

VIPSU OFFICERS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/945) 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 Very Important Persons Support Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list of the officers thereof who have accompanied Very Important Persons on overseas missions, since 2005 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) grade and posting thereof;
- (b) countries visited and duration thereof;
- (c) personalities they had accompanied, and
- (d) total amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and any other allowances.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the following VIP's are entitled to be accompanied on overseas missions by officers of the Very Important Persons Support Unit –

- (i) the President;
- (ii) the Prime Minister;
- (iii) the Vice-President;
- (iv) the Deputy Prime Minister;
- (v) former Presidents;
- (vi) former Prime Ministers, and
- (vii) the Leader of the Opposition.

The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, may we know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister when the VIPs travel for private visits whether they get Police officers to accompany them?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, there have been occasions on private visits where several of these VIPs have taken Police officers. I have not, but there have been occasions.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea is not here! So, next question, hon. Sesungkur!

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – LEGISLATION- AMENDMENT

(No. B/947) 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(Withdrawn)

PMO – LEGAL ADVICE - COST

(No. B/948) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to external legal advice sought by his Office, he will state, for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively, the cost thereof, indicating in respect of each case the –

- (a) reasons why external legal advice was warranted, and
- (b) names of the legal Counsel whose services were retained.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the information relating to external advice sought by the Prime Minister's Office for the years 2011 to 2014, as well as the names of the respective Legal Counsel and the fees paid in each case, has already been provided to the House in reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/313 on 28 April 2015.

Madam Speaker, the Attorney General's Office is the principal Legal Adviser to Government.

In relation to external advice sought, except for the case brought by Mauritius against the United Kingdom under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, there is no record on the files of the Prime Minister's Office as to the specific reasons therefor.

ABORTION – GIRLS UNDER 16 YEARS – REPORTED CASES

(No. B/949) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to abortion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of girls under the age of 16 having allegedly undergone same, since January 2010 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number of prosecuted cases thereof and indicate the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if an assessment of the situation has been carried out recently and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, abortion or unlawful termination of pregnancy is criminalised under section 235 of the Criminal Code and anyone convicted under that section is liable to a penal servitude for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Termination of pregnancy is also regulated under section 235A of the Criminal Code, section 38A of the Medical Council Act, which was introduced by the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012, and the Medical Council (Termination of Pregnancy) Regulations 2012.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, between January 2010 to 20 November 2015, there have been four reported cases of girls under the age of 16 years who have allegedly undergone unlawful termination of pregnancy.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Police of the following outcome of each case -

- (i) the Director of Public Prosecutions has advised no further action in two cases reported in 2011 and 2013 respectively;
- (ii) one case reported in 2012 is awaiting advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and
- (iii) one case reported in 2013 is pending court judgment.

The House may wish to note that, following the passing of the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012 and the Medical Council (Termination of Pregnancy) Regulations 2012, 13 cases of termination of pregnancy in specified circumstances have been authorised in public hospitals, including one case of a girl under the age of 16.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that although there has not been any formal assessment of abortion in general, teenage pregnancy is being closely monitored at their level. Sensitisation on sexual and reproductive health, including teenage pregnancy, is carried out in upper primary and secondary schools and community centres. Furthermore, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare ensures that counselling services and medical sessions are provided in the Drop-in-Centre managed by the Mauritius Family Planning Welfare Centre for the victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether we have figures for illegal abortions that have gone wrong and that, therefore, end up in hospital?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I do not have the information. It would be probably available at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

DANGEROUS DRUGS – SNIFFER DOGS

(No. B/950) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the sniffer dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof operating at the Police Dogs Section, indicating the number thereof posted at the Central Investigations Department, Anti-Drugs Smuggling Unit, and other units respectively, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for an increase in the number thereof to address the dangerous drugs problems and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Mauritius Police Force presently has 52 Police dogs, among which are 18 drug sniffer dogs and two general purpose cum drug sniffer dogs.

All the Police dogs are attached to the Police Dogs Unit based at the Special Mobile Force at Vacoas. They are deployed from the Police Dogs Unit upon formal requests received from the various Divisions and Branches through the Police Information and Operations Room.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the present number of sniffer dogs is currently meeting the operational requirements of the Police. There is consequently no immediate need to increase the number. Nevertheless, due consideration is being given to increase the number in the years to come, so as to enhance Police response to dangerous drugs problems. In that respect, eight puppies born at the Police Dogs Unit are presently undergoing training and will be ready to be used in Police operations by mid-2016.

Any additional dogs required will be purchased from local breeders.

Mr Bhagwan: How does the hon. Ag. Prime Minister reconcile the fact - he can ask the Commissioner of Police – that, when the Head of the ADSU deponed at the Commission of Inquiry, one of the complaints which he made – which has become public – is about the lack of sniffer dogs? Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister take up the matter with the Commissioner of Police and inform us accordingly?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will, Madam Speaker. This has not been brought to my notice.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether requests have been made for our local Police trainers to go and follow courses overseas and whether such a request has been entertained? Can I know also whether there is a plan to send our Police officers - because it is a specialised job - for training, especially in UK and in other European countries?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, the trainers have been trained in Durham, UK, in India and also in France. So, it appears to have been, at least, ten cases. In fact, three persons have undergone training in the last five years and maybe that is not sufficient.

POLICE RIDERS - MOTORCYCLES - REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/951) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Police Traffic Branch, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of motorcycles attached thereto, indicating if he has received representations

from the Police Riders attached thereto to the effect that the low saddle thereof is causing them severe health problems and, if so, indicate if due consideration will be given thereto, including the renewal of the fleet thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when the exercise will be carried out, and
- (b) the number and types thereof that will be purchased.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 172 motorcycles have been allocated to the Traffic Branch, out of which 54 are of low saddle type.

I am further informed that several Police riders have verbally complained of backache as a result of riding these low saddle motorcycles over a certain period of time. They have received appropriate medical treatment at the Police Medical Unit.

Madam Speaker, the low saddle motorcycles were purchased in years 2008, 2009 and 2012, and subsequent to the verbal complaints of backache, the Police are no longer purchasing this type of motorcycle.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two tender exercises have so far been initiated by the Police for the purchase of 22 and 36 motorcycles fitted with ergonomic saddle seats, so as to mitigate any discomfort that could be experienced by the riders.

The first tender exercise for the 22 motorcycles has been completed and the contract awarded on 20 August 2015. Delivery is expected to be within six months as from the date of the award. The second tender exercise for the 36 motorcycles was initiated on 31 August 2015 and evaluation is in progress.

I wish to inform the House that these 58 motorcycles will be allocated to the Traffic Branch following Government's decision to increase Police patrol and visibility on our roads.

Madam Speaker, as regards the 54 low saddle motorcycles, I am informed that necessary action has been initiated by the Commissioner of Police to dispose of them, as per established procedures, and subsequently procure new ones with the appropriate specifications.

Mr Bhagwan: With the new and good initiative taken by the Commissioner of Police to have women Traffic Officers on the road, can the Ag. Prime Minister direct the

Commissioner of Police to give these courageous women Traffic Officers good and efficient motorcycles?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the matter is that Police Officers - whether men or women - have complained and the Commissioner of Police has agreed to replace all the 54 with new ones. In the meantime, I will ask him to see what he can do for one and all.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same line, can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the Prime Minister's Office has received representations through the Police Officers that the Traffic Officers are not given adequate equipment such as helmets, jackets and gloves? We can see it on the road *de visu*. I think that, for modern Mauritius, we need a better traffic section with more efficient and good looking equipment.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam Speaker, of any particular complaint.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, with regard to the 54 low saddle motorcycles purchased, can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether there had been any tender procedures, and if so, can we know if it was with regard to the specifications that these motorcycles were purchased?

Mr Bhagwan: Can I make a request to the hon. Ag. Prime Minister pending the purchase of new low saddle motorcycles? Can he direct the Commissioner of Police, at least for the time being, to replace or make necessary arrangement to replace all the low saddle motorcycles given to these Women Police Officers?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I must say, Madam Speaker, that we have asked the Commissioner of Police to replace these motorcycles as quickly as possible. They were not planned to be replaced, we have asked him to replace them as quickly as possible. I will ask him to pay particular attention as it is within the day tomorrow to have a look at this issue. Thank you.

PMO – FORMER PERMANENT SECRETARY - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/952) **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 Mrs K. B., former Permanent Secretary

posted at the Private Office of the former Prime Minister over the period 2010 to December 2014, he will state the –

- (a) parastatal bodies/State owned companies of which she was a Board Member, and
- (b) number of official overseas missions she attended, indicating the -
 - (i) countries visited;
 - (ii) date and duration thereof, and
 - (iii) total cost incurred in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that Mrs K.B, former Permanent Secretary posted at the Private Office of the former Prime Minister was for the period 2010 to December 2014, representing the Prime Minister’s Office on the Boards of the State Bank of Mauritius Ltd and the Mauritius Post Ltd respectively.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made by the hon. Prime Minister to Parliamentary Question No. B/56 on Tuesday 24 February 2015, wherein he indicated that the information requested for was being compiled and would be tabled in the National Assembly.

The information has indeed been placed in the Library of the National Assembly on 23 March 2015.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House if Mrs K. B. upgraded herself from economy to business class in our national airline on Monday 23 December 2013, if yes, whether she is entitled as Permanent Secretary to enjoy upgrading free of charge?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, you will appreciate that I do not have that information.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that she has upgraded about 500 passengers on multiple occasions and whether a list of beneficiaries can be tabled in the National Assembly, that is, between January 2012 till December 2014.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have no idea whether this information is right or wrong and we did respond previously that such information at the Air Mauritius would not be replied to or provided in this House.

NDU – DRAINS PROJECTS – EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT

(No. B/953) **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 construction of drains projects, he will state the number of contracts therefor the National Development Unit awarded through the emergency procurement method in 2013, indicating the number thereof approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development without the prior approval of the Central Procurement Board, indicating in each case –

- (a) who gave instructions to seek the approval of the said Ministry, and
- (b) the amount of money approved by the said Ministry.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/751 on 03 November 2015 and also to a list of projects that I had then tabled.

As pointed out previously, there is an ongoing Police inquiry at the level of the NDU on this issue and consequently, it would not be appropriate to provide all the information being requested.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, I agree that the hon. Ag. Prime Minister gave such an answer last time, but it was at the CCID on a technical issue. This is purely a financial issue. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to inform the House whether six projects valued to about Rs71 m. have started work without the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in fact, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development did draw the attention of the then Ministry of Public Infrastructure that projects had been undertaken without prior financial clearance.

Dr. Sorefan: One more question, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that 7 contract projects allocated between February and May 2013 have exceeded the approved contract value of Rs70 m. and has gone up to Rs124 m.? Is the hon. Minister aware of this variation?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I think particular questions regarding contracts or projects undertaken by MPI should be addressed firstly to MPI and not to the Prime Minister's Office. Secondly, Madam Speaker you will appreciate that there is currently

an ongoing Police enquiry by CCID and I think it would not be appropriate for us to delve too much into this issue.

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, it seems that the issue lies in the Public Procurement Act, section 21 (1), whereby a public body may purchase goods, services or works from a single supplier without competition in case of extreme urgency. I think this is where the problem lies. Can we know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister if it is his intention to bring some amendments to this Act?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I think Madam Speaker, in the light of what has happened and possible abuses thereto, I am sure that consideration will be given eventually by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development in his budget or prior to that, to tighten the law to ensure that things are not repeated but, anyway, I think the whole Police enquiry is also a lesson for us all. We should respect the Public Procurement Act.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Ag. Prime Minister has made a request that questions addressed to him be taken out of turn as he has to perform the Opening Ceremony of the General Assembly of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa. I have acceded to his request. Consequently, I shall now call PQ Nos. B/957, B/983 and B/984.

Furthermore, the Table has been advised that PQ No. B/983 in regard to the 42 cases of alleged dispossession of land by the sugar barons will now be replied by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister as I have just said. PQ No. B/998 in regard to the landslide prone area of Hermitage, in Coromandel and addressed to the hon. Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. PQ No. B/955 has been withdrawn. Hon. Jhugroo!

MAHEBOURG WATERFRONT - REGATTA ACTIVITIES

(No. B/957) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state if consideration will be given for measures to be taken for the promotion and organisation of Regatta activities thereat.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Regatta is part of our local folklore and is a popular leisure activity among our people. My Ministry, through the MTPA, is encouraging more and more people to participate in this activity.

Apart from preserving and encouraging Regatta as a popular leisure activity amongst locals, our aim is also to develop it into a major tourist attraction. The concept of “Heritage Regatta” is being used to enrich our tourism product in the cultural as well as water sports niche segments. In this context, I am informed by the MTPA, that since the beginning of the year, no less than eight Regattas have been organised at Mahebourg, the last one being on Sunday 22 November within the *Festival International Kreol*. I understand that a final one is scheduled on 13 December. This is the first time that so many Regattas have been organised within a single year.

I am further informed that the Mahebourg Waterfront is among one of the preferred locations for the organisation of Regatta activities in view of its rich cultural, historical and heritage values and infrastructural facilities.

Madam Speaker, the Regatta activity is already being actively promoted by the MTPA as a folkloric tourist attraction in all its promotional materials and its international marketing campaigns.

LAND RESEARCH AND MEDIATION UNIT – ALLEDGED DISPOSSESSION OF LAND - INVESTIGATIONS

(No. B/983) Mr G. P. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the forty two cases of alleged dispossession of land by the sugar barons identified in the report of the Land Monitoring and Mediation Unit referred to his Office, he will state where matters stand, indicating the names of the families concerned therewith and if officers of his Office have established contacts therewith.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/983 and B/984 at the same time as they refer to the same issue.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the hon. Member is referring to the “Land Research and Mediation Unit” rather than the “Land Monitoring and Mediation Unit”.

I informed the House on 17 November 2015 that a Land Research and Mediation Unit had been set up and the Unit had started its operations on 16 November. This Unit will carry out in-depth investigations in all the cases of land dispossession mentioned in the report of the Truth and Justice Commission, and will advise the complainants. They will, in the first instance, attempt to resolve the disputes through mediation or advice whether legal assistance is required. A Press Communiqué has already been issued with contact details of the Unit.

Madam Speaker, I have previously informed the House that there are 42 cases where there is enough evidence of land dispossession and which have been forwarded to the Attorney General's Office as to the way forward.

I am informed that these cases are very complex as they date back to more than 100 years and are still under consideration. Thereafter, the Attorney General's Office will send their advice to the Land Research and Mediation Unit which will then call these persons. I am tabling a list indicating the names of the families concerned.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of Parliamentary Question No. B/984, I wish to inform the House that the Head of the Land Research and Mediation Unit is a former Deputy Chief Surveyor at the Ministry of Housing and Lands. He has 39 years of experience in the field of land surveying and has never had any adverse report. He has already carried out research in some of the cases mentioned in the Truth and Justice Commission Report and has submitted an interim report in April 2015. He is well qualified and has necessary experience to head a Unit.

At this stage, there is no evidence of conflict of interest of the person heading the Unit and same has been confirmed by the person himself. However, in the event any member of the Land Research and Mediation Unit finds himself or herself in a situation of conflict of interest, the member will have to disclose his or her interest and will take no further part in the proceedings.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, with regard to the 42 cases that have been referred to the Attorney General's Office, I thank the Ag. Prime Minister for tabling the list of those concerned. May I ask him whether those concerned will be informed in writing that their cases have been referred to the Attorney General's Office?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the procedure is as follows: the Attorney General's Office is looking at these cases and the Attorney General has told me himself that they are very complex cases. They will then be sent batch by batch back to the Land Research and Mediation Unit which will then interact with the persons involved. We hope, Madam Speaker, to have a first batch before the end of the year.

Mr Lesjongard: We understand, Madam Speaker, that those 42 cases are in the pipeline for the mediation process. May we know for cases concerning Rodrigues how do we move forward? Will the Unit sit in Rodrigues or will those people be called to come to Mauritius?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is a good question, Madam Speaker. We will see whether we have sufficient cases for the Unit to go to Rodrigues or whether we will call them here, but we will try to facilitate the procedure in some way.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, one of the problems with expropriation of property is that, in the meantime, they have been prescribed without the knowledge of the victim. Has the Ag. Prime Minister considered whether there is any amendment that needs to be brought to the legislation, to the prescription ordinance, in order that the victims, who were not aware of the prescription procedure, are able to be adequately compensated?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I do understand that the legal situation is quite complex with regard to the prescription which probably has been done in a legal way in a way. So, the one problem that we have is the issue of prescription and that is why we are waiting for the Attorney General's views on the matter, but there are other issues as tracing back all the heirs today and also maybe the land has been parcelled, etc. So, there are many issues and that is why it is so complex.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the Ag. Prime Minister, in his statement, last week said that there were 224 cases which were referred to the Land Research and Monitoring Commission. Out of those 224 cases, 42 are straightforward cases, 91 cases need further investigations. May we know what will happen to the other 91 cases left?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there are cases which require further investigation; there are cases which came in too late and were not looked at. All these cases are going to be taken on board by the new Unit, Madam Speaker.

Mr Ganoo: It is linked to the answer of the hon. Ag. Prime Minister. Does that mean that the Unit now will be opened to anybody who has discovered at a late stage that his ancestors have been dispossessed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Because of the amount of work involved - in fact, there are cases which were reported to the Truth and Justice Commission but which the Unit - the Commission then - could not look into in depth. These will be looked into. Then, there were cases which could not be looked into by the Truth and Justice Commission because of late submission, these will also be looked into and we are stopping there at the moment otherwise we will never get to an answer.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that the former Commission, that is, the Land Research and Monitoring Commission did get into the

mediation process, but unfortunately when those concerned were convened, they did not turn up. Doesn't the Ag. Prime Minister think we will go through the same process again with the same Unit that has been put up?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware, Madam Speaker, whether they were convened and did not turn up. I left Government, as you know, in the middle of last year so, I am not aware of that, but I will look into that and eventually I will report to the House whether that is the case and how progress is being made or otherwise, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

LAND RESEARCH AND MEDIATION UNIT – ALLEGED DISPOSSESSION OF LAND - REPORT

(No. B/984) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the alleged dispossession of land identified in the report of the Land Monitoring and Mediation Unit, he will state if -

- (a) the Land Monitoring and Mediation Unit will inquire into all the cases that have not been referred to the Attorney General's Office, and
- (b) there exists a possibility of conflict of interest regarding the person heading the Land Monitoring and Mediation Unit.

(Vide reply to P.Q. No. B/983)

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/978 has been withdrawn. Hon. Jhugroo!

PUBLIC PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - LOCKERS - PROVISION

(No. B/954) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the students of the public primary and secondary schools, she will state if consideration will be given for the provision of lockers thereto with the implementation of the Nine Year Basic Schooling.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I am advised that a proposal for the provision of lockers to students had been envisaged in the past but due to implications in terms of school infrastructure and space, resources and investment, it could not be pursued.

However, consideration may be given for the provision of lockers to students of higher classes of the Primary and Upper Secondary especially for those doing activities such as sports, music and other such activities which may require storage facilities.

The implementation of the Nine-Year Continuous Basic Schooling both at the primary and secondary levels will entail an enhanced use of digital contents and materials in the teaching and learning at school level. Digitalisation of teaching and learning resources and the use of ICT mediated methods will be promoted.

Bearing this in mind, it is considered that the need for lockers to all students may not be fully warranted. Yet, in cases where it is found that a real genuine need is felt, lockers may be provided.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

MAHEBOURG WATERFRONT - UPGRADING

(No. B/955) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state if any project for the upgrading thereof is being envisaged and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE – FORMER BUILDING - REPAIRS

(No. B/956) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the building which formerly housed the Mahebourg Social Welfare Centre, situated in the vicinity of the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state if he has been informed of the abandoned state thereof, indicating if consideration will be given for the pulling down thereof.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions that the building which formerly housed the Mahebourg Social Welfare Centre at Swami Sivananda Street, Mahebourg was a property of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. With the development of the Mahebourg Waterfront under the aegis of the State Property Development Company Ltd (SPDC Ltd), the land and building were vested in the SPDC Ltd. In March 2007, the Social Welfare Centre was shifted to another building constructed by the State Property Development Company Ltd at Hollandais Street, Mahebourg, some 150 metres away from the initial site.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the SPDC Ltd. that the second phase of the Mahebourg Waterfront Project is currently in abeyance. Hence the pulling down of the building does not arise.

Future development will be undertaken by the SPDC Ltd. In the meantime, maintenance works have been carried out at the building which formerly housed the Social Welfare Centre and the area has been fully fenced. Further maintenance works are planned early next year to repair the leaking roof and to repaint the building with a view to possibly leasing it.

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

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS - HP INDIA

(No. B/958) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the contracts awarded by Government institutions to HP India for computerizing projects, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof in each case.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that no contracts have been awarded by any Government institutions to HP India for computerization projects.

I am also informed that the SBM Ltd has awarded a contract to HP India for a computerization project. However, in view of the fact that the awarding body is a company listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and is governed by the Companies Act, it would not be appropriate for me to disclose the information requested.

Dr. Sorefan: I thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his answer. Is he aware that HP India has been paid to the tune of Rs5 billion for a contract sum of Rs7 billion for only 30% of the work done up to now? A contract which should have been completed in 2014, up to now they have done only 30% and they have already enjoyed Rs5 billion and also Rs3 billion have been paid to the Architect Accenture in IT. Is the hon. Minister aware that this is a huge sum and Mauritius is losing a lot of money for work not being completed so far?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I cannot confirm, but I can say that the new Chairman of SBM Holdings Ltd, Mr Kee Chong Li Kwong Wing and a group of consultants are looking into the matter.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development aware that for HP India to continue with the project, the company is insisting to the remaining payment of Rs2 billion to be paid before carrying on with the project and to enter into a management contract on a yearly basis, for 7 years, to the tune of **Rs1 billion**?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I am not aware, Madam Speaker, but as I said the committee chaired by Kee Chong Li Kwong Wing is looking into the matter.

Dr. Sorefan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the IT system is located physically in India with all the primary IT data there under Indian law and control...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, are you requesting your question within the province of this question?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Dr. Sorefan: ...employing hundreds of Indian Software Engineers in India? It should have been in Mauritius, creating jobs for our youths. Is the hon. Minister aware that there were about 400 IT young Mauritians who have lost their jobs because of this project gone to India?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of this information.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, next question!

CSR - *POCHES DE PAUVRETÉ* – SPONSORING COMPANIES

(No. B/959) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain a list of the thirty-eight companies which are sponsoring *poches de pauvreté*, indicating in each case, the *poche de pauvreté* which is being sponsored.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, in my reply to PQ B/592 on 29 September 2015, I emphasised that “*parrainage*” is a new approach for empowering vulnerable families, in lieu of ‘*l’assistanat*’. This is in line with the Anti-Poverty Marshall Plan announced by the Prime Minister during the electoral campaign. This approach was further emphasized in the Economic Mission Statement by the Prime Minister

whereby the collaboration of the private sector was sought to address, *inter-alia*, the issue of poverty.

It is in this perspective that the private sector has taken full responsibility to implement the national *parrainage* project through the Lovebridge concept. In this respect, I am informed that the Lovebridge Ltd has been incorporated as a private company. The Board of Lovebridge Ltd is currently co-chaired by Mr Raj Makoond of the JEC and Mr Harold Mayer. The company has requested nomination of two representatives of Government to serve on the Board.

Madam Speaker, there are far more than 38 companies which have decided to adopt ‘*Les Poches de Pauvreté*’. In fact, Madam Speaker, there are 110 companies that have expressed their firm determination to be fully involved in the national effort to eradicate absolute poverty.

I am tabling the list of those 110 companies.

Once Lovebridge completes its current recruitment exercise and finalise its operational framework, it will work with those companies to define its action programme.

On our part, Government has pledged to provide an amount of Rs100 m. to Lovebridge Ltd from the unspent CSR funds remitted to MRA. We are confident that the private sector will contribute its fair share through the Lovebridge Project to empower the poor and eradicate absolute poverty in our country

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, we are talking about the CSR, the Corporate Social Responsibility. Probably, the hon. Minister will remember that when he presented the Finance Bill, the CSR Committee was cancelled, he cancelled, in the law, all CSR guidelines and so on. Now, can I know whether it is not a fact that the CSR Committee is still in operation? There are still guidelines. Therefore, the law which we voted then, at Finance Bill time and which the hon. Minister commented upon on 29 September: “We have done away with all guidelines.” He talked about the *defunct*, the then National CSR Committee. Where are we?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, we are where we are, on the right path.

(Interruptions)

And the CSR Committee, Madam Speaker, is there.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Danielle Wong is the Chairperson. What has been changed in the CSR Committee is the approach. The approach in the past was that the CSR Committee had to give guidelines to the private sector as to how they had to allocate their CSR funds. We came to the conclusion that it is not our responsibility to give guidelines to the private sector on how and where they should allocate funds which belong to them. It is very important that the House knows that the 2% of CSR is not tax which is being lost. It is above the 15% tax paid by companies to MRA. So, I have done what had to be done. The guidelines have been removed, but the CSR Committee is ongoing and is participating fully in the Marshall Plan that my colleague is working on. Therefore, there is no distortion or no contradictory approach as far as this is concerned. Now, within this framework, we also announced in the Budget what we termed in a beautiful way '*parrainage*' which is the concept which goes beyond *l'assistanat* whereby - the Rt. hon. Prime Minister took the commitment - all those *poches* of absolute poverty will disappear in the next five years, and he will do it. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister also requested the private sector to contribute their share in this fight against absolute poverty. This is how the Lovebridge Project was born. It is a private sector motivated project, build up by the private sector, managed by the private sector and it is the way through which the private sector wants to say: "We want to contribute in this massive effort to eradicate absolute poverty". I am quite satisfied that as it is today, the private sector is playing its role totally as far as combating absolute poverty.

Mr Bérenger: Can I remind the hon. Minister that through the Finance Bill, we deleted the two sections of the law where that CSR Committee is set up. It is stated, therefore, that: "the Committee referred to shall be appointed by the Minister and shall consist of a Chair." We deleted these two paragraphs. Can I ask the hon. Minister under which paragraph is he appointing that Chairperson?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I don't have to be under any paragraph.

(Interruptions)

The CSR Committee is functioning. Madame Danielle Wong who is a national figure is the one who is chairing it. I am, in fact, coordinating more and more, now, with my colleague responsible for ensuring that absolute poverty disappears in Mauritius. The Opposition also, I am sure, share the same view as us that we have reached a level of development that we can no longer continue with a divided society where those who are left aside are forgotten. I want to express the total commitment of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who is absent today that in

five years, Madam Speaker, there will no longer be any *poche de pauvreté* in this country and we will do it.

Mr Bérenger: All this is *bla-bla-bla*! In the Finance Bill, the hon. Minister provided for the end of the CSR Committee. He cannot appoint a Chairman of a CSR Committee. I challenge him to give us the section under he is appealing. What was provided, on the other hand, for the MRA, through the Finance Bill, to exercise a lot of responsibilities, can I know whether the MRA is exercising those responsibilities?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: The MRA is doing the job of collecting the CSR funds which have not been spent like companies which are making a profit.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, in my question, I asked the hon. Minister a list of the 38 companies which are sponsoring the *poches de pauvreté* in each case. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the list which he has just tabled - which I have not yet seen - is per region-wise, per company-wise, that is, as the Appendix that we had in the Budget Speech, of the 38 companies? Is it a list of those 38 companies with each company which will sponsor each of these *poches de pauvreté*?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I see the point of the hon. Member. I am sorry the project is much more popular than what we indicated in the Budget. We were 38 in the Budget, we are now 110. This is why I am very excited to see this reaction of the private sector to the request of Government. We are now in the presence of 110 companies, and it is now the responsibility of Love Bridge Ltd, private sector company, to ensure implementation of this project.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister who will decide which particular company will look after which particular *poche de pauvreté*? Has this been done? Can the hon. Minister of Finance, therefore, inform the House which are those companies looking after the different *poches de pauvreté*?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: We are referring to *parrainage*. We are not referring to the whole Marshall Plan, which is managed by my colleague the Minister here, which involves much larger number than 38. The Minister is, in fact, monitoring all the *poches de pauvreté* in Mauritius. I want to spell out this word '*parrainage*'. It is a specific project within the

Marshall Plan. Within this project, the *parrainage* is a project which is being implemented by the private sector through the Love Bridge Project. Therefore, we should not confuse *parrainage* with the Marshall Plan which is being carried out by my colleague the Minister. I think, Madam Speaker, this is very clear.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madame la présidente, la ministre est en train de noyer le poisson. Laissez-moi revenir par rapport au *PQ B/592*, where I quote what the hon. Minister stated –

“We have 38 companies which have already adopted mainly *les cités ouvrières*.”

Maintenant, laissez-moi venir avec la liste des 38 *pockets of poverty with a specific question*. No. 4 is Quartier Shell. Quartier Shell se trouve dans ma circonscription à Roche Bois, dans la circonscription No. 3. Est-ce que je peux savoir quelle est la compagnie qui est en train de parrainer le Quartier Shell ?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, be happy know that Quartier Shell will be taken care of. Now, the company that will take care of this *poche de pauvreté* will be determined by Love Bridge and not by Government. We have to go with it now that *parrainage* project is being implemented by Love Bridge. I am saying it, maybe my friends, on the other side, have not quite seized the concept. *Parrainage* is now totally in the hands of Love Bridge. They are not 38 companies; they are now 110 companies that will distribute and share this work at national level. I can assure the hon. Member that the *poche de pauvreté* he mentioned will be taken care of.

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

Mr Lesjongard: *Thank you, Madam Speaker.* Le concept de parrainage, comme on le comprend, c’est une famille qui va parrainer une autre famille. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre comment est pris cette décision ? Qui décide qui va parrainer qui et quelle famille qui va être parrainée ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please !

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam speaker, it is naturally incumbent on the Board of Directors of Love Bridge to determine which are the companies and in what way they will intervene. There is no doubt that when we speak of *poches de pauvreté*, there is not only type of *poches de pauvreté*. Each *poche de pauvreté* demands something very specialised. Let us say Batimaraais in the constituency of my friend there. Batimaraais is very specific. You can’t

deal with Batimarais as we would deal with another *poche de pauvreté*. That's No. 1. And No. 2, the concept of Love Bridge is beautiful in the sense that it is no longer *assistanat*. It is long term, it is a marriage, it is a long term adoption of a *poche de pauvreté* by the company. It goes on; it is generational. I am confident that what we are doing today will influence positively all the *poches de pauvreté*...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:...in the long term. This is how it is.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

SME PARKS – SETTING-UP

(No. B/960) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether in regard to the proposed setting up of Small and Medium Enterprise Parks in specific regions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the measures being taken for the promotion of small and medium enterprises in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues, respectively.

Mr Bholah: Madam Speaker, SME Parks are being set up so as to provide industrial space facilities to entrepreneurs to operate their business in appropriate locations throughout Mauritius.

In this respect, provision has been made for 100 *arpents* of land under the 2,000 *Arpents* Scheme agreed between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association.

These parks are constructed by the State Land Development Co. Ltd. (SLDC) and are thereafter leased to prospective entrepreneurs who apply for industrial space.

Madam Speaker, as at date, three SME industrial parks are operational, namely at Roche Bois, La Valette Bambous and La Tour Koenig.

In addition, lands have already been acquired by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and leased to the SLDC at Plaine Magnien, Petit Bois Caroline, Solitude and Vuillemin.

The construction works are scheduled to start next year after completion of all required formalities, survey and design works.

Furthermore, lands have been identified, but not yet acquired at Chebel, Henrietta, Gokoola and Beau Climat.

Today, I am informed that a total land area of around 30 *arpents* have already been acquired out of the 100 *arpents*.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is also working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the SMEDA, the SLDC and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association, amongst others, to identify lands in other locations where there is a demand for industrial parks and to ensure that such facilities are available on a regional basis.

With regard to the measures being taken by SMEDA for the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises in Mauritius and Rodrigues, I wish to inform the House that the SMEDA acts as a facilitator and receives daily request for assistance and support for SMEs, especially entrepreneurs willing to start new businesses or to grow the existing ones. In this respect, the measures being initiated by the SMEDA include –

- (i) The provision of counselling services through its business facilitation and Counselling Unit. Since January 2015 to date, 10,758 potential and existing SMEs in Mauritius have been provided with counselling services and 2,728 in Rodrigues. In addition, 334 site visits to entrepreneurs have been effected in Mauritius and 85 in Rodrigues.
- (ii) The organisation of training programmes, seminars, workshops and conferences for the entrepreneurs. These need based training programmes aim at improving knowledge and competencies of SMEs in technical, marketing, financial compliance policy, regulatory, legal, commercial and other important functions of enterprises.

Since January to date, 31 training programmes have been attended by 919 participants in Mauritius and 308 entrepreneurs attended 11 such sessions in Rodrigues. Moreover, last week a one-day workshop was organised on Building Export Capacity for SMEs in the Africa Region and it was attended by some 80 entrepreneurs.

Madam Speaker, one of the major constraints faced by local SMEs relates to opportunities to market and sell their products. Indeed, a wide range of quality products is produced by local SMEs but local consumers are hardly aware of them. With a view to easing their access to local markets, the SMEDA organises trade fairs. Thus, SMEDA has organised three trade fairs this year. 20 SMEs participated in the trade fair that was held in May this year at Vieux Conseil, Port Louis...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, do you think your reply is long? How many pages do you have? Otherwise, you can circulate your reply, if you wish.

Mr Bholah: I will circulate.

Madam Speaker: But you can address the measures indicated in the second part of the question.

Mr Bholah: Yes, Madam Speaker. Another important measure that is being initiated by SMEDA, in collaboration with my Ministry, is the setting-up of SME one-stop shop in Port Louis which will allow a coordinated service to be provided to SMEs.

This innovative service, which will be fully operational as from January 2016, will provide under one roof all assistance and support required by SMEs to start business or to grow, including the processing and delivery of permits and licences, wherever needed. Thank you.

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister, there has been a series of measures taken by the Government for this important sector. Will the hon. Minister agree that there is an urgent need to restructure completely this important organisation that we call SMEDA?

Mr Bholah: I agree with the hon. Member that there is a need to restructure, especially when we want the SMEs to become the backbone of the economy. My Ministry has instructed the SMEDA Board to consider urgently modalities for restructuring the SMEDA with a view to meeting the needs and aspirations of the SMEs.

Mr Jhuboo: The SMEDA just carried out the SME Industrial Park Survey in 2015. Can we know from the hon. Minister how many SMEs did register up to now?

Mr Bholah: There are around 25,000 SMEs registered, I mean, on the roll of the SMEDA.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister just mentioned that there is urgent need to restructure SMEDA. But back in the Budget in March this idea had already been debated in this House. So, may I know from the hon. Minister why after nine months, the SMEDA has still not been reorganised and the one-stop shop that was promised is still not operational?

Mr Bholah: Well, in fact, the Finance Act has addressed the issue of the composition of the Board and we reduced the members from 13 to 11. Now, we have Members from the MCCI, BOI and from the MauBank who are sitting on the Board in order to have a concerted approach to address the issues of SMEs.

Again, my Ministry is conducting a Master Plan on a 10-year basis. I believe that this issue of SMEDA, which is a unique institution to address the issues of SMEs, will be taken into account.

Mr Rughoobur: On this issue of restructuring exercise, there has been a report of the Office of Public Sector Governance which was prepared in June 2013. May I know from the hon. Minister if he is aware of its recommendations and we might use these important recommendations and implement them for the benefit of SMEDA itself?

Mr Bholah: Yes, I am aware of the report following the survey carried out by the OPSG and the report is dated June 2013. But I am afraid that none of the recommendations have been implemented and some of the recommendations listed that there should be a reduction in non-technical staff and putting up a research unit. But instead more and more staff have been recruited.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, the Government is putting a lot of emphasis on the development of small and medium enterprises. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has conducted a performance appraisal of SMEDA, what results it has delivered so far and what programme his Ministry is conducting to educate our youngsters to stand on their own two feet and to do some business on their own?

Mr Bholah: I can inform the hon. Member that the OPSG is carrying out a survey on all the parastatals in Mauritius and this question will be addressed too.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a series of institutions which is quite confusing for the small and medium enterprises. A lot of institutions are bringing

support to the SMEs. You have got the MBGS and the National Women Entrepreneur Council. May I request the hon. Minister to please look into the possibility of bringing all these institutions under a single umbrella and to ensure that there is no such confusion in the country regarding this?

Mr Bholah: Unfortunately, not all the institutions fall under my Ministry. Institution like Enterprise Mauritius falls under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection and therefore, the regrouping is quite difficult at this moment. However, we do proceed in a concerted approach so that the SMEs are well served.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/981 has been withdrawn! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

REAL ESTATE SECTOR - EXPATRIATES - OCCUPATION PERMIT

(No. B/961) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Occupation Permit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to –

- (a) the number of expatriates having been issued therewith in the real estate sector since January 2010 to date, indicating the respective nationalities thereof and
- (b) when the criteria for the allocation thereof was last reviewed, indicating the reasons which warranted the said review.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Board of Investment that from January 2010 to date, 289 non-citizens have been issued with an occupation permit in the real estate sector and the information as regard their nationality is being tabled.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, the criteria for issue of Occupation Permit for the Investor Category was last reviewed in April 2010 to introduce the requirement for an initial investment amount of USD100,000 by the potential investor. The purpose was to ascertain the genuineness and the financial worthiness of the applicant.

As for the Professional Category, the criterion to qualify for the Occupation Permit was amended in October 2015 whereby the monthly salary threshold of the Professionals outside the ICT sector was increased from Rs45,000 to Rs60,000. The salary threshold was reviewed to encourage employment of local graduates.

Mr Rughoobur: In regard to this Occupational Permit, there have been a lot of debates on the fact that we need to give priority to Mauritians but I don't know if the hon. Minister is aware of the series of complaints regarding the delays that there is in the processing of applications for occupational permit, but also, of renewals. The fact that we need foreign expertise and the companies that we require in the sector with the requirement of expatriates, may I request the hon. Minister to please look into the possibility of accelerating the issue of those Occupational Permits; renewal and issue?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, I am aware of the delays in the approval of the permits. This is due to the fact there are not sufficient numbers of meetings of the Joint Committee which comprises BOI, the Prime Minister's office and other Ministries. So, I will request the Board of Investment to increase the frequency of those meetings.

Mr Rughoobur: There is one important point that I wanted to mention to the hon. Minister. Will the hon. Minister agree that these expatriates coming to Mauritius bring expertise, but there is also the issue of networking. I mean, we can use them to network and to bring in business in other sectors. Will the hon. Minister agree that we need to put a mechanism in place at the Board of Investment to ensure that we take advantage of such networking and the expertise that we get from them, so that we can probably see how this can benefit the country in terms of *formation et tout le reste*?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: We already have a database of consultants. Well, the idea of disseminating the information that we have on those consultants is a valid one. So, I will ask the Board of Investment to ensure that it is widely circulated with the private sector especially.

Mr Sesungkur: Can the hon. Minister confirm if the Board of Investment does carry out routine checks on those who have benefited from occupancy permit from time to time to ensure that they comply fully all the way throughout with the conditions of the permit?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, there is a mechanism for the monitoring of those consultants, whose request has been approved. So, there is one already at the Board of Investment.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Rughobur!

CAP MALHEUREUX - RESIDENCE LE PAVILLON – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/962) Mr S. Rughobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Housing Estate located at Pavillon, in Cap Malheureux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if a survey was carried out prior to the implementation of the renovation works thereof, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, following complaints from residents of some NHDC housing estates all over the island, including “Residence Le Pavillon” in Cap Malheureux, in respect of leakage from water pipes, the National Housing Development Company Ltd. (NHDC) appointed, in November 2011, a Consultant to carry out a survey and design of rehabilitation works to be undertaken to the water reticulation network there. The Consultant submitted a feasibility Report in July 2012 and defined the scope of works.

The contract for the rehabilitation works in respect of three housing estates, including “Residence Le Pavillon” in Cap Malheureux, was awarded on 10 April 2013. The rehabilitation works started on 07 May 2013 and were completed on 28 April 2014 to the satisfaction of the Consultant and of the NHDC. Since then, no complaint relating to water leakage has been received at the NHDC.

Mr Rughobur: I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for the answer. Let me confirm to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that presently, we have got quite some leakage problems there in the housing estate, but we also have flooding problems as well in the yard. So, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if he can request the NHDC to please conduct a survey at the NHDC at Le Pavillon Cap Malheureux and to look into the possibility of having some renovation works done at the level of waterproofing, painting and the rest?

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Member will appreciate that we don’t have problems now concerning water leakage. It is true to say that we have received, according to my information, concerning the roof waterproofing. In September 2015, some residents of Residence Le Pavillon have made representations to the NHDC regarding problem of roof. It is true to say that, but, on the other side, the water problem had already been solved. I am

informed that the matter is being actively looked into and remedial measures as appropriate will be applied at the earliest possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/964, B/971, B/972 and B/980 have been withdrawn. Hon. Rughoobur!

NEF - SCHOOL MATERIALS - DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/963) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the distribution of school materials, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to if the list of the students who are eligible thereto for the school year 2016 has been finalized and, if not, why not, indicating the expected start and completion dates for the carrying out of the exercise in relation thereto.

Mr Roopun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Foundation that the list of students eligible for school materials for the academic year 2016 is being compiled and the cut-off date is 30 November 2015. As at yesterday, 19,017 children have been found eligible.

With regard to the distribution of the educational support, I am informed that the NEF is making all the necessary arrangements for same to be completed by the end of January 2016 at latest. The House may wish to note that the distribution exercise for the year 2015 spanned between December 2014 up to mid-February 2015.

The House may also wish to note that, despite the declared policy since 2013, only wards of households eligible under SRM were to receive school materials, the NEF used its own database for such distribution until 2015. Following Government decision on 03 April 2015 to the effect that only households eligible under the SRM will benefit from services provided by the NEF, a fresh national survey had started with the collaboration of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the closing date was 20 September 2015.

With a view to ensuring maximum outreach, a press communiqué was re-issued on 24 October 2015 by the NEF to remind all those households who had not yet been registered to do so until 06 November 2015. In this connection, the field visits by staff of the NEF are presently on-going as well as the data capture on the SRM database by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, which is expected to be completed by 30 November 2015.

Mr Rughoobur: The hon. Minister stated that the SRM is as if the main criteria for identifying those who will be eligible. Is he aware that there have been lots of complaints based on the fact that lots of applications for such facilities have not been approved simply because those families who were eligible in the past, this time are not found in the list, even if these are genuine cases. So, may I request the hon. Minister to, please, review the criteria and ensure that apart from this SRM we have a more humane approach and we ensure that people who genuinely require these facilities are taken on board and that materials are supplied to these families.

Mr Roopun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the number of persons covered by the SRM and receiving schools materials has increase various folds since 2010 and this is the main reason why we have to come with a mechanism to ensure that all those who are really in need benefit from these facilities. The SRM register is based on a proxy means test and there are objective criteria which have been used. But, of course, I must concede that any system has got its loopholes and there is a Standing Committee set up at the level of my Ministry together with officers of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to try to deal with any specific cases where there is a feeling that persons have been left out and there is a complaint desk at the level of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to review whatever complaints there may be.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, distribution of materials relates to people who are living in a poor condition, people who are below a certain *seuil de pauvreté*. May I know from the hon. Minister what measures are being taken to ensure that these distributions are made in a way not to stigmatise those children and make them feel as if they were different from those who have the means to go to school and don't have to rely on the State? Is there going to be a public show where these children are invited and Ministers and local MPs go and hand over these school materials or are we going to do away with it and procede in a very discreet way having regard to the human dignity of the parents and the children concerned?

Mr Roopun: In fact, initially, distribution was being done at the level of the school and eventually, with this in mind, we changed the method and, now, it is being done outside school premises in certain dedicated places. But, unfortunately, we are under pressure because we have to wait till the result of the CPE is made public. Now, we have also got the issue of students taking again one subject which is going to be by 20 December, which means that there is a lot of pressure for us to do it as early as possible. In fact, I understand

the point made by the hon. Member, but if there are ways and means to try to do it in a more serene and discreet manner we will explore this possibility.

SAINT FRANÇOIS XAVIER STADIUM - LIGHTING

(No. B/964) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Saint François Xavier Stadium, he will state if consideration will be given for the covering of the bleachers and for the provision of lighting thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

BAI – EMPLOYEES – TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

(No. B/965) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the BAI Co. (Mtius) Ltd. and related entities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of the employees thereof whose contract of employment have been terminated since April 2015 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) company in which the said employee was employed, and
- (b) quantum of compensation paid out thereto.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that the information relates to private companies incorporated under the Companies Act which are either under Special Administration or where the undertaking has been transferred as provided under section 110 (b) of the Insurance Act.

I can, therefore, only inform the House that out of a total of 3,515 full-time employees of the BAI Group and 817 insurance sales persons representing a total of 4,332 employees, 3,923 jobs have been safeguarded representing 91% of the total work force.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is very clever not to tell us how many have been fired. He worked it the other way round, how many jobs have been saved. Can I ask him, apart from Courts Mauritius Ltd whereby 188 employees have lost their jobs, how many other employees in the group of Apollo have lost their jobs?

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already stated that there are 4,332 employees and 3,923 jobs have been safeguarded. The mathematic shows that it is 409

employees who had their contract terminated. With regard to Courts, I believe 188 had their contracts terminated, but 720 jobs have been safeguarded in Courts. Apollo is still running as it has been running. There has not been any termination of contracts except for a few members of top management, I believe.

Mr Ameer Meea: I am afraid to say that the hon. Minister is wrong for Apollo because it was reported in the press - Le Star of Sunday 01 Novembre - *et je cite* –

“ Cette semaine cinq employés ont été licenciés *on economic grounds* ... »

Et c'est aussi rapporté que la secrétaire et un chauffeur ont été mis à la porte. C'est aussi rapporté par les employés : « C'est injuste envers ces deux petits employés qui n'ont rien à faire avec la crise du BAI . Certains, au gouvernement, ne réalisent pas comment ils sont en train de ruiner les familles”. Ma question à l'honorable ministre : pourquoi ces petits employés ont été licenciés sur *economic grounds* ?

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the contract of six employees had been terminated in management which I have mentioned before. Now, with regard with what 'The Star' or any other newspaper is publishing, I cannot go by the information which is in the press. I can only go by information which is given to me officially.

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, please.

Mr Bhadain: The other thing I would mention is that the special administrator who is handling this particular assignment is the one who is dealing with this matter. I don't think that there are any sort of piecemeal terminations of contracts. I, personally, would not believe what has been published in that particular newspaper.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister did not answer to part (b) of the question which was about the quantum of compensation paid to these people who lost their job. Even if he does not know the quantum, at least, does he know the rate that was paid to them? And also if he has the information as to what is the cost to Government to look after them under the Workfare Programme because these people have been admitted to the Workfare Programme and are being paid out of public funds.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not correct to say that they are being paid out of public funds because the compensation which has been paid to these employees comes from the fund which is managed by the special administrator as part of the overall

administration under section 110 of the Insurance Act. Now, there were representations made by Trade Unions representatives to the effect that a special effort should be made for people to be paid more than the two weeks which is provided for in law. And there are, I believe, certain cases which have been looked into and three weeks have been paid in certain cases. The Workfare Programme is there and we all know how the Workfare Programme works. The compensation is coming out from the special administrator. There is no involvement of public funds.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, last supplementary!

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister did not want to give the list company-wise, how many employees lost their job, but it is very sad to hear that more than 400 employees of the group has lost their job since April 2015. Apart from Courts, there are also companies like Boatyard Bewing, Publico Ltee, Yukondale, *Le Voyageur* Travel Tours. All companies which were operating within the group. There have been 101 employees for the companies I have just mentioned who lost their job. May I ask the hon. Minister in the Insurance Company BAI itself and Bramer Bank how many employees did lose their job?

Mr Bhadain: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have stated that the whole group BAI, Bramer and all the companies which fall under that sort of spider web structure which was built by BAI, the total figure is 4,332 and 3,923 jobs have been safeguarded. Now, the hon. Member is focusing on 409 jobs which have been terminated. But - I mean - it is a question of how you want to look at it! 3,923 have been safeguarded in a huge Ponzi Scheme where if all the effort, time and energy had not been put into that, these 3,923 jobs would not have been safeguarded. I believe it is a major achievement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

STATE LAND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/966) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State land, he will state the names of the beneficiaries of new leases therefor granted since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) terms and conditions of the lease, and
- (b) purpose of the lease.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no new leases, as such, have been granted during the period of January

2015 to date. As a matter of fact, only cases of renewal or transfer of leases have been dealt with, and cases where lands leased out have not been developed as required by the lease conditions, action has been taken for resumption of possession of these plots of land.

After consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms and the Attorney General's Office, my Ministry has, with Government approval, established a new Policy Framework and procedures to govern the allocation of State lands to ensure transparency and accountability in the process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I deemed it relevant here to inform the House that, according to records in my Ministry, there are two cases of lease where action had already been initiated and decisions already taken well before 01 January 2015. However, the clearances became due for issue after 01 January 2015. These two cases concern Le Chaland Hotel at La Cambuse and the Vrihat Vaishnav Sabha in Rivière du Rempart. In a third case, upon the request of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, a lease was granted in February 2015 to the World Hindi Secretariat over a plot of land in Phoenix.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very surprised to hear this from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister because he, himself, in this very House, stated that he has regularised a lot of squatters. So, I would have thought that some amount of State land has been leased to these beneficiaries.

Coming to my specific question, in the Budget Speech, it was announced, and I quote

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“Government is making it mandatory for the names of beneficiaries of new leases of State lands to be published in the Government Gazette giving details of the lands leased and proposed usage.”

Is Government going ahead with the proposal made in the Budget Speech of the hon. Minister Finance and Economic Development?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, as I mentioned in my answer, there has been renewal of the lease. It is also true to say that for the small people, for the poor people, I have already given to more than thousands of people. But, according to what the hon. Member has asked with regard to the lease, according to my information, concern the industries or whatever. But, for people who have less than 10 *perches*, we have already given the lease to nearly more than

thousands and, in fact, we are coming 483 persons concerned with ex-CHA since 1960. Very soon, we are coming with this. So, we are just taking into consideration all the leases which have been at a deadlock; nearly more than 2,000. Nearly every week, we are giving. For this purpose, if my hon. friend wants to have the list, I can circulate it; I can table it. There is no problem on that. But with regard to new lease for any construction of hotels or any industrial lease, we have not yet given. It is only La Cambuse, which lied for seven years, after which we have been able to release the land.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister did not answer the question as to whether the names and purpose would be published in the Government Gazette, as was stated in the Budget Speech. Another promise made in the Budget Speech is that there would be a Digital State Land Register which will be compiled and made public and which will provide comprehensive data on State lands already leased as well as unallocated State lands that may be developed for commercial, industrial and other uses. So, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, first, whether he still intends to Gazette all the beneficial owners of these State lands and second, what happened to this Digital State Land Register?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, as I mentioned, we are coming with a policy framework, which we have approved last Friday, and which will be normally published in the Government Gazette, and it will be official. All applications will be in line and it will be transparent. We are not going to do as it was done formerly.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

NATIONAL PROPERTY FUND LIMITED - ASSETS & LIABILITIES

(No. B/967) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the National Property Fund Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -

- (a) the assets and liabilities thereof as at to date, and
- (b) when it will issue debentures to the policy holders of the Super Cash Back Gold Scheme and the investors in the Bramer Property Fund.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Property Fund Limited is a company incorporated under the Companies Act and, in accordance with section 210 (1) of

the said Act, the National Property Fund Limited has to submit its audited financial statements to the Registrar of Companies not later than six months after the Balance Sheet date. The hon. Member can have access to the information requested with the Registrar of Companies at the time the National Property Fund Limited will file its accounts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with respect to part (b) of the question, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/624 of 06 October 2015. I am also informed by the National Property Fund Limited that debentures for the repayment of the first tranche of Rs3.1 billion will be issued and paid prior to 30 June 2016.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had a very specific question, which was when would the debentures be issued by the National Property Fund and the answer I got is that it would be before 31 July 2016.

So, do we have any more precision? Because may I remind the hon. Minister that he, himself, in this House, several months ago, said that National Property Fund Limited is going to very shortly issue those debentures.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even though I do agree with my learned friend that I said that the debentures will be issued by NPFL shortly, I am informed by NPFL that the repayment date is not 31 July, it is 30 June 2016, and they will be issued prior to that date. Now, it would not make any difference whether the debentures are issued tomorrow or on 29 June 2016 because they would be redeemable on 30 June 2016, in any case.

Mr Uteem: Actually, it does make a difference because the hon. Minister went on TV and stated that, once these debentures have been issued to policyholders, they would be able to go, pledge it, raise finance. So, now, I take it that there is no plan for the Government, through the National Property Fund, to give to all these policyholders any debentures until 30 June 2016.

Mr Bhadain: As I stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are redeemable on 30 June 2016. We were on the same TV programme. Probably, the hon. Member did not understand that properly. However, with regard to the possibility of people cashing in on their debentures by pledging it and contracting a loan, that would be possible, but it is after 30 June 2016.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, especially for the old-aged people, the time for debentures is too long. When issuing debentures, will the hon. Minister consider making an allowance for the old-aged people who have debentures to be shortened, so that they can use their money? Because they are very in need of their money to survive.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I totally agree with the hon. Member. In fact, there have been several representations which have been made at the level of my Ministry to that effect and the matter has also been discussed in Cabinet, and it has been agreed that we are looking into the possibility of repaying everything to people who are 75 years old and over.

Mr Ameer Meea: Recently, there was an issue that companies were not allowed to claim their debentures. Can the hon. Minister *éclairer nos lanternes par rapport à ça ?*

Mr Bhadain: Absolutely. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there were 55 companies in Super Cash Back Gold and the decision which was taken by Government was that those companies would not be repaid because they don't fulfil the eligibility criteria which was put forward for repayment purposes. Now, it just happens that in those 55 companies, there are other insurance companies which have actually contracted these insurance policies with BAI. It does not make sense. How can an insurance company have an insurance policy with whatever insurance company and now when this turns out to be a huge fraud that Government is going to step in with all the efforts and energy which is being put into it to recover money, to go and repay these insurance companies! That wouldn't make sense at all. I am also informed that they will have that amount which they have invested as a tax loss which can be brought forward.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem, last supplementary!

Mr Uteem: Since it is the last question, I would refer to the answer which the hon. Minister gave to me. He told me to go and look at the answer to PQ B/624. In PQ B/624, the hon. Minister stated that – that was in October 2015 - there were 1,554 policyholders who had invested less than Rs500,000 in the Super Cash Back Gold scheme, who had not been repaid. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he has updated figures as to how many policyholders there are now who have not yet been repaid and would he confirm the real reason as to why these policyholders are not being repaid and the real reason why the debentures are not being issued, it is simply because as at to date the National Property Fund Limited does not have the necessary cash and assets to meet these commitments?

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will reckon the figure of 1,524 which was mentioned, was not only for people who had invested Rs500,000 or less. It was the total amount; Rs500,000 plus also. Now, I checked yesterday and I was informed by NPFL that out 12,001 policies, if I remember correctly, of people who had invested less than Rs500,000;

there are only 86 persons, out of 12,000, who have not been repaid and that is because these people have not come forward for those repayments. This is in terms of people investing less than Rs500,000. For Rs500,000 or more, the figure has greatly reduced and it is now 764. So, if we are to add up 764 with 86, that would be about 850, odd. So, 1,554 has been reduced to 850 since I last answered that question.

(Interruptions)

Yes, assets are always there. Explained assets, not unexplained ones!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

MAURITIAN DIASPORA SCHEME – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/968) 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 Mauritian Diaspora Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the number of applications received thereunder, indicating in each case the outcome thereof.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Investment Promotion Mauritian Diaspora Scheme Regulations were published in October 2015 to give effect to the budgetary measures for the setting up of the Mauritian Diaspora Scheme.

As provided for in the regulations, the Board of Investment has set up a Mauritian Diaspora Technical Committee for the implementation of the scheme. The Technical Committee is currently working on the eligibility criteria for registration under the scheme which is expected to be finalised by early December 2015. I wish to inform the House that the scheme will be launched officially in January 2016.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the Board of Investment that, in the meantime, it has already received 16 applications and these will be examined by the Technical Committee once the eligibility criteria have been approved.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am happy with the answer given by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development that it is only as from January next year that we will start considering applications. But how would the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development reconcile that on the one hand the BOI and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development are inviting the Mauritian Diaspora to come back to

Mauritius and, at the same time, the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life is telling Mauritians to go and work in Africa; the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is telling Mauritians to go and work in Saudi Arabia and Emirates; how would he reconcile the fact that we are, on one hand, asking diaspora to come back and, on the other hand, we are telling Mauritians to go and work abroad?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: It might look like a contradiction. It is not! We have an excess number of doctors. What do we do with them?

(Interruptions)

We have excess number of pilots. What do we do with them? We have an excess number of teachers. So, in Mauritius, we have shortage in certain sectors where we need people to come in...

(Interruptions)

...and there are sectors in the economy where we have too many which have been trained. In fact, in our Budget, a scheme whereby those whose degrees don't match with what the market requires, in those cases, we have launched a programme for the retraining of 3,000 graduates whose degrees do not match local conditions. So, it is complex. The sentence of the hon. Member can give the impression that there is contradiction. There is none! On one side, we have an excess of certain professionals, on the other side, we have shortage and we are dealing with both.

Mr Uteem: Do I take it then that under this Mauritian Diaspora Scheme, there would be designated sectors where there are actual shortages, where we would invite the Mauritian Diaspora to come and work, will there be guidelines as to which sectors we need Mauritians to come back and in which sectors we don't want our Mauritians back?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: There will be naturally a set of criteria shortlisting the priority sectors. But there is one issue also; we want our people to come back. So, at the end of the day, we are not excluding any Mauritian who has settled abroad and wants to return to his Motherland. So, all applications will be considered, but priority will be given naturally for those who are qualified in the sectors we need. I am looking at the criteria which are here. We give on 100 points, 20 points go for those who have a Doctorate for instance; 5% for those who have Diploma and Vocational Certificate; in the case of experience, someone who has got more than 15 years, has 40 points; one who has less than 5 years, 5 points. It is clear

that those criteria will come up to a maximum and the maximum is that out of 100, anyone to be eligible should have at least 60%.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Merci, M. le président. Donc, par rapport à la logique de l'honorable ministre, les pilotes et les médecins ne seront pas la bienvenue.* Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister for the 16 applications that he received; may we know what are their respective professions?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Mostly professionals! This is why I have given it. Yes, they are mostly professionals. I need to reply to the other question of the hon. Member who says that we are not inviting those professionals where we have an excess of employment. I want to put emphasis on one thing; we want our children to come back. The concept which has, in fact, inspired this decision was that we want Mauritians who have settled abroad to come back and to share their experience in the country. This is basically the priority. Now, we come at the second level to those who we need absolutely and those who are less required, but then will fall on the third category on consultants and I need to tell the House one thing; we can't expect a growth rate that will allow us to move out of the middle income trap without opening the market. So, we are moving in a period of our history where we'll be opening our market for professionals, non-Mauritians, living abroad, but who we need, who will be allowed to come in to work and participate in the growth and success. This is inevitable. It will be impossible to move towards high growth without opening the economy. We have opened up the sky. The sky is now more open with the coming in of at least six new air companies. So, this forms part of the strategy, we should not exclude just on the basis of dogmas because we feel that it is wrong. We are opening up and we will open still more the economy in the years ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given us a very long answer to the question put by hon. Ameer Meea. Could I come back to that question? The question is very simple: how many professionals? We know the answer is 16. Could we have details of what professions are concerned? Give us figures. The question he put was very simple and it was a beautiful attempt on the part of the hon. Minister to drown the fish. Could be, please, give us the answer?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Unless the hon. Member did not listen to what I am saying or my English is not as good as his, but I beg...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister reply!

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: ...the hon. Member to understand what I am saying. The majority of those 16 are professionals. If you want the exact number...

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry! Hon. Mohamed, you asked the question, let him reply!

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:...but now you are provoking me, I won't reply to you. Don't provoke man!

Out of the 16, there are 13 professionals and 3 are self-employed. Among the 16, there are 14 with more than 10 years' experience and 2 with less than 10 years' experience. Among the 16 who have applied, 11 come from UK. So, we have among the education, 4 have CFA, 4 have CA and one has LLB Law. Do you want more information?

(Interruptions)

I am just saying, well take an appointment with me, I'll give it to you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sesungkur!

EXPORTS – REVENUE

(No. B/969) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to export trade for the years 2014 and 2015 respectively, he will state in each case –

- (a) the total export revenue thereof;
- (b) the current account deficit thereof;
- (c) if the worsening of the current account deficit was due to a fall in the export revenue, and
- (d) the steps taken to rebalance the economy.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, total export of goods and services amounted to Rs192.9 billion in 2014. According to the latest Balance of Payments data published by the Bank of Mauritius, exports of goods and services for the first semester of 2015 are estimated at Rs97.5 billion.

Regarding part (b) of the question, in 2014 the current account deficit stood at 5.5% of GDP. The projected deficit for 2015 is 4.8% of GDP. This includes an upward adjustment in tourism revenue due to inclusion of new data sources.

Mr Deputy Speaker, 2015 would turn out to be a much better year than the previous years in terms of external account deficit of the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the series of measures we are taking to further improve the current account of the balance of payments as well as the trend with regard to the current account deficit for period 2011-2015.

Mr Sesungkur: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am thankful to the hon. Minister who is doing a tremendous effort to reignite our economy and to re-engineer our economy and give a boost up to export. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that we have to do special effort with regard to certain sectors which can create employment for the low and semi-skilled like EPZ, light engineering, etc, like we did in the 1980s. So, is he contemplating certain measures to give incentive to foreign investors in those sectors?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, we are engineering a second economic miracle which will not leave a lot of space for others. What we are doing is that we are creating new subsectors of the economy that will generate a lot more growth. We spoke of the famous pyramidal structure made of three subsectors mainly the ocean economy/blue economy, the marine hub and then Africa and, on top of this, I agree with the Member that we have to diversify the base also in terms of training. The challenge we have now is not so much demand for employment, it is demand for specific jobs and this is where my colleague, the Minister of Education is working a huge programme for the training of professionals and for the *Chambre de Métiers*, that is, training of people at the level of construction and others which can contribute in the development process. But, I am satisfied that we are on the right path.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, wouldn't the hon. Minister of Finance agree that, in fact, the only reason there has been an improvement in our current account deficit is because there has been an appreciation of the rupee which increases our export earning and also there has been a dramatic drop in the price of petroleum product in the world market. But if we remove these two external factors, in fact, the situation would have been worse if we had relied only on the domestic indicators?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: There is truth to it. The improvement in the current account deficit in 2014 and this year also is partly due to the fact that there is a deflation worldwide at the level of commodities. Whether it be petroleum products or others, we are, in fact, in a period which is quite exceptional. Rate of inflation this year will be less than 1.5% calendar year basis, which means, therefore, that we are already living a period of deflationary forces where prices are going down. There is no doubt, therefore, that the bill for importation of petroleum products has helped us a lot. Number two, has the appreciation of the rupee helped in the process? I would tend to have doubts...

(Interruptions)

Yes! Appreciation of the dollar. The depreciation of the rupee has not helped. In fact, I feel that, basically, the improvement in the current account deficit, is number one, the deflationary forces which are playing worldwide, and number two, demand also in some sectors has gone down – all combined.

Now, can we say that this improvement in the current account is something permanent. No! Unless we take measures. This is why I am circulating, today, a list of measures which will help to ensure that, in the long-term the current account deficit is improved. We were only five years back with a current deficit of 13.2% of GDP, that is impossible to manage in the long-term. So, we are trying to bring it down to a level which is manageable, which should be between 3% to 4%. This is the objective.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sesungkur, next question!

CWA – WATER SUPPLY – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/970) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the number of applications received for connection to the network thereof as at 31 December 2014 which have remained unattended as at to date, indicating –

- (a) the fee charged when the applications were submitted, and
- (b) if measures will be taken to expedite the processing of the pending applications therefor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr. I. Collendavello): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that, as at 31 December 2014, there were 444 applications still pending for the following reasons –

- (i) the payment of the new supply fee had not yet been made;
- (ii) the applicant had to carry out the offsite works to connect to the network;
- (iii) no network or service main was available in the vicinity;
- (iv) outstanding wayleaves had not yet been obtained from the Local Authorities or from the Road Development Authority.

A processing fee Rs500 is paid at the time of application for domestic supply and Rs1,000 for non-domestic supply.

As regards part (b), I am informed by the Central Water Authority that it is following up with the relevant authorities on a case to case basis to obtain wayleaves.

Mr Sesungkur: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. He is doing a marvellous job to put some order at the Central Water Authority. Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that connection charges at times are quite exorbitant and when we talk about very poor families who cannot afford those charges, can he consider special measures and see to it that in 2015 families are not deprived of such a necessity?

Mr Collendavello: Well, I can only answer generally. A lot of effort is being made and new measures are going to be announced in order to alleviate the hardship felt by the deprived of this country. But, I would not be able to answer specifically to that question with regard to connection charges.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

AUGUSTE VOLLAIRE STADIUM - FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS

(No. B/971) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Auguste Vollaire Stadium, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to if it is presently not available for the holding of football competitions thereat and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF *BOXE FRANÇAISE* - MS L. B. & MS S. S. C. -
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

(No. B/972) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Ms L. B. and Ms S. S. C., he will state the reasons why his Ministry did not extend any financial assistance thereto for their participation in the final World Championship of *Boxe Française* to be held in Paris, in December 2015.

(Withdrawn)

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES - SPORTS COMPLEXES & FOOTBALL GROUNDS -
FACILITIES**

(No. B/973) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the sports complexes and football grounds managed by the local authorities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the local authorities, information as to if the utilization thereof by local clubs and by individuals is free of charge and, if not, why not.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the use of sports complexes and football grounds managed by the District Councils of Flacq, Moka, Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart are free of charge whereas a nominal fee is being charged by the other local authorities for use of these facilities.

With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the relevant information is being tabled in the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je ne sais pas si j'ai bien compris la réponse du ministre. Dans sa première partie, il affirme que ce n'est pas payant et par la suite les collectivités locales en question réclament un *nominal fee*, c'est bien ça, pour l'utilisation ?

Dr. Husnoo: No, there are four District Councils: Flacq, Moka, Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart where they are free whereas you have the other eight District Councils where you have to pay. It varies.

Mr Quirin: Mais qu'en est-il, M. le président, des Municipalités ?

Dr. Husnoo: You have to pay naturally.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le fait de faire payer dans certaines collectivités, n'est-ce pas une contradiction avec le rôle de facilitateur que devraient jouer les collectivités locales en faveur de la jeunesse des quartiers, en faveur des clubs qui, je peux affirmer, M. le président, nombreux sont ceux qui se trouvent dans les poches de pauvreté, dans les quartiers défavorisés ? N'est-ce pas là aller à l'encontre de cette politique de faciliter, de donner les moyens à la jeunesse des quartiers qui sont sans moyen, sans soutien financier, sans sponsor, qui ne bénéficient pas de fonds du CSR ? Pourquoi ne pas permettre à ces clubs de jouer sans payer ?

Dr. Husnoo: A lot of these, as I just mentioned, the Municipal Councils and the other District Councils, the fee charged is much less. It is a nominal fee that they have to charge just for the maintenance. But, it is a nominal fee and is not as expensive as a private club or whatever.

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, si j'ai bien compris l'honorable ministre, pour les *sports complexes and football grounds* qui sont gérés par les municipalités maintenant c'est payable? Parce qu'autant que je sache, jusqu'à décembre 2014, *les football grounds* étaient *free of charge* à Port Louis !

Dr. Husnoo: As I said, I have got a long list here of the different District Councils and Municipal Councils. A lot of these facilities are free. I am going to circulate it. It depends on many factors. It depends, firstly, on whether the person is in that particular local council or outside. It depends on whether the club is registered with the council or not registered. It...

(Interruptions)

Can I finish, please?

(Interruptions)

Can I finish, please?

(Interruptions)

Let me finish! The hon. Member has asked his question, I have given him time to ask his question...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! Silence!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: I have given him time to ask his question, let me finish!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea! Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Can you, please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Husnoo, can you, please, sit down?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, can you allow him to answer? You have asked a question, will you listen to the answer?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: I am not talking rubbish. I am just telling you the factors that are taken into consideration to charge the fee! I am not talking rubbish like you do sometimes! So, don't blame me!

(Interruptions)

Okay?

(Interruptions)

I am telling you the factors that are taken into consideration. Whether you want to listen or not, I don't care!

(Interruptions)

Stop it! I am not talking about all these!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Minister, please sit down! Hon. Ameer Meea, if you won't listen to the answer...

(Interruptions)

Has the hon. Minister answered his question?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: I was going to mention there are different factors that are taken into consideration when they put the fee. As I mentioned, whether it is an inhabitant or non-inhabitant, registered or not registered, whether it is day or night for that matter because at night you have to pay for the electricity, so, they charge a bit more or whether it is a student or nonstudent. There are so many factors. That is why I said I am going to circulate it, then, the hon. Member can have a look at it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

COMMISSION FOR CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION - CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/974) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and training whether, in regard to the appointment of Mr I. S. as Chairperson of the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the date of appointment thereof;
- (b) the terms and conditions of contract thereof, and
- (c) who was acting as Chairperson prior to his appointment and since when.

Mr Callichurn: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in accordance with section 83 (3) of the Employment Relations Act 2008, Mr Iswarduth Seetohul has been appointed President of the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation for a period of three years on contract. He assumed duty on 30 October 2015.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am tabling the information sought for.

Regarding part (c) of the question, prior to the appointment of Mr Seetohul, the Vice-President of the Commission was called upon to act as President from March 2015 until the appointment of Mr Seetohul.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any adverse report against the Vice-President, the one who has been doing the actingship?

Mr Callichurn: No.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any specific reason why this person who was doing the actingship has not been appointed?

Mr Callichurn: Well, it is an appointment made by the Minister and I chose Mr Seetohul to be the President.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this appointment is a political appointment?

Mr Callichurn: Certainly not!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you did ask the question!

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that he appointed Mr I. S. May I know from the hon. Minister -

- (i) whether there was any *appel de candidature*, and
- (ii) this Mr I. S., how many years of experience does he have in relation to conciliation and mediation? How many times he has appeared before the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation? How many labour cases he has done in his life which will justify his appointment on this very important Commission for Conciliation and Mediation?

Mr Callichurn: Well, section 87 (3) of the Employment Relations Act 2008 empowers me, as a Minister who is responsible for the subject matter of labour and employment, to assign a Chairperson for the Commission.

As regards the experience, I can tell the hon. Member that Mr Seetohul is a Barrister, he has been a judicial officer for eight years and he is the right person in the right place, I should say.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Just a very simple question to my good friend, the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training. The person who was in the second position, after Professor Thorul left, was Acting Chairperson. She has all the experience. As I am sure the hon. Minister would agree, she is qualified. She has been chairing a lot of mediation issues at the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation. She has clearly got more

experience in labour matters and mediation matters than the person he has nominated. So why...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: So, why is it...

(Interruptions)

This is my question!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please don't give an opinion; go to your question!

Mr Mohamed: Why is it, therefore, that someone with experience, a young lady, a professional, was put aside and someone else with no experience compared to that young lady was preferred? Why?

Mr Callichurn: Can I tell the hon. Member something? At the Commission, we need someone who is independent, but recently there has been a strong lobby for the Vice-Chairperson to accede to the Presidency of the Commission, which is a very bad thing for the Commission because we need someone independent at the head of the Commission.

Mr Ganoo: Just to enlighten the House, can the hon. Minister tell us whether, in the past, when Mr Torul or when the Vice-Chairman was recruited, the same procedures were adopted? Was there any advertisement in the past?

Mr Callichurn: No, they were actually appointed by the former Labour Minister, my good friend, hon. Mohamed, on the same conditions.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, last supplementary!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, please! I will not have to ask you every time to stop passing on comments. Allow the hon. Member to talk.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House and the nation whether that person, Mr I. S.; is the same person who was acting as Magistrate or a legal officer and who signed a warrant when he was on leave to arrest the DPP? Is he the same person?

Mr Callichurn: I am not aware of this particular issue, but I can tell the hon. Member something. A Magistrate is on duty 24/7, seven days a week, even if he is on leave. I am not aware of the statement that the hon. Member just made.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, next question, please!

**MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND
INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, MINISTER OF TECHNOLOGY,
COMMUNICATION AND INNOVATION - EMPLOYEES - CONTRACT**

(No. B/975) 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 persons employed on contract at his Ministry since December 2014 to date, he will state in each case the –

- (a) names thereof;
- (b) qualifications held;
- (c) post occupied;
- (d) terms and conditions of contract thereof, and
- (e) parastatal bodies or State Owned Companies on which they represent his Ministry, indicating since when and the remunerations received.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information sought by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library in due course.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rutnah!

SUBRAMANIEN BHARATI EYES HOSPITAL - AVASTIN TREATMENT

(No. B/976) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Avastin treatment, he will state the number of patients who have permanently lost their eyesight following

treatment therewith at the Subramanien Bharati Eyes Hospital in the recent past, indicating in each case, the name of the doctor who had administered same thereto.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House is aware that PQ B/90, which dealt with the Avastin injection, was replied to by the former Minister of Health and Quality of Life. The House may also wish to note that, on Friday 24 April 2015, I made a statement in the House regarding the incident which arose as a result of injections of Avastin at the Subramanien Bharati Eyes Hospital at Moka and a copy of the enquiry report was tabled.

With regard to the other part, I am also informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that four patients have lost partial eyesight. I also wish to inform the House that the four injections were done according to the existing protocols.

Mr Rutnah: Given the report of Dr. Isabelle in April, which identified serious lacunas, insofar as, amongst others, hygiene and sterilisation were concerned at the time, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Medical Council has seized the matter to investigate into the alleged professional conduct of those who were involved in the treatment?

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as I recollect, the report of the Committee did not identify any failure on the part of the doctors in giving the proper treatment, but there were certain recommendations that were made in regard to improving the conditions under which the Avastin was being prepared and this is being looked into.

Mr Rutnah: Insofar as the recommendations were concerned, one of the recommendations was for the procurement of a laminar flowchart to prepare Avastin in a sterile environment. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether his Ministry is being using its best endeavours to acquire one of them in the public interest?

Mr Gayan: It is already in progress.

YVES CANTIN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/977) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life Whether, in regard to the Yves Cantin Community Hospital, he will state –

- (a) if it is in fact a dispensary, a mediclinic or a hospital, and
- (b) the projects earmarked for implementation thereat, if any.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Dr. Yves Cantin Community Hospital situated at Black River, as its name suggests, is a Community Hospital. It operates on a 24-hour basis and provides basic primary health care services. It also has laboratory facilities, X-ray services and a stand-by ambulance service.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Yves Cantin Community Hospital and the five Community Health Centres in its catchment area provide general consultations, maternal and child health services and family planning services as well as a range of other health services such as blood collection for analysis and dressings for wounds and injuries.

My Ministry is aware of the transport constraints in the region of Black River and is considering the introduction of an outreach service to facilitate access to healthcare for the people residing in the area, specifically for blood collection and home nursing in the first instance.

My Ministry will constantly monitor the health needs of the people in the locality and will provide further outreach health services as and when required.

Furthermore, infrastructural works are being carried out to improve the services being provided to the public and to patients in particular.

Mr Jhuboo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a catchment area of around nearly 20,000 people, covering a region from Cascavelle up to Chamarel and to Le Morne. Doesn't the hon. Minister think that it is high time that Yves Cantin becomes a full-fledged hospital?

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an issue which has been raised on several occasions, but for a regional hospital to be fully operational, it needs a catchment area of about 250,000 people. Obviously, Black River does not satisfy that criteria, but I am informed that the services are being provided. There are ambulance services and, in case of special urgency, it is Victoria Hospital that is easily accessible from the area. In the south as well, we have Souillac Hospital. It was supposed to be a regional hospital, but again we have a population criterion which is not met.

Mr Jhuboo: Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. À l'origine de la création d'Yves Cantin, les patients ont été admis. Il y avait des chambres qui recevaient les patients suite à de lourdes opérations, et depuis neuf ans plus aucun patient n'est admis en convalescence. Le ministre peut-il reconsidérer la position sur le concept d'admission?

Mr Gayan: Je crois que ces services sont disponibles dans les hôpitaux à Rose Belle et à Candos. Je crois que ce n'est pas nécessaire, mais si jamais la nécessité se précise, on verra ce qu'on pourra faire.

Mr Ganoo: May I request the hon. Minister to see to it that the ambulance services are made more efficient in view of the several complaints that the inhabitants of the area make concerning that particular service? For example, there is no Labour Ward at Yves Cantin. From time to time, we do receive complaints regarding the ambulance services.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware of the complaints that are made regarding ambulance services and I will certainly look into that. I may also inform the House that we are seriously considering putting GPS in all the ambulances, so that we can monitor their movements.

The Deputy Speaker: Last supplementary hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Merci, M. le président. Toujours dans le registre la santé sur la côte Ouest, le ministre peut-il informer la Chambre s'il a reçu une proposition d'un partenariat PPP pour la construction d'un hôpital privé sur la côte Ouest?

Mr Gayan: We get lots of proposals. If the hon. Member wants to come with a specific request, I can look into that. But we get lots of requests every day.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS - NPS BUILDING - RENT

(No. B/978) Mr S. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the office space rented by his Ministry at the NPS Building, at Rose Hill, he will state the –

- (a) monthly rental fee thereof;
- (b) purposes therefor, and
- (c) activities being carried out thereat.

(Withdrawn)

MONT CHOISY - TARISA RESORT HOTEL - PUBLIC ROAD

(No. B/979) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Mon Choisy, he will state when decision was taken for the public road in front of the Tarisa Resort Hotel thereat to be deviated, indicating if –

- (a) all the procedures therefor were followed, and
- (b) consideration will be given for the reinstatement of the previous alignment of the said public road.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed that in March 2010, LVN Tourism Enterprises Ltd. (Tarisa Resort Hotel) made an application to the Road Development Authority for the deviation of part of the Pointe aux Piments - Mon Choisy coast road running along the public beach, arguing that it posed a safety hazard for the clients of the hotel.

Subsequently, on 08 October 2010, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping sought and obtained Cabinet approval to -

- Firstly, divert and deproclaim part of the Pointe aux Piments – Mon Choisy coast road (B38), and
- Secondly, proclaim a new access road which will be constructed to link the Pointe aux Piments – Mon Choisy coast road (B38) to the Mon Choisy – Cap Malheureux Road (B13).

As a result of that decision, part of the Pointe aux Piments – Mon Choisy coast road (B38) was deproclaimed as per Government Notice No. 37 of 2013 and the new road alignment to link Mon Choisy – Cap Malheureux Road (B13) was proclaimed as per Part II of the Schedule of the same Government Notice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new section of the road came into operation on 27 February 2013.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that after the matter has been considered by a Ministerial Committee involving the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the Attorney General and myself along with senior Government officials, it has been found and decided that, to allow the public enjoyment of the beach and to restore car parking facilities for the general public, the deproclaimed part of the Pointe aux Piments – Mon Choisy road (B38) would be re-instated, depending on the determination of the Court case.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre, qui c'est, valeur du jour, qui a l'administration de cette partie de la route qui a été *deproclaimed*?

Mr Soodhun: Sorry?

Mr Ramano: Qui c'est qui a l'administration de cette partie de la route qui a été *deproclaimed* parce qu'il existe une barrière, valeur du jour, entre la plage et l'hôtel ?

Mr Soodhun: As I just mentioned, the hotel received permission from the authority concerned; it is under approval and also Cabinet's decision.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know this supplementary does not fall under your purview, but as we are talking about road deviation, can you transmit it to the Minister concerned. The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is here. When you deviate from the north to go to the south, there is a traffic light and this traffic light is for a very short time, it is for about 50 seconds and this is causing traffic problems. It is very dangerous. Can the Minister concerned do the needful to increase the lifespan of that light so that we can have a good turning?

Mr Soodhun: I agree with the hon. Member; I am going to talk to my colleague.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us the names of the Directors of this hotel and can he confirm to the House whether it is the first time that such thing happens in this country and whether the person concerned is a major Labour agent of Constituency No. 5?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as there is a Court case, I don't want to comment on this.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Oree, next question!

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF *BOXE FRANÇAISE* - ATHLETES –
FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

(No. B/980) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the World Championship of *Boxe Française* to be held in Paris, in December 2015, he will state why his Ministry is not providing any financial support to the two Mauritian athletes who have been qualified to participate therein.

(Withdrawn)

**MADAGASCAR - INDIAN OCEAN CUP CHAMPIONSHIP ZONE 7 OF
VOLLEYBALL – SELECTED CLUBS**

(No. B/981) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Indian Ocean Cup Championship Zone 7 of Volleyball held at Madagascar from 12 to 21 November 2015, he will state if his Ministry has received any request from the four selected clubs therefor for any grant thereto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SC EXAMINATIONS 2015 – EXAMINATION PAPERS

(No. B/982) Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations 2015, she will state if she is aware that the examination papers thereof for Mathematics, Accounts and Economics were scheduled on the same day, 05 November 2015 and, if so, indicate if measures will be taken to avoid any such recurrence in the future.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) that the examination papers for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations were scheduled on 05 November 2015 as follows –

	Examination Papers	Time
1A	Mathematics Syllabus A	08.00-10.00
1B	Mathematics Syllabus D	08.00-10.30
2	Principles of Accounts (Multiple Choice Paper)	11.00-12.00
3	Economics (Multiple Choice Paper)	13.00-13.45

There was a break of 30 minutes and one hour between the papers.

I am further informed that, at the time the provisional time table was received, the MES did make representations to the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) regarding the duration and the number of papers scheduled on that specific examination day. A proposal was also made by the MES for a time table deviation and for the Mathematics

Papers Syllabus A and Syllabus D, to be rescheduled on the morning of 30 October 2015 or on 03 November 2015. However, the proposal was not retained by the CIE.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the time tables for SC and HSC examinations are prepared by the CIE taking into consideration the time zone where the examination papers are administered in the various countries and the potential threats to the security of the question papers. It is worth noting that according to the CIE handbook, it is only when the total duration of the papers taken in one session exceeds 3 hours and 45 minutes that a time table deviation can be envisaged. Thus, being required to sit for 3 or more different subject papers on the same day is not considered as an acceptable reason for time table deviation by the CIE.

However, I am informed that in the CIE provisional time table for 2016 SC Examinations, the 3 papers of Mathematics, Principle of Accounts and Economics are not scheduled on the same day.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

CEB - SARA KO PROJECT - INQUIRY

(No. B/985) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Sarako Project for the generation of electricity, he will state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following my reply to PQ No. B/129 on 03 March 2015, a technical committee was set up to carry out an assessment of the Sarako PV Farm, including compliance to the land lease agreement and the EIA licence.

The Committee included officers from my Ministry, the Ministries of Environment, Agro-Industry, Housing and Lands, Public Infrastructure, the Central Electricity Board, the Water Resources Unit and the District Council.

In its report dated August 2015, the Committee found that –

- (i) from February to December 2014, the plant produced 20.4 GWh of electricity, equivalent to 97.7% of the expected energy export;
- (ii) only 60% of the 80 acres of land was being utilised. This is being looked into by the Ministry of Housing and Lands;

(iii) the promoter had not complied with some conditions of the EIA licence, namely -

- submission of quarterly monitoring reports;
- building sound proof structures for the standby generator;
- construction of wastewater treatment plant on site, and
- tree and grass planting.

These non-compliance issues are being monitored by the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management as well as the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the Committee looked into as to why when the project required some 30 *arpents* of land, some 90 *arpents* of land were allocated to the promoter of that project?

Mr Collendavelloo: That was not within the terms of reference of the Committee. What we know is that the total site extent was 337,669 metre square but only 60%, that is, 202,745 metre square was used. The remaining land is just waste.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what amount has been paid to Sarako since it is in operation?

Mr Collendavelloo: Can the hon. Member be more precise? What amount has been paid to Sarako?

Mr Hurreeram: What amount of fees?

Mr Collendavelloo: Oh, I see. Well, there is a contractual financial support of Rs37 m. per year which is being paid to CEB - the Government has granted that support to CEB to meet the differential in price. There is a differential between the marginal cost and the purchase price of Rs6.60 which is the price which CEB pays and there is an additional Rs37 m. which Government has to pay to CEB.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, a last supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Since the hon. Minister has confirmed that the excess of land that has been allocated for that project is not being utilised and might not be utilised in the future, will he inform the House whether Government will retrieve that excess of land from Sarako?

Mr Collendavello: Thank you for that supplementary. The matter has been referred to the Minister of Housing and Lands to see what actions should be taken in the light of the fact that the rest of the land has not been used.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/987, B/988 and B/989 have been withdrawn. Time is over.