on board and tomorrow itself we have the General Assembly of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate and I am going to address all the stakeholders tomorrow. So, that is going to be another forum for me to talk to them and to inform them of all the things that we are doing at the level of the Ministry with regard to that Industry.

PARASTATAL BODIES & GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMPANIES - CODE OF CONDUCT

(No. B/535) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the parastatal bodies and Government owned companies, he will state if -

- (a) his Ministry has prepared a code of conduct therefor, and
- (b) he has received representations to the effect that several chairpersons intervene daily in the day to day administration of the respective organisation, for

example, the Chairperson of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, initiated in relation thereto, in each case.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I refer to the hon. Member to the reply to PQ B/285 of 07 April 2015 when I informed the House that my Ministry had issued a circular letter on 13 February 2015 to all Ministries and Departments to provide guidance and clarifications on the roles of Chairpersons and Chief Executives in public sector organisations.

Madam Speaker, the issue of this circular has been prompted by the numerous failures in the management and oversight of public sector organisations which have been compounded by unclear segregation of roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Boards and their Chief Executive Officers. This situation has, in many cases, led to abuse of office, other malpractices and also the weakening of our institutions and the erosion of trust in public sector organisations.

Accordingly, with a view to ensuring and enhancing oversight and good governance, it was decided that the roles and responsibilities of Chairpersons and Chief Executives must be kept separate. Consequently, the functions of Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer should not be exercised by the same individual and the Chairperson should not have any executive role.

As regards the Chairperson he or she is primarily responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the Board and is not allowed to interfere in the day to day management of the organisation. His or her main role is to put in place structures and procedures to achieve the Board's independence, to ascertain that all the relevant information is provided to the Board, to preside meetings and to provide overall leadership to the Board, while encouraging active participation of all Board members.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I have not received any representation at my Ministry, regarding non-compliance with the said circular.

With regard to the MFDC, my Ministry is informed by the MFDC of the following –

Firstly, the day to day administration of the MFDC is under the responsibility of Mr Sachin Jootun, Director;

Secondly, the Chairperson of the MFDC is not involved in the day to day administration of the Corporation;

Thirdly, he has had a meeting with staff members of the Corporation when he was newly nominated;

Fourthly, he had a few site visits with officers of the MFDC regarding the relocation of MFDC offices and studio.

Mr Bhagwan: I'll take a few supplementary questions, Madam Speaker, with your permission. I'll start with the MFDC. This Government is talking of good governance and issuing circulars. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the present Chairperson of the MFDC – I'll call him the local Danny Denzongpa - was arrested on 30 November...

(Interruptions)

He is our local Danny Denzongpa. He was arrested on 30 November 2010 under....

(Interruptions)

Let me ask the question. He is a member of the PMSD, no? He is not a member of the PMSD, the one I am talking...

Was he arrested on 30 November under PoCA. He was released on bail and is still on bail *pour trafic d'influence* at the Trust Fund for Specialised Care.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of any Danny Denzongpa having been arrested in Mauritius. I think Danny Denzongpa is an actor in India.

Mr Bhagwan: He was arrested, I am saying it officially here – what's his name?

(Interruptions)

I know. He is on bail. Ag. Prime Minister, he is on bail.

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: He is on bail.

Madam Speaker: Ask your question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Does the hon. Minister of Good Governance find it normal - he is somebody who is supposed to ensure that there is good governance - that the Chairperson of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation is on bail for *trafic d'influence*? Is this normal? Does the hon. Minister find it normal?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate that I have a lot of responsibilities as Minister of Good Governance and I am assuming those responsibilities, but, unfortunately, I am not a Judge of the Supreme Court, I cannot prejudge a case of the court.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House, the population that he will ensure his colleague, responsible for that parastatal body, that pending whatever happens in court, will have this person replaced?

(Interruptions)

We are talking about good governance, *moralité*.

Mr Bhadain: Well, Madam Speaker, as I have stated, if there is any case in court, then, of course, the court of justice of our country will deal with that accordingly and, with regard to the procedures that are being put in place regarding the roles of Chairpersons and CEOs, this is being adhered to and I can also reassure the hon. Member that there is a team within my Ministry who is actively looking at conducting the performance appraisal of those Boards and the roles of these Chairpersons and CEOs.

Mr Bhagwan: I will come to the first part of the question. The Minister has been provided with information, but that person goes there only for a few minor activities. Is the hon. Minister aware that this Chairperson who is convicted – convicted Chairperson – he is...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Who has been accused...

(Interruptions)

accused...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Please, withdraw this word 'convicted'.

Mr Bhagwan: Yes. Who is accused – Chairperson – he not only goes there a few times, he is always there *pe tire photo ek acteur, actrice*, he has been travelling abroad. So, can the hon. Minister give assurance that he will conduct an enquiry for what I am saying and see to it that good governance prevails there and the Chairperson is not the MD – and the MD himself is complaining?

Mr Bhadain: To reassure the hon. Member, I can certainly look into that. If there are any procedures, malpractices as to how the Chairperson and the CEO are acting right now,

this will be looked into by my Ministry, but with regard to the court case, this is unfortunately not under my purview.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentions good governance and code of conduct. Being given that for anyone who seeks employment in the private sector, he needs to provide a Certificate of Morality, so may I ask the hon. Minister whether, in his code of conduct and criteria to be appointed, to represent Government on Board, that he would insist that henceforth all these nominees produce their clean Certificate of Morality and disclose whether there is any Police case against them ongoing?

Mr Bhadain: I am sure my hon. friend Uteem would know that when you ask for a Certificate of Morality, if there is a case which is being investigated or tried against somebody, it would not appear on the Certificate of Morality. What would appear is when somebody is convicted, and, at this moment in time, I understand, there is no conviction.

(Interruptions)

But I do appreciate that this is a very good initiative and I am going to look into it.

BELLE MARE WATER PARK AND LEISURE VILLAGE – STRATEGIC PARTNER

(No. B/536) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Belle Mare Water Park and Leisure Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sugar Investment Trust, information as to if a new strategic partner for the renovation and management thereof has been secured and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the strategic partner therefor, and
- (b) terms and conditions of the partnership agreement therefor and, if not, why not.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Sugar Investment Trust that Belle Mare Le Waterpark and Leisure Village has ceased its operations since October 2013 following the publication of the report of the Commission of Enquiry on the death of two children which occurred at the Waterpark.

Since that time, the Sugar Investment Trust has been in search of a strategic partner to upgrade and modernise the infrastructure and propose new activities to attract more people to the Waterpark whilst maintaining the highest standards in terms of security and safety.

The Sugar Investment Trust has, in July 2015, received a proposal from a potential strategic partner to revive the Waterpark. Negotiations are still going on and will be finalised in due course.

As no agreement has been reached yet and no Memorandum of Understanding signed, it would not be appropriate and proper, at this stage, to disclose the name of the strategic partner and the details of the negotiations.

Mr Ameer Meea: May I ask the hon. Minister why there has not been any open tender for the management of Belle Mare Waterpark?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, as you are probably aware, at the Sugar Investment Trust, we have not had a Chief Executive Officer for some time. We have advertised for the post and I think yesterday was the closing date for that post. Hopefully, we are going to have someone new at the head of that Institution with also new Board Members to be appointed following election which is due shortly. So, probably, we will go for that, but I must say that, in the meantime, we have been receiving offers. I have been told also that last year we have had three firms that were interested in that particular project, but none of those three suited the conditions laid out by the SIT and were not considered.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could repeat for how long, how many months, this Belle Mare Waterpark has not been functioning and what happens monthly? I take it that no one has been thrown out of work and, therefore, what is happening, what monthly losses are accumulating?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, like I mentioned in my reply earlier on, it has ceased its operation since October 2013, and the cost of maintaining and operating that water park which is now closed cost around Rs1.3 m. per month. There used to be 36 permanent employees posted there. Of those 36, 20 have been redeployed elsewhere within the group. Like I said, we are looking for new partners to join in to be able to put it back into operation hopefully very soon.

Mr Ameer Meea: With the coming up of a new strategic partner, would the SIT invest additional sum of money, and, if yes, does the hon. Minister have any amount that will be invested in this project?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must say that the SIT itself is in big financial trouble with some dodgy projects that were undertaken in the last few years and that have not brought any money in those projects. So, I must say that as it is now, they have not got enough financial resources to put into that Water Park to make it up and running, unfortunately.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

SQUATTERS – REGULARIZATION

(No. B/537) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the squatters, he will state the number thereof, district-wise, indicating the measures that will be taken in relation thereto, indicating where matters stand in relation to those who are eligible for the regularization of their situation.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, the House certainly knows that the problem of squatting State land is a long-standing one and it has existed for many decades now.

I believe that the inaction and lack of interest on the part of the previous Government to deal with the problem at hand has worsened the situation. Consequently, this Government has inherited a situation where families with babies, old people and in a case, an old lady of 102 years old as well as children are living in poor and bad conditions, with no basic necessities such as water and electricity.

However, the present Government is committed to addressing very rigorously the issue in a meaningful way. For the purpose, a plan has been developed so that the approach is very humane while taking into consideration the socio-economic implications, on a strictly merit basis.

To gauge the extent of the problem, my Ministry recently carried out an exercise and it has been found that, as at July 2015, there were 1054 cases of squatting on State land throughout the island.

The situation, district-wise, is as follows -

District	No. of cases
Rivière du Rempart	99
Flacq	114
Grand Port	81
Savanne	78
Black River	232
Port Louis	347
Pamplemousses	50
Moka	34
Plaines Wilhems	19

Making a total of 1,054 squatters.

Madam Speaker, Government acknowledges that it is a tough exercise to eliminate squatting. However, in an endeavour to assist these people in securing a decent dwelling, my Ministry is attending to eligible cases either by way of relocation of these squatters or by regularization *in situ* of their occupation of the State land. A cut-off date of 01 July 2015 has been adopted so that the situation can be controlled.

The plan that has been developed provides for 422 cases to be considered for regularization *in situ*, subject to the families concerned being found eligible. 472 other families will be relocated as the sites squatted upon are either not suitable for residential purpose or are required for Government projects, such as the Phases 2 and 3 of the Ring Road Project. Regarding the remaining 160 cases, investigation is being carried out by my Ministry to determine the suitability of the sites in terms of accommodating residential units, and if otherwise, relocation would be envisaged.

As regards the 422 cases which have been considered for regularization, survey works have already started on site and the squatters have been requested to fill in a form giving their particulars. In the same breath, a social inquiry is being carried out by the Ministry of Social

Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to establish the profile of these households.

I am circulating the details regarding the sites for both relocation and regularization cases.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that persons who are drawing high incomes or who are owners of any immovable property would not be eligible for the grant of a building site lease and necessary legal action would be taken to have them evicted from the site squatted upon.

To ensure that squatting State land does not become a never-ending problem, I have arranged for a mobilization of teams made up of officers of my Ministry, "*Police des Terres*", and the regular Police Force to deal with any new reported case of squatting. The teams will cover not only the sites where presently there is squatting but also other areas which are considered to be squatting prone. The provisions of the law will be rigorously applied.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that with the structured approach which is being adopted, the problem of squatting State land will be effectively dealt with and the cooperation of all stakeholders is essential for that matter, as squatting is a problem which goes well beyond party politics and other such considerations.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just stated that there have been 422 squatters who have been found eligible for regularization. Can I ask him what has been the criteria for eligibility for these squatters?

Mr Soodhun: As I have just informed in my statement, there is a criteria, that is, they do not have any property or the salaries are above Rs10,000.

Mr Bérenger: From what I have heard, we have 1,054 registered squatters and enquiries are being carried out to see how many of them do qualify. We have been given a cut-off date, 01 July 2015, and those enquiries are going on. Can I know from the hon. Minister within what time frame, roughly, is it a question of weeks or months, before these enquiries are completed and, the squatters that do not qualify - and those who qualify - are informed that they do not qualify?

Mr Soodhun: Nearly in three months' time.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned the number of squatters on State land. But would he agree that the Ministry also needs to carry out a survey to find out the number of people, especially poor people, who are staying on abandoned land or private land as he would have a complete picture of the number of homeless in Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: I thank the hon. Member. We have taken into consideration that there are people who are squatters on private land. I would also like to inform the hon. Member that we are going to deal with those squatters. For example, in Tranquebar, we have nearly 82 and due to the Phase I and Phase 2 of the Ring Road which is coming, we are going to relocate them to Pointe aux Sables and then we are going to hand over to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport which will then be responsible for this State land.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us - when he says that legal action would be taken - what sort of legal action does he contemplate and when such legal action has been taken and those people find themselves without a home, is there any other scheme which he proposes whereby people will not end up being homeless?

Mr Soodhun: First, as I have explained, we have nine districts. I have put nine officers and a team of five Police Officers. So, they are in charge of the whole district so that we do not have the new as I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we have to take precaution that the new squatters cannot come in. So, they don't come directly, they just come there and you know, put the Police...

(Interruptions)

Let me explain. Why are you in a hurry? Cool!

(Interruptions)

What I am just explaining is that action will be taken against those, I mean the new squatters as from now. Because what we have done is that we have already enquired about

the number I have given, 1055 plus one will be illegal, we are going to warn them first and we are going to go strictly by the law according to the Land Acquisition Act.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister has indicated to the House that the first phase of the regularisation process is to decide upon the eligibility of the squatters. May I ask the hon. Minister - once this eligibility exercise has been carried out, since we know there is a time frame until the occupiers formally get their formal lease once the eligibility criteria has been agreed upon - whether the Ministry could issue a letter of intent so that these occupiers, on the basis of the letter of intent, can be provided with electricity, water supply and the utility services?

Mr Soodhun: Thank you. I think it is a very good question, 422 will be immediately offered the letter of intent so that they can help all these people to get water and electricity supply. So, we are going to do it in a couple of weeks.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister just said that the eligibility criteria should be one who should not possess any land and should not have a high salary. Can I ask the hon. Minister what does he mean by high salary, what should be the amount?

Mr Soodhun: In the past, it was Rs8,500, now we have reached up to the sum of Rs10,000.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, we have been talking all this time about squatters and the issue of eligibility criteria, the salary that they are drawing. There are also, according to my information, some sugar estates, some sugar companies that are also squatters on many areas of State land and, in particular, the old rail tracks whereby they have squatted upon those lands and I remember Constituency No. 13 in Rivière des Anguilles where there is a huge area that has been squatted upon by the Sugar Estate. Now, I am sure and I hope that the eligibility criteria would be applied very strictly here, that they don't have any other home or that they do not earn more or less than Rs10,000 and what would be done therefore to ensure that all sugar estates move off the State land?

Mr Soodhun: Concerning the Sugar Estate, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agro Industry is looking into it, what we call the camp and this will not fall under my purview.

DIABETES - CHILDREN - MEASURES

(No. B/538) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to diabetes, he will state the number of children suffering therefrom as at to date, indicating the measures and policies applicable in relation thereto at schools and in hospitals, respectively.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, in reply to the first part of the question I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/141 on 03 March 2015 where I provided the House with statistics on the number of children suffering from diabetes and where I also elaborated on the services provided to diabetic patients. Madam Speaker, as at 31 August 2015, the number of children below 18 years suffering from Type I diabetes is 181 and the number for Type II is 34.

With regard to the second part of the question, my Ministry has adopted a series of measures to sensitise school children and the public at large and the preventive measures to be taken in respect of lifestyle and consumption patterns.

In this context, the following activities are regularly carried out by my Ministry –

- (i) Ongoing primary school health program whereby pupils of Standard I and Standard V are examined by community physicians. Overweight and obese children are referred to health centres for further investigation and follow-up. They are also referred to the nutritionist for dietary counselling.
- (ii) The screening of students of Form III between 13 to 14 years and Lower Six between 17 to 18 years for risk factors related to diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. Those children with risk factors are referred to the regional hospitals for follow-up and counselling. Support for Type I diabetic children by diabetes specialised nurses in all regional hospitals is also provided. There is also provision of free glucose meters, testing strips, sharp disposal containers as well as latest insulin analogs to all children with Type I diabetes aiming at achieving an optimal control of blood sugar. We also have yearly conduct of open day activities in all the five regional hospitals under diabetes and vascular health centre where such patients are screened for eye, kidney, cardiac complications as well as other diabetes associated disorders.

Oral healthcare treatment and appropriate counselling for Type I diabetic children are also provided. There is also conduct of health education programme on healthy lifestyle in

hospitals and health centres for diabetic patients and there is finally a mass sensitisation on non-communicable diseases targeting the public at large including children.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre s'il existe un personnel formé au niveau des écoles ou un protocole de collaboration avec son ministère pour les cas d'urgence concernant ces élèves?

Mr Gayan : Madam Speaker, I am informed that there have been programmes in schools where these patients can be present and participate and there are also programmes to give training and assistance to the parents, but there are also health nurses and community centres in the area and in case there is an emergency, they can be contacted.

Dr. Joomaye: I would like to know from the hon. Minister the number of dieticians specialised in paediatric nutrition in post at your Ministry.

Mr Gayan: Do I understand diabetics' nutritionist?

Dr. Joomaye: Dieticians specialised in paediatric nutrition?

Mr Gayan: Well, I only have the information about the nutritionists, but I take it nutritionists cater from babies to old age.

Mr Mohamed: Since the Minister said that there exist programs to advise on situations where children are suffering from diabetes, could he tell us whether there are any leaflets that he could provide us with or table in this Assembly to show us what exactly is an advice or pamphlets or leaflets informative that are shared not only to students, but also to parents in such situations? Has this been provided for and does it exist?

Mr Gayan: I do not have the pamphlets with me, but I will certainly look into the matter and communicate it to the House.

Mr Leopold: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is working with NGOs specialised in the follow up of small children diabetes together with his Ministry?

Mr Gayan: Yes, I am given to understand that there is an NGO the *Ti Diams* actively involved in this.

AUTISM - AGE GROUPS

(No. B/539) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to autism, he will state the number of patients suffering therefrom, indicating the -

(a) age group thereof, and

(b) measures provided by Government to help such patients.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): I wish to inform the House that according to the information received from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 51 patients of the following age groups have been diagnosed with autism as at 15 September 2015. Age –

0 up to 10 - 37

10 up to 20 - 13

20 up to 30 - 1

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that no comprehensive survey has been carried out until now to determine the exact number of persons suffering from autism in Mauritius. However, according to the figures available at my Ministry, there are around 200 autistic children aged between 3 to 18 years old. We are currently in the process of setting up a new database whereby beneficiaries of basic invalidity pension, carers and other social aid allowances will be classified in terms of the diseases they are suffering from. It will then be possible to obtain an exact figure of those patients who suffer from autism.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry is taking the following measures to help autistic persons -

- (i) provision of a Basic Invalidity Pension of Rs5,000 to patients above 15;
- (ii) provision of a monthly carer's allowance of Rs2,500 to patients who require constant care and attention as certified by an approved Medical Practitioner;
- (iii) provision of Social Aid in the amount of Rs2,460 to patients below 15 and whose parents' annual income does not exceed Rs250,000.

- (iv) provision of an additional special allowance of Rs1,350 for patients who are severely disabled. The special allowance is made up as follows -
 - (a) Rs450 for those who are bedridden
 - (b) Rs450 for those who suffer from incontinence
 - (c) Rs450 based on severity of disability
- (v) free transport for both autistic children and adults;
- (vi) refund of bus fare by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to parents who accompany their autistic children to schools/ day-care centres;
- (vii) provision of wheelchairs, spectacles and hearing aids in some cases;
- (viii) an annual allowance of Rs595 to children attending school to enable them to cover their school expenses;
- (ix) the organisation of Respite Care programmes and leisure activities by our Ministry for disabled children, including those suffering from autism;
- (x) provision of *ad hoc* financial assistance from the NGO Trust Fund to “*Autisme Maurice*”, and
 - (xi) with a view to enhancing capacity-building of NGOs catering for autistic children, assistance from *ALEFPA, Association laïque pour l'Education, la Formation, la Prévention et l'Autonomie* from Reunion Island has been sought. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed shortly.

Furthermore, I wish to add that my Ministry is presently working on a Disability Bill which will better protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including those suffering from autism. The Bill will also make provisions for the setting up of One-stop shop to provide better services to them.

It is also good to be highlighted that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare do intervene and provide support services to all cases of children at risk, including reported cases of children suffering from autism.

I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that in public hospitals all patients suffering from autism are being followed by a multidisciplinary team comprising Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapists.

In critical cases where patients cannot be cared for at home, they are admitted in the adolescent wards of Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre for daily follow-up by Psychiatrists and Psychologists. In addition, parental counselling, family therapy are being provided by Psychologists and Social Workers.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre quel moyen de détection existe au niveau du ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la Vie, et s'il existe un protocole d'aide dans les écoles pré-primaires ou même dans les garderies en matière de détection?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, I think this question should be put to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Mr Ramano: La question était adressée directement au ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la Vie.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano, if you have got a question for the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, then next time you put the question to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The hon. Member will understand that it is my Ministry which is offering all the measures to cater for the care of persons with autism.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has mentioned that certain patients suffering from autism go to the Brown Sequard Hospital - if I heard her correctly. But, why there? Because, if you suffer from hearing, you are admitted in a place which has a different connotation. So, why not take these children somewhere else?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I have not said that all the children are sent to Brown Sequard Hospital. If some of them need help from that hospital, then they are sent there and they are admitted to the adolescent wards and special care are being given to those children.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramano!

PRIVATE & PUBLIC SCHOOLS - AUTISM - STUDENTS

(No. B/540) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the students suffering from autism, she will state the -

- (a) number thereof presently admitted in private and public schools, and
- (b) existing specific measures provided thereto.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a), I am informed that as at date there are 168 children with autism admitted in both public and private schools as follows –

Sn	Schools	Number
1	Pre-primary schools	16
2	Integrated Units in Primary schools	20
3	SEN schools run by NGOs	132

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the education of children with special needs, including autism is high on the agenda of my Ministry. In this context, various measures have been taken to cater for the specific needs of children with autism as follows -

Two Integrated Units dedicated for children with autism are operational at the Gopeechand Chuttur Government School, Ecroignard and at the J.T. Ramsoondur Government School at Solferino. The one at Solferino also caters for children with other impairments.

Three Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centres are operational at Ferney, Colonel Maingard, Beau Bassin and Plaine des Papayes.

These Centres provide a range of services, including assessment, diagnosis, therapeutic services, sessions with the students and their families, capacity-building including

workshops, parenting as well as counselling programmes to the children with special education needs including those with autism. They are staffed by a multi-disciplinary team, including professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Educational Social Workers.

Four new Resource Centres are being constructed at the Rajcoomar Gujadhur Government School in Flacq, Allée Brillant Government School, Rivière des Anguilles Government School and Moka Government School, and they will all be operational in 2016.

My Ministry has been conducting regular special admission exercises to register children with special needs. Out of 15 applications received this year from parents of children with special education needs, three of them are on the autism spectrum and will be admitted in schools that best caters for their specific needs.

Adapted curricula have been developed by the MIE in respect of children suffering from autism. These curricula have been piloted in special education needs schools run by NGOs as well as in the Government Integrated Units.

The curriculum materials will be enhanced and finalised taking on board feedback received.

The Mauritius Institute of Education has been running a Teacher-Training Programme whereby teachers working in specialised schools learn to adapt the curriculum to respond to the needs of learners with autism and to develop strategies required to optimise their learning opportunities. Teachers are also trained to develop an individual education plan and to make use of appropriate assistive devices to respond to unique needs of the learners with autism.

As from January 2015, the MIE is running a Diploma in Special Education Needs comprising a component in which teachers are specialised in the education, pedagogy and assessment and intervention strategies for the rehabilitation of children with autism.

Furthermore, in terms of our collaborative venture with NGOs, teachers working in the integrated units catering for autism have received a training course on “Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)” which was run by *Autisme Maurice*, an NGO catering for children with autism, in collaboration with a French association *Autisme Bel Avenir*.

The Grant-in-aid is provided as a financial support to the NGOs running special education needs schools. Provision is also being made for the enlistment of Carers, whose

ratio is normally one carer for 15 children. However, in the case of autism, a customised ratio of one Carer to two pupils is adopted as an enhanced support is being provided to better take on board children with autism. Parenting Programmes including meetings, workshops and working sessions are organised by the Ministry and the ECCEA to get the involvement of parents in facilitating the education of children with autism. The involvement of parents as partners enables them to play an effective role in the education process of the child with autism.

Furthermore, the Special Education Needs Unit of my Ministry, the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority are maintaining regular contact with individual parents and providing dedicated support and guidance as appropriate.

Madam Speaker: Do you have a long reply, hon. Minister?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, not much, just two or more points.

Madam Speaker: Otherwise, you may circulate your reply.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, only two points.

The collaboration with development partners are also on board. With a view to securing expertise in the field of special education needs and to enhance the local capacity, my Ministry is working with non-state organisations, development partners and friendly countries on a bilateral cooperation basis and we have been dealing with the European Union which has come up with training programmes; training for trainers as well as providing technical support for the development of the Special Education Needs Framework for pre-primary sector which includes, among others, children with autism. A committee comprising of representatives of the MIE, the ECCEA and my Ministry is working at present on the implementation programme.

During my last visit to the Reunion Island, other collaborations have been engaged with their education institute to come up with further training programmes for children and teachers working with children with special education needs.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, en 2012, le ministre d'alors avait annoncé un *comprehensive survey* avec la collaboration des *stakeholders* pour la formulation d'une

politique d'ensemble. Peut-on savoir si ce *survey* a été fait et est-ce que l'honorable ministre est disposée à rendre ce *survey* public?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Le *survey* a été fait dans le domaine de l'éducation et hier on a publié le nombre dans le '*Educational Statistics*'. Au fait, là, valeur du jour, il y a 168 élèves dans nos institutions que ce soit privées ou publiques. Mais, bien sûr, le *survey* va continuer et on va continuer à suivre de près nos enfants ayant besoin de *special needs*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have, myself, come across a situation of a child suffering from autism and the issue is of being able to identify in a normal school whether a child through various symptoms is, in fact, potentially suffering from autism. I now come to my question. In England, I have come across recommendations whereby all teachers should be provided in teacher training with a special curriculum in order to be able to identify a child that is suffering from autism and not to make that child feel excluded or dumb or stupid as is the case sometimes in Mauritius, during the time that we were in Government. I am not saying anything wrong. So, could the hon. Minister instead of, I appreciated, having talked about existing training measures for children and for teachers in special needs' environment, how about extending this to every single teacher to enable them to identify those learning difficulties of an autistic child and to be able to advise children accordingly?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Madam Speaker, this is being taken on board. The whole Teacher Education Programme is being revisited and especially for children requiring special education needs and, in fact, not only this is being done at the level of the Mauritius Institute of Education, but the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority has also trained a number of its teachers to be able to find out, to assess and to diagnose cases of children showing autistic behaviours.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I know from the hon. Minister what is the policy of screening at school level by doctors?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The screening is being done by the teachers themselves right now because in the case of autism, it is more of a case of developmental disorder rather

than a disease as such. So, the teachers are being trained and, obviously, if there is a need for special attention by Medical Practitioners, the schools would obviously ask them to come for that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, dans les différents *Integrated Units*, les *Government Schools*, par exemple, Henry Buswell Government School, le nombre d'élèves a sensiblement diminué parce que selon les parents les élèves sont carrément enfermés, n'ont même pas le droit de participer aux différentes assemblées ni aux différentes activités de l'école. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut revoir la situation?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Au fait, ce que nous sommes en train de faire c'est d'avoir, dans les écoles, des unités spécialisées pour les enfants ayant quelques troubles que ce soit des handicaps physiques ou des cas d'autisme ou des *deaf problems*. Mais notre politique est de s'assurer que les enfants intègrent vraiment l'espace scolaire et, bien sûr, nous allons voir et nous allons nous assurer que cela se fait ainsi.

Madam Speaker: One last question on this, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: I have seen that on the Internet, so there is a list whereby there are 47 - in England - criteria which help teachers to identify who is an autistic child. Could the hon. Minister consider asking her officers to surf the net - instead of going to take advice otherwise - at least; the check list is already there in the British Education System.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Obviously, the officers of my Ministry are doing the same and, in fact, we don't talk about autism as such. We talk about the spectrum of autism and you have a whole spectrum starting with people showing slight or mild cases of autism up to cases of severe autism when the person does not want to interact at all. Obviously, the officers of my Ministry have done their job.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

CEB - ST. LOUIS POWER STATION - TENDER

(No. B/541) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the last tender exercise for the St. Louis Project – CEB Tender CPB-22-2014 for the

Redevelopment of St. Louis Power Station – Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 4x15MW Diesel Generating Sets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the –

- (a) name/s of the bidder/s thereof, and
- (b) reasons why the bid exercise was cancelled.

(Withdrawn)

TRAFFIC LIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM – MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

(No. B/542) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Traffic Light Control System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) terms and conditions of the maintenance contracts awarded in relation thereto, and
- (b) name/s of the contractor/s therefor.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed that a tender exercise for the maintenance of Traffic Light Control system around the island was launched on 15 October 2014.

The contract was awarded to Sobany & Sons Co. Ltd in February 2015 for the sum of Rs6,982,189.95 inclusive of VAT for a period of one year.

The contractor is responsible, *inter alia*, for carrying out daily inspections of all sites and for ensuring that the Traffic Signal Equipment are functional at all times.

The terms and conditions of the contract include -

- Replacement and repair works, maintenance and re-programming, submission of weekly reports and modification of traffic signal equipment.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling the detailed terms and conditions of the maintenance contract.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask a supplementary question to the hon. Minister? With regard to the maintenance and repair of traffic lights, can the hon. Minister tell us whether he is satisfied, whether the terms and conditions of the contract are respected, whether there are timely repairs because we all know we have problems on the main roads and subsidiary roads where there are traffic lights which are broken down, but they take too much time to have these repaired and this is a constant and permanent cause of accident?

Mr Bodha: I thank my hon. colleague for this comment. In fact, the terms of reference provide for a submission to the office in charge, that is, the TMRSU by each Tuesday before 12 o'clock, one copy of a report covering all the faults and any repairs made during the previous week together with the list which has been submitted by the hotline, and I am confident now that we are going to apply this condition of the contract because I agree with my hon. colleague that sometimes the hotline may not be working or when the faults have been registered, they are not being corrected as soon as it should be done.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform us who is the owner of the software for the Traffic Light System and why it has not been commissioned publicly?

Mr Bodha: Who is the owner and why it has not been commissioned?

Mr Jahangeer: No, the system itself, the software.

Mr Bodha: From information I have, this is with regard to the maintenance, then you have the question as regards to the equipment itself, well, the equipment for over years now, have been supplied by the same contractor.

Madam Speaker: No, it is the software.

Mr Bodha: The equipment has been supplied...

Madam Speaker: Software.

Mr Bodha: Yes. The equipment has been supplied by the same contractor. So, I believe that the software must be processed by this company.

Dr. Sorefan: May I ask the hon. Minister whether some traffic lights have timers because, at Quatre Bornes, near the market, most of the time at 10 o'clock, the traffic light goes off?

Mr Bodha: I believe so.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

(No. B/543) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether he will state if he is aware of a letter from Mrs D. T. of *Association Justice et Vérité* about unfinished business related to the Truth and Justice Commission and, if so, indicate if he has taken any action in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like to emphasise that barely one month after the Government came into power, a Ministerial Committee was set up under my Chairmanship to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Ministerial Committee has had several meetings and has decided, in the first instance, to group the recommendations contained in the Report under three major themes -

- (i) Memorialising slavery as well as a better understanding of Mauritian history and culture;
- (ii) Dispossession of land and legal support, and
- (iii) Economic empowerment of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers.

The Committee has made several recommendations -

- the setting of a Land Research and Mediation Unit, which we discussed this morning,
- the forwarding of the Mandary report to the Attorney-General,
- the Ministry of Arts and Culture to look for land to construct the Museum of Slavery to be located either in Port Louis or Le Morne. In the meantime, the Ministry would arrange for the purchase of exhibits that could be displayed in the Museum, and
- the Ministry of Arts and Culture would submit a report on what has been done and what would need to be done for better memorialisation of the economic contribution of slaves in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, Government is committed to fostering a just, fair and equal society to give opportunity to all. It has and is taking many decisions to respect its commitment.

In this connection, Government has taken a series of measures which are in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission. These are listed hereunder -

- The old age pension has been increased to Rs5000/- per month.
- A salary compensation of Rs600/- per month has been granted to all full time employees.
- Government will construct 2,000 social houses per year, with a larger surface area.
- The Ministry of Housing and Lands has regularised and is continuing to regularize hundreds of cases of squatters.
- A Marshall Plan on poverty alleviation is being worked out. A multi-disciplinary team of UNDP experts is actually in Mauritius to start working on this.
- A Ministerial Committee has been set up under the chair of the Vice-Prime Minister to look into the issue of asbestos.
- Constitution of a national database of vulnerable households registered in the Social Register of Mauritius for targeting pro-poor services.
- The setting up of a Poverty Observatory.
- A new CSR policy has been devised to allow companies to directly provide help to those needy persons.
- An amount of Rs100 m. per year has been provided for the love-bridge project to address in an integrated way the issue of poverty.
- More than 33,000 needy students have benefitted from school materials in 2015.
- A nine-year schooling plan is being implemented.
- A minimum salary wage is being devised.
- Zero tolerance policy for people who endanger the cohesive fabric of our nation as recently demonstrated.
- All Boards of parastatal bodies to be multi-cultural.
- Review of the Certificate of Character Act.

Madam Speaker, since the submission of the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission in 2011, and the setting up of a High-Powered Committee which again I chaired, many of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission have been implemented. I would like to mention but a few examples -

- (i) An Equal Opportunities Commission has been set up.
- (ii) Creole is being recognised as a language and is an examinable subject at Primary level.
- (iii) The case of Ratsitatanina has been reviewed by the State Law Office and an interim report has been submitted.
- (iv) A list of 20 historical sites associated with slavery has been listed as National Heritage, and research is on-going.
- (v) The “Festival International Creole” is being held every year to promote the Creole culture and it is in its 10th year.
- (vi) Le Morne was listed as World Heritage Site in 2008.
- (vii) The Workfare and Youth Employment Programme has been set up.
- (viii) Free meals are provided in all ZEP Schools.
- (ix) The freezing by Act of Parliament of land prescriptions.
- (x) The setting-up of Land Administration, Valuation and Management Information System (LAVIMS) which is a cadastre system, and
- (xi) The provision of artisanal fish farms to fishermen.

Madam Speaker, the list is too long to be enumerated here and I will place in the Library the details of the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will take note that, in terms of assistance to deprived areas, numerous works have been undertaken including in Port Louis: rehabilitation of Karo Kalyptis; provision of electricity at Quartier Robert Scott, Cité La Cure; relocation of squatters at Marjolin, Cite La Cure; rehabilitation of Cite Roche Bois; construction of Sir Gaëtan Duval Leisure Park in Roche Bois and, of course, constant upgrading of Pere Laval Historical Site. Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: The question I put to the hon. Minister is a simple question concerning a letter addressed to him or to the Prime Minister by the Association Justice et Vérité related to those families who have been dispossessed of their land. In that letter,

Madam Speaker, they state that they have requested a meeting with the Ag. Prime Minister since the 21 of April 2015, and until now, he has not responded to their request. May I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether he will receive those families or whether there is a problem for him to receive those families?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the whole issue relates to land. My friend, here, was Minister of Housing and Lands for so many years. What did he do? Why does it have to be left to another Government, another Minister to look at the issue? Madam Speaker, the Member should have taken his responsibility when he was Minister of Housing and Lands and he did not do so and that is the truth. And maybe now, he is having some pangs of remorse, I understand. Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, I will receive the hon. Lady at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, this has nothing to do with my question. I am talking about land where those families have been dispossessed of that land.

(Interruptions)

If you want to know! We regularised the cases of 2,000 squatters when I was Minister of Housing and Lands....

Madam Speaker: Put your question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is simple. You have with you a report,...

Madam Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Lesjongard: and you said that in your reply, submitted by Mr Mandary. They want to know what is in that report - those 43 families. That is why they have requested you for a meeting. It is as simple as that, Ag. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, I am drawing your attention. Address the Chair! Don't address the Minister directly.

Mr Lesjongard: So, tell us why you cannot meet those people and those families.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will meet them with pleasure. There is no need to get excited. I will meet them with pleasure.

(Interruptions)

And I'll mention again, five years he was Minister of Housing and Lands...

(Interruptions)

Five years, he was Minister of Housing and Lands, Madam. These people have been dispossessed for hundreds of years; he could have taken some attention to it. But now he has some remorse, he is pleading for them. I will receive them with pleasure. But, Madam Speaker, what we are doing and I say that in no uncertain terms, we are providing help as never before to these poor people to recover, hopefully, and take possession again of their land *malgré les problèmes légaux qui existent*.

Madam Speaker: You have a question, hon. Lesjongard? Okay! Last question on this issue!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister if we did not have that Truth and Justice Commission, this issue would not have been raised today in this House? We have had that Commission and you were at one time responsible to implement the recommendations of that Commission. My question is again very simple: will you meet those families and brief them on what the situation is?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, address the Chair! Don't address the Ag. Prime Minister!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I answered, Madam Speaker, but I hope the hon. Member is not saying that he was not aware that during the 18th century, 19th century, people have been dispossessed and he wanted to wait for the report of the Truth and Justice to learn about it. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – STAFF - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/544) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the recruitment of staff in the private secondary schools funded by the Private Secondary School Authority, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the composition of the panel of interviewers therefor and procedures laid down and followed for the appointment of the members thereof;

- (b) the total amount of money disbursed in terms of salaries of the staff of the educational institutions registered with the Authority for the year ending 31 December 2014, and
- (c) if any mechanism is in place to appraise the performance of the non-teaching staff members of the private secondary schools.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in the context of the implementation of Government policy for free education, grants are disbursed for payment of emoluments to teaching and non-teaching staff of registered Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools through the PSSA which is the authority responsible for payment of grants under section 15 of the PSSA Act.

The staff of these Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools are not *per se* employees of the PSSA; the legal employer of all the members of staff employed is the school, represented by its Manager.

Madam Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the effect that sections 16(4) (a) and (b) of the PSSA Act clearly provide that by the reason of payment of emoluments to a school, the PSSA shall not be regarded as the employer. This provision of the Act further highlights that the school shall always remain the employer and shall be responsible for matters of promotion and supervision.

As such, the PSSA, not being the legal employer of the staff, does not directly intervene in the recruitment made by the schools which generally have their recruitment mechanism.

However, I am advised by the PSSA that whenever a vacancy arises, the authority ascertains that the person recruited -

- (i) holds the qualifications required as per the terms and conditions of service of the Private Secondary Schools under the PRB, and
- (ii) falls within the entitlement of the school concerned.

Grants towards the salary of the staff concerned are disbursed once these requirements are met and all necessary clearances are submitted to the authority.

PSSA, as a regulatory body, has to ensure that payments of grants made towards emoluments (salaries and allowances) are in accordance with the provisions of the Pay Research Bureau.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the PSSA that, in regard to Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools, the total amount of money disbursed in terms of salary of staff, for the year ending 31 December 2014, stands at Rs2.5 billion.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) of the question, and as already pointed out earlier, matters pertaining to supervision and promotion of staff statutorily rest with the school which shall always be the employer as provided under section 16 of the PSSA Act. I wish to add that performance appraisal rests upon the management of the school which is under the responsibility of the Manager and the Rector.

However, it is to be noted that there are cases whereby the PSSA receives representations with regard to the appraisal of performance of staff for the purpose of payment of increment in which case the PSSA examines such representations, on a case to case basis.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The amount invested for the year 2014, therefore, as stated by the hon. Minister is Rs2.5 billion. The issue is one of quality of education and, of course, value for the sum invested. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if she is satisfied with the current structure and the functioning of the PSSA and if the institution has the resources to monitor to ensure that public funds amounting to Rs2.5 billion invested almost yearly only on salaries and not in grant-in-aid? Do the resources that this institution has respond or do we need to have a serious look at the whole functioning? May I also know if the Board has already been constituted?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Board has been constituted, Madam Speaker. As far as the quality assurance is concerned, this has been transferred to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and the Quality Assurance Unit is under my Ministry and is being run by officers of the Ministry.

As far as the money is concerned, the money that has been disbursed is in terms of emoluments of teachers as per the regulations, as per the PSSA Act.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Please, may I ask the hon...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, could you, please, be brief in your question?

Mr Rughoobur: Yes. May I ask the hon. Minister to, please, look into it because this institution has been the way it is since years? Could she, please, see to it that there is a full review of its functioning in light of the development that we have today and in light of the huge sum of money that is being invested?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the PSSA Act is being reviewed and, obviously, the Ministry is looking into the matter and we are trying to see how best to adapt it to the current situation.

Mr Rughoobur: I believe the issue of *formation est important*. I know that we have got a series of institutions looking after *formation*. But still, I would request the hon. Minister, while looking into this whole structure which would probably be revisited, to ensure that in the new structure there is adequate attention given to this whole issue of *formation dans le secteur privé aussi*.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is being taken into account.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

LEASING EQUIPMENT MODERNIZATION SCHEME

(No. B/545) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Leasing Equipment Modernization Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to if –

- (a) it has been extended for the current financial year, and
- (b) any amount of leasing facilities approved by the Corporation is still due to leasing companies and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) total amount owed as at to date, and
 - (ii) expected dates on which the arrears will be paid.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS)

became operational in 2009 and the averred object was supposedly to provide money to large companies to acquire equipment on lease allegedly for the modernisation of their operations. This Scheme was part of what was called a Stimulus Package introduced by the then Government in the context of the then prevailing global economic crisis.

I am informed that, as at 31 December 2014, a total amount of Rs3.84 billion in favour of 1,058 enterprises has been approved by the Restructuring Working Group (RWG), a Committee set up under the National Resilience Fund (NRF) for disbursement by SIC.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the RWG has ceased to operate since December 2014 and no new applications are now being entertained.

With regard to part (b) of the question, out of the amount of Rs3.84 billion, an amount of Rs520 m. has still to be disbursed to the leasing companies.

The SIC is presently discussing with the leasing companies on the possibility for them to raise the capital amount from the domestic banking system in view of the excess liquidity situation instead of relying on funds from the NRF and on new modalities.

Mr Uteem: I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mention that the scheme has been stopped and that now SMEs are being directed to look for Commercial Banks. But this scheme was set up precisely to help SMEs which could not raise finance from the banking system and that is the whole purpose of having this scheme. So, does that mean that henceforth the Government will no longer support SMEs by providing these leasing facilities?

Mr Collendavelloo: We all know that all this was window dressing by that Minister. We know whom the hon. Member is talking about!

(Interruptions)

No!

(Interruptions)

The Stimulus Package, it was not him!

(Interruptions)

Remember!

(Interruptions)

Let us not go into polemics! I am just telling the hon. Member that as a matter of fact, as from December 2014, the Restructuring Working Group has been disbanded. So, the question does not arise!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has mentioned the amount disbursed today. May I know whether he has the information as to whether there has been any default, any non-repayment?

Mr Collendavelloo: I don't have that information, but I know that big financiers took a lot of money and did not refund. This is public knowledge.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

STATE LAND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY - UNIVERSITIES - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/546) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the project for the construction of universities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Land Development Company Ltd., information as to -

- (a) the amount of funds invested in relation thereto as at to date, indicating the -
 - (i) names of the consultants and building contractors appointed therefor and;
 - (ii) completion dates of works thereof, and
- (b) if the company is exempted from the application of the provisions of the Public Procurement Act.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD - NATIONAL PORTAL - BIDDERS

(No. B/547) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the creation of the new national portal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information Communications Technology Authority, information as to -

- (a) the amount of funds invested therein, indicating the names of the bidders therefor, further indicating the price quoted in each case, and
- (b) if the successful bidder has strictly complied with the scope of services, as at to date and, if not, indicate the measures that are being envisaged against the latter.

Mr Bhadain: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Computer Board that the total amount of funds invested in the project for the creation of a new national portal, which I shall refer as the Government Portal, amounted to Rs57,532,247.39. The project was completed in December 2012.

Following a tender exercise, through the open advertised bidding and a two -envelope process, 10 bidders had submitted their proposals. They were as follows -

- (i) Anglo African Ltd
- (ii) Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd (LCI)
- (iii) Africa Digital Bridges Networks Ltd (ADBN)
- (iv) *Formation Recrutement et Conseil en Informatique Ltée (FRCI)*
- (v) Harel Mallac Technologies (HMT)
- (vi) Catalyst Business Partners
- (vii) DCDM Consulting Ltd
- (viii) New Edge Solutions
- (ix) State Informatics Ltd (SIL)
- (x) Data Communication Ltd (DCL)

After the technical evaluation of the offers received, only two bids were found to be technically responsive and were retained for financial evaluation. The envelopes containing the financial offers of the eight bidders, who had failed the technical evaluation stage, were returned unopened to them.

The financial proposals of the two responsive bidders, namely 'Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd' (LCI) and '*Formation Recrutement et Conseil en Informatique Ltée*' (FRCI), were subsequently opened and their bid prices were as follows -

BIDDER	BID PRICE (incl of VAT)
LCI	Rs104,651,610.00
FRCI	Option 1: Rs55,145,680.00

	Option 2: Rs49,990,642.60
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Following the financial analysis, the contract for the creation of a Government Portal was awarded to FRCI for a sum of Rs49,990,642.60, inclusive of VAT.

It is to be noted that during the project implementation, the following additional works were entrusted to the successful bidder, which I am informed was in compliance with the Public Procurement Act -

1. The Mauritius E-Gov Portal Mobile version amounting to Rs1,504,200, inclusive of VAT, and
2. Mauritius E-Gov framework payment gateway amounting to Rs6,037,404.79, inclusive of VAT.

The mobile version allows users to access the Government Portal through their mobile phones, whilst the e-payment gateway allows for online payment.

Taking into consideration the cost of the additional works, the total contract price turned out to be Rs57,532,247.39, that is, 15% over and above the original contract price which is within the statutory limit for contract variations, I am informed.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the contractor has complied with the scope of services which, *inter alia*, included the following -

- Supply of necessary hardware;
- Supply of necessary software;
- Networking;
- Portal solution;
- Portal technical architecture;
- Security solution;
- Scalability, operability and availability;
- Compliance with e-GIF (e-Government Interoperability Framework) standards;
- Training, and
- Post-implementation services.

The contract was signed on 09 November 2011 and delivery was effected on 03 December 2012, that is, within the 14-months timeframe. The two additional items of contract variations, that is, the mobile version together with the e-payment gateway, were completed in December 2013.

I am further informed that the post-implementation services went well and that the contract has been completed without any problem, Madam Speaker.

Mr Rughoobur: The hon. Minister speaks of a sum of Rs57 m. approximately for the value of contract, while, the report of the Director of Audit speaks of a sum of almost Rs80

m. You've got a maintenance contract of Rs30 m. additional. May I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of this award of Rs30 m. for the maintenance contract? How was it awarded and whether the provision of the Public Procurement Act was complied with?

Mr Bhadain: I am told that the provisions of the Public Procurement Act were indeed complied with and the information that I have been supplied regarding the details of how much was spent is as per the answer that I have given, but it is also true that I am chairing the Committee with all the Permanent Secretaries of all the Ministries regarding the recommendations made by the Director of Audit and I will certainly look into this matter in that Committee and if there are any issues which should be looked at, I will certainly look at those issues.

Mr Rughoobur: I believe the portal, as it is now, does not seem to satisfy the requirements of modern age. May I request the hon. Minister to please look into the whole matter and also to ensure that there is, if need be, an investigation on this whole issue of 57-80 million and the Director of Audit Report also speaks about the sum of Rs6 m. that has been spent on e-payment, but today we can't access e-payment facility. I would request the hon. Minister to please get a whole investigation in the whole issue and probably to report to this House later on.

Mr Bhadain: We will certainly look into that, Madam Speaker, the Committee is meeting tomorrow morning.

NATIONAL AIDS COMMITTEE

(No. B/548) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the National Aids Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) when the Committee last met, and
- (c) if the proposed discontinuation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme was discussed at the level thereof and, if so, table copy of the proceedings thereof in relation thereto.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (a) & (b) of the question, I am informed that the National Aids Committee, at its inception, was made up of the hon. Prime

Minister, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the hon. Minister of Tourism and External Communications, the hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, the hon. Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, the hon. Attorney General, the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports and the Commissioner of Health Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the NGOs were the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Associations; PILS, Vivre Plus, *Action Familiale*, the Council of Religions, Media Watch Organisation, Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA). The Committee last met Madam Speaker, in April 2006.

Madam Speaker, as for part (c), the question does not arise as the methadone substitution therapy programme has never been discontinued. Beneficiaries in the programme are still receiving their daily doses of Methadone.

Mr Baloomoody: So, do I understand that there is no National Aids Committee now? There is a National Aids Secretariat, I understand. Do we have a National Aids Committee because this is one of the protocol of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, that there should be a National Aids Committee and the hon. Prime Minister, the list of participants is not correct, there was in that list as well a Member backbencher of the Government and a Member of the Opposition when it was first instituted. So can I ask from the hon. Minister whether we have a National Aids Committee now?

Mr Gayan: Well, as I have said there is still a National Aids Committee, but it last met in 2006. The National Aids Secretariat has come to the Ministry of Health from the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Baloomoody: Do I take it that the National Aids Secretariat has taken over the works of the National Aids Committee?

Mr Gayan: My understanding is that the National Aids Committee still stays as an institution, but all the operational requirements of the National Aids Secretariat have gone to the Ministry of Health and that is where the work is being done.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the National Aids Secretariat, the hon. Minister has gone on record when saying that he is going to do with the supplies of methadone and the

substitution thereof. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether with regard to the Secretariat this matter has been raised and discussed?

Mr Gayan: Well, the issue of methadone, Madam Speaker, has been a matter of consideration in my Ministry since this Government took over in December last year and we have had lots of meetings with the NGOs, with the experts working on the programme, I had myself had discussions with the WHO people and, in fact, we have a team of the WHO which is coming to review the whole programme and this is something which is of great interest to lots of people and we are doing the best we can in the circumstances. But let me say also that all those who are on the methadone treatment right now, which is about 4,700 and something, they are still being given their treatment as was the case before. However, modern research has shown that those who are on methadone addiction for a long term, develop all sorts of other complications and this is why, for those who want to join the programme, we have said: let us see if there are alternatives so that people do not become methadone addicted for life and this is what we are doing.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned that there have been several meetings. May I know when the last meeting was held with regard to the methadone issue at the National AIDS Secretariat?

Mr Gayan: I don't have the date, but I have the details in the office.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the country report of the AIDS Secretariat dated April 2015 where it is stipulated that, following the introduction of harm reduction strategies in 2006, that's when there was the National AIDS Committee, namely the Needle Exchange Programme and the Methadone Substitution Therapy, the percentage of PWID - that is, People Who Inject Drugs - among detected cases decreased from 68.1% in 2011 to 42.2% in 2012, 38.1% in 2013 and in 2014, it was only 31.1%; showing clearly that the Methadone Substitution Therapy is working positively.

Mr Gayan: Well, Madam Speaker, if we travel back in time to 2006, that was the time when the HIV/AIDS epidemic was creating havoc not only in Mauritius but also in Africa. There were news items almost on a daily basis. Whole villages were destroyed because of HIV/AIDS. Today, that is no longer the case. There are new medicines on the market and then the ARV treatment was given to the HIV-positive people and that programme is still on-going, but we do have some vulnerable groups. Obviously, there will

be some vulnerable groups like men having sex with men, sex workers and all these are vulnerable groups. So, as a Government, and I as the Minister responsible for public health, have to adopt a holistic approach to this issue and this is what I am doing with the assistance of the WHO, with the assistance of the people attached to my Ministry.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Hon. Minister - if he is going back years - this is a report from your Ministry, from the Secretariat. There is no longer in National AIDS Committee, there is the AIDS Secretariat in your Ministry. Now, this is dated April 2015, sent to the United Nations, and it is all praise to both the methadone, which can be improved of course, but it is all praise for both the methadone programme and the syringe distribution system. This is a huge achievement which has reached in April from your Ministry and will you confirm that, in fact, the National AIDS Secretariat is not being taken on board adequately with the changes that are being envisaged?

Mr Gayan: I will certainly not subscribe to the last part of the question, but let me also say, Madam Speaker, we hear lots of things in this country and with regard to the Needle Exchange Programme; the whole purpose of the Needle Exchange Programme - I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well - was that I bring a used needle and I am given a new needle. That has not worked and this is why,...

(Interruptions)

Yes, that was dated April. I will give you the facts and the figures. The average amount of needles that were being used per month last year was about 10,000. In the month of May it reached 65,000. That's when I started asking questions and that's when the Minister became the target of criticisms and I will also say, Madam Speaker, that we read recently the premises of *CUT (Colletif Urgence Toxida*, - that is, the NGO responsible for needle exchange were burgled; information was lost, computers were lost. Then, as a responsible Minister, I am concerned. We are dealing with matters which are highly sensitive, people who are injecting drugs, who need treatment, because at the end of the day all these people who need treatment, end up in the hospitals and we need to give them the treatment available. What I am saying to this House is that I...

(Interruptions)

The National AIDS Committee is a different thing. The National AIDS Secretariat is with the Ministry and we are working with the National AIDS Secretariat to ensure that people who wish to join the programme of detox do not become dependent for life on methadone. I was just doing some research while waiting for this question, Madam Speaker, and it says that prolonged use of methadone causes changes in the mental framework of people. It has lots of side-effects and this is what...

(Interruptions)

You have Google. Please Google, go on methadone and mental health. You will see all the information there. Methadone causes personality disorders.

(Interruptions)

This is why we need to have a look at alternatives. We cannot be wedded to a system that is not performing. We need to be open to new challenges.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have as well googled the Minister himself, and having googled the Minister, I have come across and connecting what the hon. Minister has stated today with what has been reported to have been said recently at the World Alzheimer's Month event that was organised recently and which the hon. Minister attended, where he said there - he is reported to have said, at least - that methadone is connected to the possibility of dementia and it is also connected to the possibility of Alzheimer. Now, methadone happens to be on the list of approved treatments by the World Health Organisation. Is the hon. Minister telling this House or is he telling the country that the World Health Organisation allows - on its approved list of drugs substitution therapy - methadone, at the same time knowing that it is something that can provoke dementia and can provoke Alzheimer, and if he has a report to that effect, if he could please give us, make us happy by tabling such a report that gives us conclusive evidence of his amazing discovery?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I will certainly place in the Library of the National Assembly research relating to mental disorders, psychiatric disorders of people on long-term methadone treatment. Research has also shown that psychiatric disorder is up to ten times higher in the population on long-term methadone maintenance therapy. So, it is not something that I am inventing. I am just saying what is scientifically proven.

Dr. Joomaye: Methadone substitution is partly funded by the *Fonds mondial*, the Global Fund. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will refuse the funding from this organisation because they fund Methadone and Needle Exchange Programme?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, the Global Fund deals with HIV, malaria and TB. There are now attempts being made to expand the range of the Global Fund to cancer. There was a time when the Global Fund was giving a lot of money to Mauritius. Because we have become an emerging country with a relatively sound economy, the funds are not as significant as they used to be. We are talking to the Global Fund. We will certainly accept whatever amount is given, but we will be accepting the money on terms that meet the concerns of health in our country. Mauritius as a Sovereign State must reserve that right for itself.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Minister, even if he says that the methadone programme has not been discontinued, but in a certain sense newcomers will not be dispensed with this treatment now, which means that it has been discontinued for newcomers who will come and seek treatment. Why has not the hon. Minister talked, dialogued with the social workers, with the different NGOs who have been very active concerning the fight against the drug addiction and rehabilitation?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I have spoken to them and, in fact, last Friday I was invited to pay a visit to the Headquarters of PILS and I had accepted the invitation. Then they decided to cancel the meeting. So, I am trying to arrange another meeting.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody! Next question! We have sufficiently discussed on this issue. Next question!

NINE YEAR CONTINUOUS BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/549) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Project, she will state how her Ministry is proposing to respond to the public concerns that -

(a) it will lead to the introduction of an additional competitive high stake examination at the end of Year 9, and

(b) the introduction of mixed schooling in existing single sex schools, to be renamed Academies, in Year 10, may result in serious management issues.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the Nine Year basic continuous schooling which is being introduced in the context of the reforms will bring in a transformation of our current educational structure and the accompanying measures are likely to usher in a systemic change. The new project aims at putting in place a system which eliminates cut-throat competition and undue stress. It will promote the holistic development of the child, inculcating in them the desired skills, knowledge and competencies to become 21st century citizens. Many education systems worldwide are adopting this trend. It is our duty as a caring Government to relieve our children and to give them back their childhood by creating the right conditions for their cognitive and integral development.

This is a holistic and integrated approach, Madam Speaker, which will involve a paradigm shift, a change in the mindset of people. The new assessment system will take on board not only the student's performance level but also their talents, aptitudes and attainments.

First of all, I wish to inform the House that the assessment at the end of Year 9 is already in place since 2010 by way of the National Form III assessment/exams. The nine-year schooling project is proposing an assessment to come up with the award of the National Certificate of Education (NCE).

This assessment aims at -

- measuring the attainment of the students at the end of the nine years of basic education, and
- promoting students to Grade 10 in their respective schools.

It will also be used for the purpose of admission of students opting for seats in Academies at Grade 10 level.

The NCE is thus not an additional examination given that it is already the practice for students of Form III to sit for the National Form III Assessment at their school at the end of the year. These examinations aim at assessing the learning outcomes of students and are also

used for the purpose of promotion to Form IV and for the choice of subjects for Form IV and School Certificate. It will also help in the allocation of seats, as I said earlier, for students opting for Academies.

The current National Form III Assessment will therefore be replaced by the NCE in 2020 where there will be a national assessment in all subjects. The NCE will be organised by the MES which will also be responsible for the marking at the central level.

As already stated earlier, the NCE will not be a high stake examination. The reason is that students are already enrolled in a secondary school and will be able to pursue and complete their secondary education at the same school. The very fact that the students have already secured a seat in a Regional Secondary School, it will be a matter of choice for the student to decide whether he or she will opt for a seat in the Academies or not. The students will be mature enough to take a decision at this age.

I would like to draw the attention of the House that the NCE will also come up with innovative modes of assessment, namely the school based assessment where all students have the possibility of demonstrating and being assessed on talents other than the merely cognitive ones.

For the majority of them, the NCE will therefore serve the purpose of certification only. Furthermore, this reform wishes to bring in its wake a valorisation of the TVET with the state-of-the-art technology so that it becomes a pole of attraction for students. Hence, the NYS makes a case for different pathways and Academies are just one of those.

Madam Speaker, students remaining in their Regional Schools will have a further advantage of competing for both National and Regional Scholarships. The latter are not offered to students in Academies. Thus, the examinations at the end of Grade 9 cannot be considered as a high-stake competitive one inasmuch as the student is already enrolled in a secondary school where he has undergone 3 years of schooling.

His seat is guaranteed to pursue the remaining years of the upper secondary schooling. Opting for the Academies thus becomes purely a matter of choice.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I would like to remind the House that many of the Private Secondary Schools are mixed, and they have stood the test of time.

We all know that co-education has been practised in many of our private secondary schools and the students have been performing well in all fields.

We have good examples to testify namely, the MGI Secondary School, the MGSS schools, St Andrews, among others, have a good track record of mixed schooling whether in terms of discipline, performance or adaptability as well as parents' acceptability. There have been no serious management issues reported till date in these schools. Co-education is known to have a positive effect, enhancing not only performance, but also the development of sound interpersonal skills. That being said, mixed schooling is not a new phenomenon. Currently, pupils are already evolving in harmony in co-education environment in the pre-primary and primary subsectors. A similar condition prevails at the technical and vocational schools and at the Tertiary Education Sector, not to mention the private tuition classes which have been operating thus for years.

Madam Speaker, it is worthwhile noting that we are preparing the students for the world of work and for life. In this natural endeavour, if boys and girls are instructed in a co-education environment, it will facilitate transition and integration in their workplace and in their adult life.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, time is nearly over. Do you have a long statement?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am ending, just a last sentence! Furthermore, co-education schools provide the opportunity to make gender mainstreaming a reality in our schools and provides for the same facilities for boys and girls following the same curriculum. The hon. Member may rest assured that regarding Academies, all necessary facilities will be made available in terms of infrastructure, special rooms, special facilities for either group and all regional schools are operating as single-sex institutions, as such we retain the gender specificity. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer, but, unfortunately, there is still some confusion outside with regard to the CPE because looking at the document which was circulated when we attended the Minister's invitation, the criteria for admitting students to Grade 7 - so, we are talking about those who are leaving Standard VI. There are three criteria: parental choice, but the second one: overall grading at the Primary School Achievement Certificate which is now replacing the CPE examinations. So, it is clear that

that examination will have an impact on the future of the child. So, he will still be competing one way or the other before going to Grade 7.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: To start with, Madam Speaker, let me say straightaway that the National Schools will not be admitting students at Grade 7 level. Students will be moving on to Grade 7 in all regional schools. So, first of all, competition is reduced at this level only.

Secondly, when we talk about the criteria for admission in Secondary Schools, it is clear that we are going to take overall grading which means that there will not be any A+ nor very acute sort of progression from one level to the other. All students will be admitted into Grade 7 after Grade 6, no matter what their results are as far as the PSAC examination is concerned. All students will move on to Grade 7, but the admission will be done on a regional basis as it is done right now for regional schools depending on the students' results, the proximity of the residence to the school opted for and the priority of the parents.

Mr Baloomoody: We have many local schools. So, how will one choose to which school this child will go if we are not going to take into account the overall grading at the Primary School Achievement Certificate?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is going to be the way it is done for regional schools right now, that is, according to the demand of the parents, the priority list, the proximity to the place and also the results of the students, but there will be no sort of ranking of students, no marks concerned; let's say that if we say for 'A', if we are talking about A's or whatever the grading system would be, it will be the same for all students having it. They will be able to enter the school depending on the proximity of their residence to the school.

Mr Baloomoody: Now, with regard to the academic schools...

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Academies!

Mr Baloomoody: The Academies, are we in one way or the other keeping, what we call, the Star Schools where we have all the best talented teachers?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, the attribution or rather the way teachers will move from one school to the other would be the same as it is today. So, there will be no special teachers for special schools. All the Academies will admit students only at Grade 10, which means that the students will have the choice of going to an Academy or not and the

Academies will be schools of excellence in areas. *C'est-à-dire*, they will have schools with certain specialism, with certain specialist areas, schools for Science, schools for Arts, etc, but there will be no sort of star schools as such. Students will be admitted according to their performance at level of grade 10.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the exams...

Madam Speaker: Last question.

Mr Baloomoody: Sorry, Madam Speaker. It is of national interest this question. With regard to the Standard Form III Exam which will be run by the MES, up to now, according to my information from those who are in the sectors, the MES, itself, is not aware how to run this exam, what will be the syllabus, how it will be run?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is totally not true. The MES is working. We have got eight different implementation committees, the MES is working on that and the MES....

(Interruptions)

No, the MES has been working earlier. Now, we are talking about the nine year schooling with the NCE exam which will be held in 2020 and the MES is now working with other partners at the Ministry for the implementation of the NCE Exams in 2020.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQs B/550, B/551, B/553 and B/561 have been withdrawn.

Hon. Members, in the course of the Private Notice Question today, after hon. Rutnah had put a supplementary question, hon. Uteem rose on a point of order to the effect that hon. Rutnah had made a serious allegation of bribery against the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I asked hon. Rutnah as to whether he had uttered words of that nature and he stated that he had not made any such allegation from a standing position. I had undertaken to listen to the recording and come back to the House. I have to inform the House that I did listen to the recording which reveals that hon. Rutnah had uttered the following words from a sitting position and I quote -

"Tone bribe dimoune".

The above words amount to serious allegation against the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I, therefore, request hon. Rutnah to kindly withdraw these words.

Mr Rutnah: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: I also have to inform the House that hon. Baloomoody has uttered the word 'batchara'.

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please, don't start again!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please! Don't provoke!

(Interruptions)

Can I continue?

I also have to inform the House that hon. Baloomody has uttered the word 'batchara' and I also request him to kindly withdraw this word.

Mr Baloomoody: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that any unparliamentary word, offensive words and allegations towards hon. Members, even from a sitting position, is not in order and does not add dignity to the decorum of the House. I, therefore, appeal to hon. Members to maintain the decorum of the House. Thank you.

Mr Gayan: On a point of order Madam. I just wish to seek your guidance, is the word 'roquet' parliamentary?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I just said that we should refrain! Hon. Members should refrain from using unparliamentary words. It is not good for the dignity of the House and it is not good for the decorum of the House. So, I, once again, appeal to all of you to refrain from using those sorts of words.

PAILLES – TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

(No. B/550) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Treatment Plant Project at Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the –

- (a) cost thereof, indicating the amount of variation costs;
- (b) date on which it will become operational, and
- (c) outcome of any inquiry carried out in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

APOLLO BRAMWELL HOSPITAL – ACQUISITION

(No. B/551) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Apollo Bramwell Hospital, he will state the –

- (a) funds that have been used for the acquisition thereof;
- (b) procedures that have been followed for the acquisition thereof, and
- (c) monthly income and expenditure thereof.

(Withdrawn)